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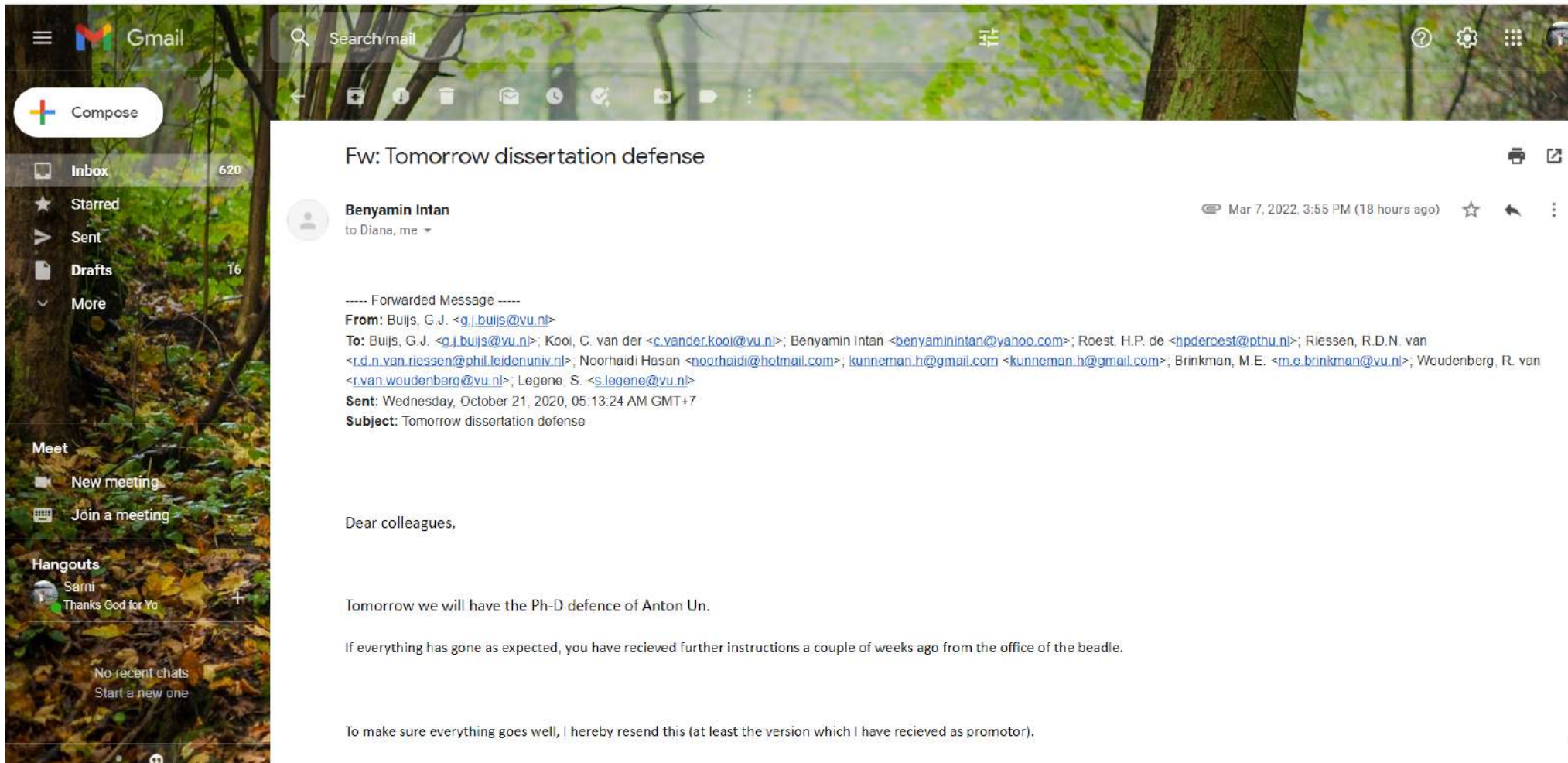
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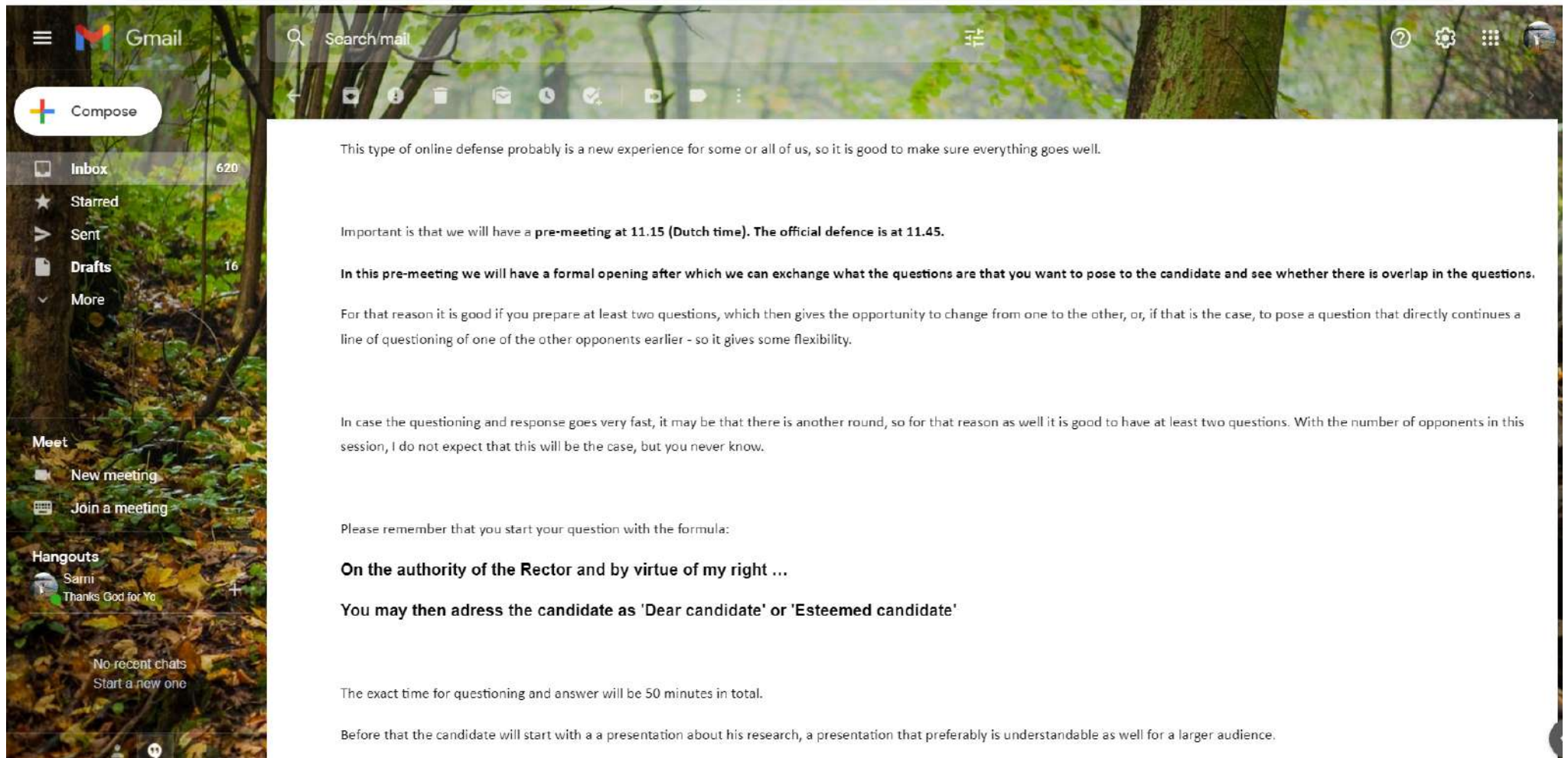
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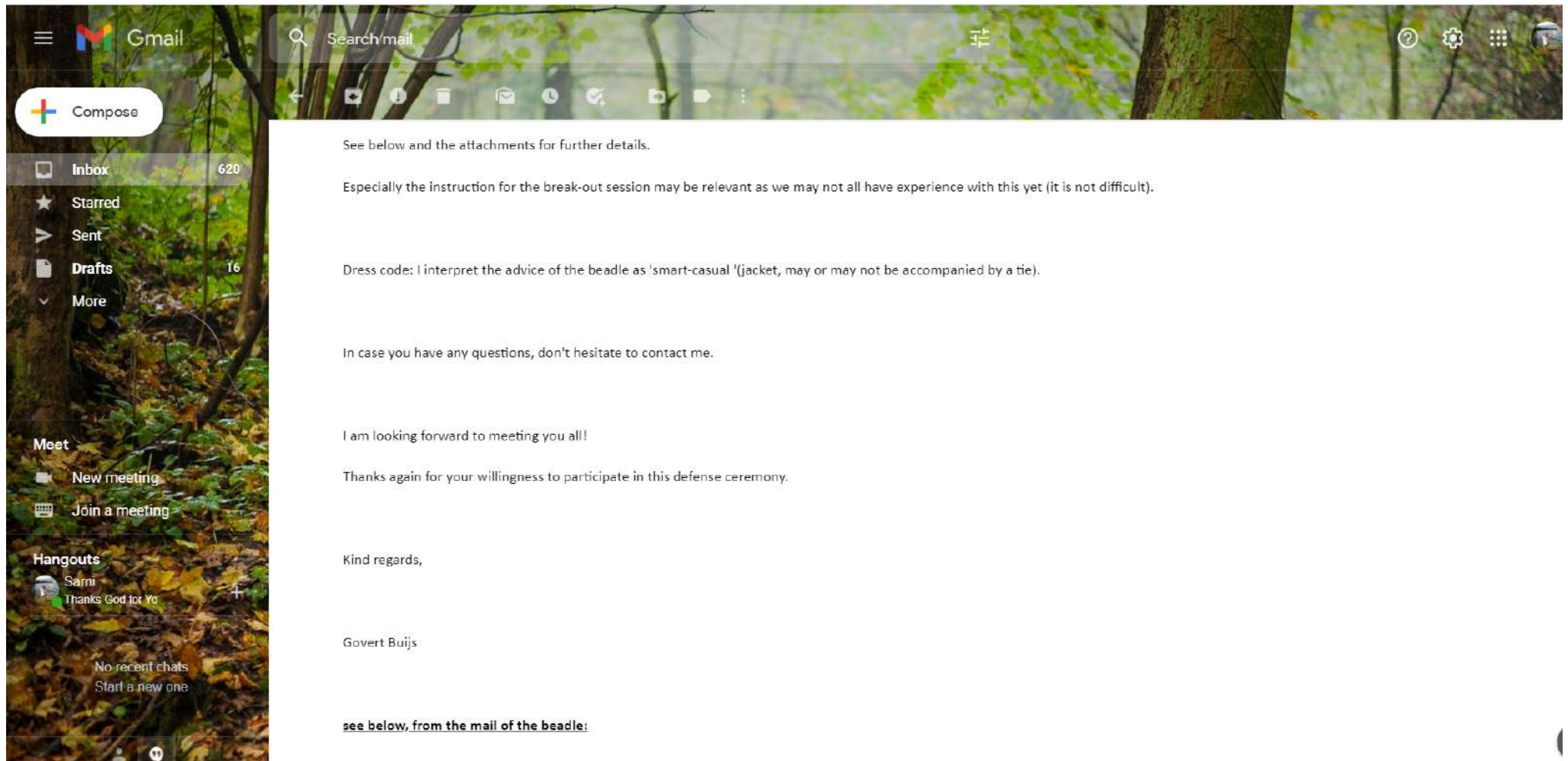
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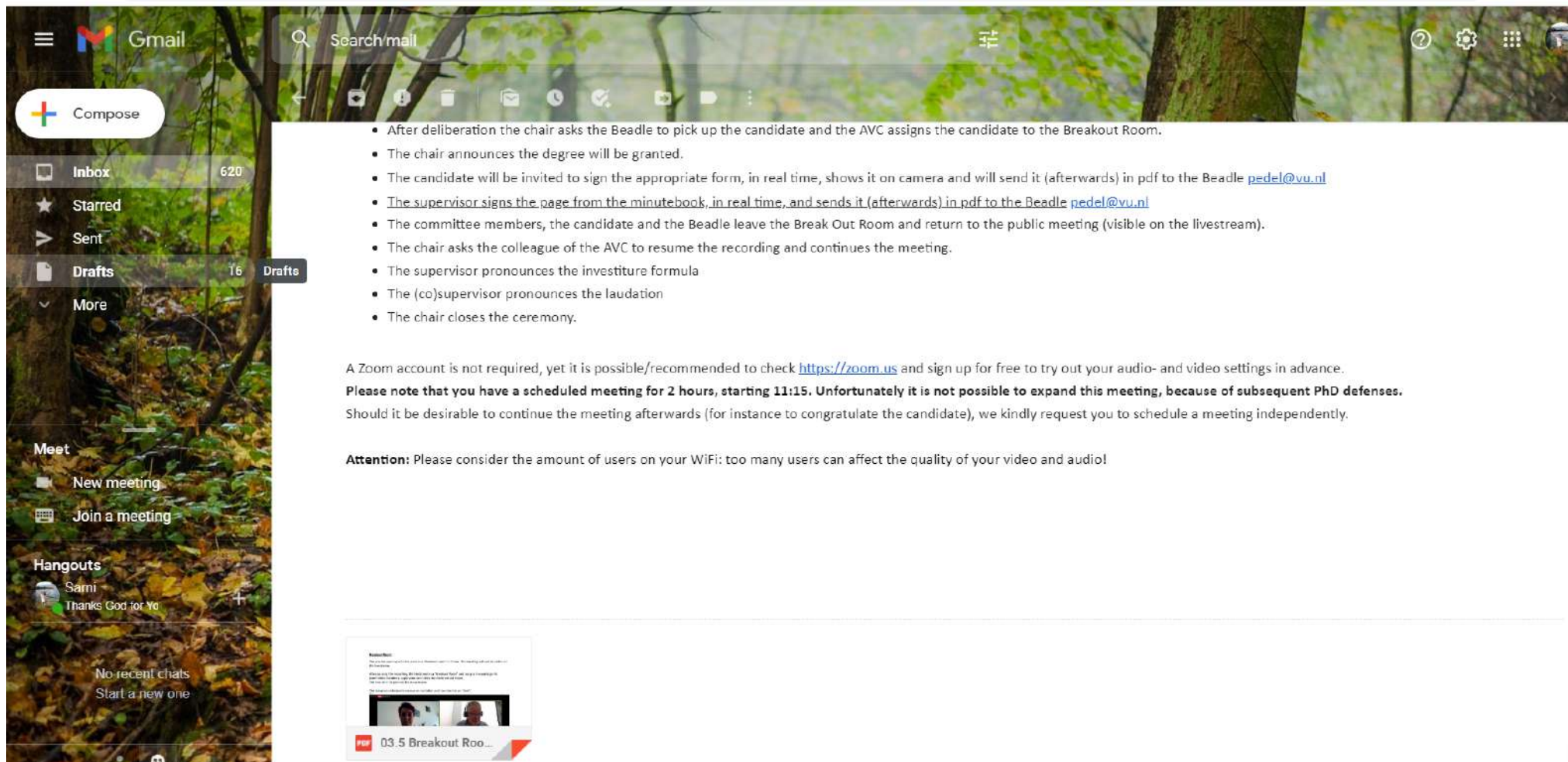
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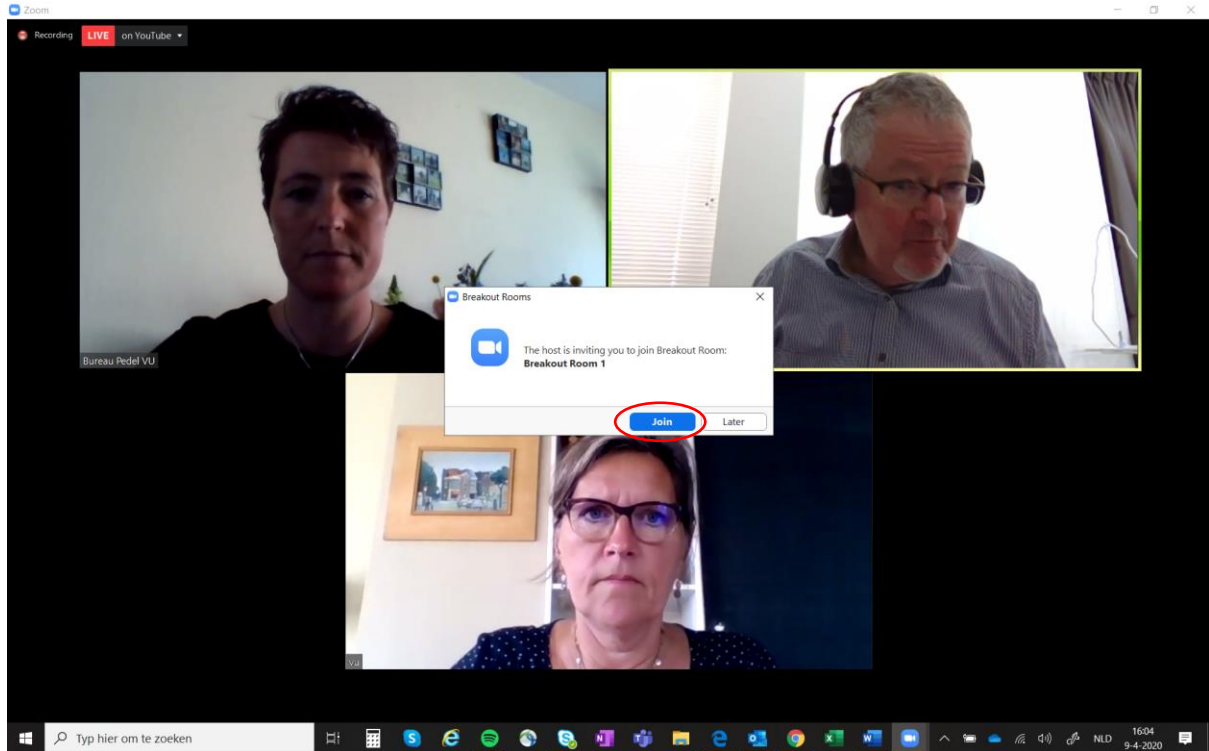


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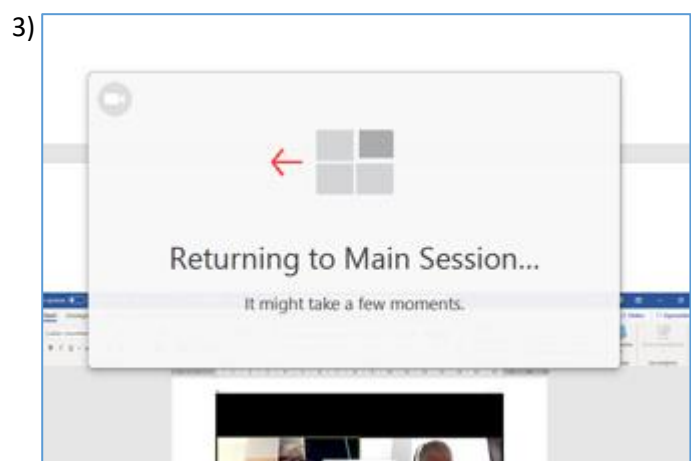
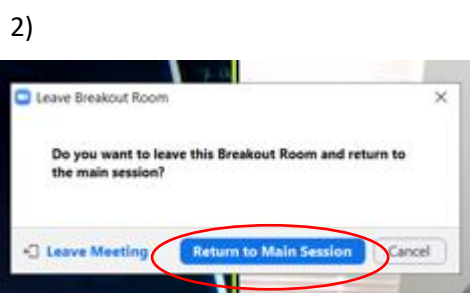
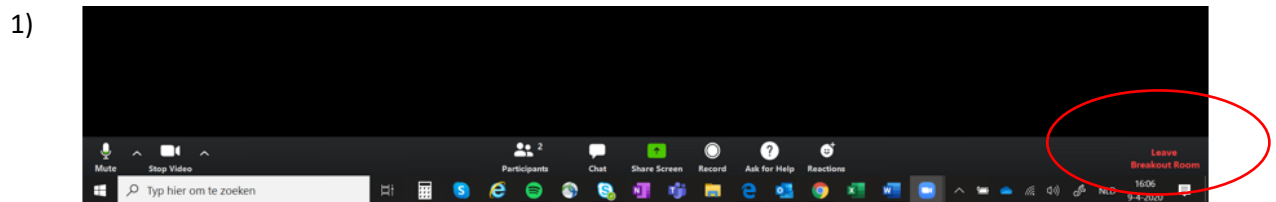
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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

THEOLOGY OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

An Interpretation of the Philosophy of Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas
from the Perspective of the Theology of Abraham Kuyper
with Implications for Public Theology and the Indonesian Context

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor of Philosophy aan
de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
prof.dr. V. Subramaniam,
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OF THE MAJOR WORKS

APP	: <i>The Promise of Politics</i> by Hannah Arendt
AS	: <i>Antirevolutionaire Staatskunde</i> by Abraham Kuyper
BFN	: <i>Between Facts and Norms</i> by Jürgen Habermas
BPF	: <i>Between Past and Future</i> by Hannah Arendt
CG	: <i>Common Grace</i> by Abraham Kuyper
CGCR	: <i>Common Grace in Centennial Reader</i> by Abraham Kuyper
CR	: <i>Crises of the Republic</i> by Hannah Arendt
CRHPS	: <i>Concluding Remarks in Habermas and the Public Sphere</i> by Jürgen Habermas
CSSOCL	: <i>Calvinism: Source and Stronghold of Our Constitutional Liberty</i> by Abraham Kuyper
EST	: <i>Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology</i> by Abraham Kuyper
EU	: <i>Essays in Understanding</i> by Hannah Arendt
EV	: <i>Evolution</i> by Abraham Kuyper
FRPS	: <i>Further Reflections of the Public Sphere</i> by Jürgen Habermas
HACCP	: <i>Hannah Arendt on the Concept of Communicative Power</i> by Jürgen Habermas
HC	: <i>The Human Condition</i> by Hannah Arendt
KCA	: <i>Kuyper on Coalitions and Antithesis</i> by Abraham Kuyper
LC	: <i>Lectures on Calvinism</i> by Abraham Kuyper
LKPP	: <i>Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy</i> by Hannah Arendt
LM	: <i>The Life of the Mind</i> by Hannah Arendt
LSA	: <i>Love and Saint Augustine</i> by Hannah Arendt
MCCA	: <i>Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action</i> by Jürgen Habermas
MDT	: <i>Men in Dark Times</i> by Hannah Arendt
MFCDD	: <i>Modernism: A Fata Morgana in the Christian Domain</i> by Abraham Kuyper
MN	: <i>Maranatha</i> by Abraham Kuyper
OC	: <i>On the Church</i> by Abraham Kuyper
OP	: <i>Our Program</i> by Abraham Kuyper
OR	: <i>On Revolution</i> by Hannah Arendt
OT	: <i>The Origins of Totalitarianism</i> by Hannah Arendt
PCMS	: <i>Political Communication in Media Society</i> by Jürgen Habermas
PDM	: <i>The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity</i> by Jürgen Habermas
PP	: <i>The Problem of Poverty</i> by Abraham Kuyper
PR	: <i>Pro Rege</i> by Abraham Kuyper
PS	: <i>The Public Sphere</i> by Jürgen Habermas
PT	: <i>Postmetaphysical Thinking</i> by Jürgen Habermas
RPS	: <i>Religion in the Public Sphere</i> by Jürgen Habermas
RPSPSS	: <i>Religion in the Public Sphere of Postsecular Society</i> by Jürgen Habermas
SS	: <i>Sphere Sovereignty</i> by Abraham Kuyper
STPS	: <i>The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere</i> by Jürgen Habermas
TCA	: <i>The Theory of Communicative Action</i> by Jürgen Habermas
TJ	: <i>Truth and Justification</i> by Jürgen Habermas
TWB	: <i>Thinking without a Banister</i> by Hannah Arendt
UCML	: <i>Uniformity: The Curse of Modern Life</i> by Abraham Kuyper
WHS	: <i>The Work of the Holy Spirit</i> by Abraham Kuyper
WW	: <i>Wisdom and Wonder</i> by Abraham Kuyper

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The issue addressed

Some recent publications indicate the presence of religion in the public sphere. Tariq Modood, a professor of sociology at the University of Bristol recently observed, “Instead of treating religion as subrational and a matter of private concern only, religion is once again to be recognized as a legitimate basis of public engagement and political action” (Modood 2019, 163). The presence of Muslims in Western Europe, which is estimated to be around twelve to seventeen million today, for example, has become a serious challenge to political secularism (Modood 2019, 164). Even in what arguably is the most religion hostile area, namely, the academic realm, religion has not disappeared at all. Nicholas Wolterstorff convincingly claims, “Contrary to the expectations of some, religion has not disappeared from the modern world, especially not from the United States” (Wolterstorff 2019, vii). As a professor at Yale University for a couple of decades, Wolterstorff found that even in that so-called secular university there were many religious-linked activities such as invocation in commencement, a course on the relation between law and theology, a seminar in the philosophy department on the nineteenth-century Protestant theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (Wolterstorff 2019, 141-142). Yale is certainly not a religiously committed university. Rather, it is a pluralist university. “Many other American universities”, Wolterstorff concludes, “are pluralist in the same way Yale is”. Modood’s and Wolterstorff’s claims indicate the failure of the thesis of the privatization of religion, not only in the recent context, but over the last couple of decades.

The ingress of religion into the public sphere confirms this failure negatively and positively, and generates several neologisms. Since 1960s, scholars have brought up and popularized theoretical terms such as “civil religion”, “public theology”, and “public religion”. Whatever their definition and differentiation might be, these neologisms refer to the role of theology *in* the public sphere. Whereas in this context the public sphere is vital for religion in general and theology in particular, the theology *of* the public sphere seems detached from the attention of many scholars of those theoretical frameworks.

Specifically, in this project, there are two contexts for constructing a theology of the public sphere, namely, public theology in general as the theoretical context and Indonesia’s public sphere and public theology in particular as the practical context. Public theology is a theology that penetrates the public sphere. It is a “theologically informed public discourse about public issues” (Breitenberg Jr. 2003, 66). Although public theology has departed from a certain religious heritage, it is often pressed and seduced into either translating or compromising its particular

voices or messages, due to the multicultural nature of the contemporary public sphere. By translating or compromising its message, public theology might forsake its distinctive contributions and its specific reason for entering the public sphere. By doing this, public theology might also undermine pluralism itself. To settle this quandary, there must be two reinforcements, both in the public sphere itself and in public theology. A theology of the public sphere emerges to provide these reinforcements.

In addition to the theoretical context, Indonesia's public sphere and public theology are the practical context for constructing a theology of the public sphere. Indonesia's public sphere has been thriving since the 1998 political turmoil which resulted in the overturning of the New Order regime of the late President Soeharto (1921-2008), in power between 1967 and 1998. In short, Indonesian society has been developing as "a democratic, just, and open society" under the Presidencies of B.J Habibie (1936-2019; in power 1998-1999) and Abdurrahman Wahid (1940-2009; in power 1999-2001) who tried to show "the commitment to plurality" (Ricklefs 2008, 693). There has been a reinforcement of Indonesian democracy since 1998 through certain efforts such as the increasing freedom of the press, the removal of restrictions on the formation of political parties, the systemic empowerment of civil society, and so forth (Hardiman 2014, 659-660). The strengthening of democracy in general and the public sphere in particular, however, are not without problems. The problem of media conglomerate and the government's pressure on digital freedom threaten Indonesian democracy and the public sphere. These problems become a serious impediment to democratic progress. A theology of the public sphere is called to obviate this impediment.

The new situation of Indonesian democracy has opened up the public sphere in the country so religious citizens can have a say, including the Protestant minority. Though Protestants might speak in the public sphere, it does not mean that the country's public sphere is a quite-plural one. Rather, it is a quasi-plural public sphere, since it is dominated by the religion of the majority, which is Islamic. A theology of the public sphere, as is attempted in this dissertation aims both at a theoretical justification for the establishment of a quite-plural public sphere and a theologico-philosophical justification of a distinctly Protestant public theology.

The theology of the public sphere, as presented here, builds on an interpretation of the philosophy of the public sphere as articulated by the American-German philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) and the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1929-) from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty of Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), a Dutch prime minister, theologian, and activist. However, their work will not be adopted uncritically. Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty consists of the principle of structural pluralism and the principle of

confessional pluralism. An interpretation of human thought, texts, or artefacts requires understanding and appreciation as well as, criticism and correction. This pattern can be viewed in this project. For the sake of brevity, I will advance only two examples.

First, Arendt's and Habermas' attempts to make the public sphere exempt from the invasion of private interest, political power, and money are highly valued from the perspective of Kuyper's principle of structural pluralism as these philosophers force through their criticism of the rise of the social, totalitarianism, and the colonization of the lifeworld. Kuyper's principle is articulated to intercept the excessive exercise of authority over social spheres as exhibited by the Bismarckian state's sovereignty and by the French Revolution's popular sovereignty which resulted in the Napoleonic deviation of power. Both the German and the French models try to invade other sovereign social spheres. Based on the idea of the sovereignty of God, Kuyper's principle of structural pluralism strengthens Arendt's and Habermas' attempts to reinvigorate the public sphere by supplying its radical legitimacy. The appreciation and strengthening just explained could be used to contribute theoretically to the empowerment of the contemporary Indonesian public sphere facing the media conglomerate and the government's pressure on digital freedom.

Second, the commitment to plurality in Arendt's and Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere is much appreciated if we view it from Kuyper's principle of confessional pluralism. While Arendt presupposes plurality as the human condition to which political action corresponds, Habermas makes it part of the principle of inclusivity following his earlier historical sketch of the bourgeois public sphere. Kuyper's principle of confessional pluralism does not only appreciate their commitment to plurality but also empowers their commitment by providing a theological foundation. This aegis is noteworthy since particular theological commitments usually are seen as a very big challenge to pluralism. This theological interpretation of and support for the commitment to the plurality of the public sphere can be used to inject theoretical fresh blood into the establishment of a quite-plural public sphere in which public theology can retain its distinctive voice without giving in to the pressure and the seduction to translate and to compromise. On our way toward building this theology of the public sphere, we will pose several research questions.

1.2 Research questions

The key question of this dissertation is

“How can a theology of the public sphere be constructed by drawing on an interpretation of Arendt and Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere from the perspective of Kuyper's

principle of sphere sovereignty which finally empower both public theology in general and Indonesian Protestant public theology in particular, and also help to strengthen Indonesia's public sphere?"

In order to answer this question, we will first address the following subquestions.

- First, what are the problems of public theology that should be solved or strengthened by a theology of the public sphere?
- Second, what are the conditions of Indonesia's public sphere and the country's Protestant public theology that should be solved or empowered by a theology of the public sphere?
- Third, what is the public sphere according to Hannah Arendt?
- Fourth, what is the public sphere according to Jürgen Habermas?
- Fifth, how can we resolve the differences between Arendt and Habermas in their thinking on the public sphere?
- Sixth, what is the principle of sphere sovereignty according to Abraham Kuyper?
- Seventh, is the public sphere a sovereign sphere in the line of Kuyper's theology?
- Eighth, how should we interpret Arendt's and Habermas' notions of the public sphere from the perspective of Kuyper's principle of the public sphere?
- Ninth, what theological reflections can be elaborated as in connection to that interpretation?
- Tenth, what are the implications of those theological interpretations and the reflections of the public sphere for public theology in general and for the Indonesian context in particular?

1.3 Methodology

A theology of the public sphere, as presented here, is an interpretation of the philosophy of the public sphere as thought by Arendt and Habermas from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty as articulated by Kuyper. Following this introductory chapter and the description of the need for a theology of the public sphere, I will analyse the philosophy of the public sphere. In order to make this analysis, I have to exegete the texts of Arendt and Habermas. On Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere, it is important to note that I expand the research to his more mature conception of the political public sphere, and do not limit myself only to his earlier historical sketch of the bourgeois public sphere. The description of Arendt's and Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere will be immediately followed up by a reconstruction

of a dialogue between these two philosophers, especially on the matters where they seem to differ. This dialogue comprises the greater part of the materials to be interpreted.

In order to have a theoretical framework that can be used to interpret the philosophy of the public sphere, I have to compose an interpretation of Kuyper's principle of sphere of sovereignty from his various works. Since Kuyper was not only a theologian articulating the principle but also an activist putting the principle into practice, I describe his principle from both the historical context and the systematic expositions.

The building blocks of a theology of the public sphere are constructed through the interpretive identification of the public sphere as a sovereign sphere. This interpretive identification means that I try to identify whether or not the public sphere is a sovereign sphere in the line of Kuyper's theology. This identification certainly is a task of interpretation and calls for a theological interpretation of the philosophy of the public sphere. An interpretation of human thought, texts, or artefacts affords understanding and appreciation, criticism and correction. The appreciation will be followed up by a design of complementary relation or a support of radical legitimacy. The criticism will be followed up by correction. The interpretation will be strengthened by theological reflections; these will mostly engage with the Calvinist position which on the one hand is objectively in accordance with Kuyper's own conviction and on the other hand subjectively in accordance with my own belief. The theological reflections in Chapter 8 are not the reflections of Kuyper's theology alone but move beyond Kuyper's theology to develop reflections from various Calvinist theologians including contemporaries, and also draw on theologians from other traditions which are still in keeping with the Calvinist tradition.

A theology of the public sphere as explained above will be followed by an articulation of the implications both for public theology in general and for Indonesia's public sphere and public theology in particular.

1.4 The overview of the dissertation

In addition to the introductory and concluding chapters, this dissertation consists of three main parts. The first part is the description of the need for a theology of the public sphere. This part is explored in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. I dedicate Chapter 2 to elaborating the notion of public theology and its need for a theology of the public sphere. Following the brief definition of public theology, I show that the vital importance of the public sphere makes it necessary for public theology to engage seriously with the philosophy of the public sphere. In this chapter, I also explore the problems of translation and compromise and solutions to those problems. Referring to one of the prominent scholars of public theology, Max Stackhouse, I show that public theology,

which is essentially engaging with civil society, needs Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty to help it to flourish. The following section in this chapter is an exposure of the compatibility of the Habermasian discursive model of the public sphere, rather than the liberal model, with public theology.

While public theology is the theoretical context of this project, its practical context is Indonesia's public sphere and the country's Protestant public theology. These themes will be the main focus of Chapter 3. Both conditions actually require the thoughts of the thinkers under discussion in this study. While *Pancasila* prefers deliberative democracy, Habermas' two-track model will bring to fruition the implementation of the Fourth Principle of the national ideology. While the country's public sphere has been more democratic since 1998, the thoughts of Arendt, Habermas, and Kuyper can be of great value to address the problem of the power of the media conglomerate and the state's pressure over digital freedom. While Protestant theologians, politicians and institutions may express themselves in the public sphere, a theology of the public sphere that weaves together the thoughts of those thinkers could empower public theology to speak in such a quasi-plural public sphere.

The second part of this dissertation is the exploration of the philosophy of the public sphere as thought by Arendt and Habermas. This exploration consists of three chapters. While the first two chapters comprise an exploration of Arendt's and Habermas' thinking, the last chapter of this part is the dialogue between the two philosophers. Chapter 4 focusses on exploring Arendt's philosophy of the public sphere. Arendt's notions of the public sphere as a space for freedom, politics, and power will be elaborated in detail under two main basic understandings of the space of appearance and the common world. In addition to these themes, I will show the public sphere as a space for self-disclosure. I will end with the conclusion including a small part showing the need for Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere.

Chapter 5 then is the systematic exposure of Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere, starting from the very beginning with his historical sketch of the bourgeois public sphere, going through his notion of communicative action and the lifeworld, exploring his more mature conception of the political public sphere and ending with the more positive and optimistic attitude toward the existence of religions in the public sphere.

It is an obvious philosophical fact that there are many differences between Arendt's and Habermas' philosophies of the public sphere. Chapter 6 focusses on solving differences such as the private sphere, civil society, the lifeworld and the common world, political action and communicative action, the concept of power, and certainly the dramatic and discursive setting of

the public sphere. In this chapter, I found several indications that there is a great need to involve Kuyper's thought.

The third part of this dissertation, which consists of three chapters, is the construction of a theology of the public sphere starting from the description of Kuyper's principle. Chapter 7 begins with a systematic and historical exposure of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. The historical background of the principle consists of the struggle with the liberals, the struggle with the French Revolution, the struggle with German state sovereignty, and the heritage of the Calvinists. This systematic elucidation consists of the doctrinal statement that Christ is the sovereign King, the principle of structural pluralism, the principle of confessional pluralism, and the state as sphere of spheres. Following Kuyper's principle, I will show that the public sphere as thought by Arendt and Habermas can be interpreted as a sovereign sphere in the light of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty.

The identification of the public sphere as a sovereign sphere indicates the need to interpret Arendt and Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere from the perspective of Kuyper's principle. This is the main chapter of the project, namely, the construction of a theology of the public sphere. I add theological reflections to the interpretation. Several themes are engaged here, such as the private sphere, civil society, the lifeworld and the common world, and so forth. The themes are mostly taken from Chapter 6. This chapter contains several implications for public theology. This theology of the public sphere does not only have implications for public theology but also for Indonesia's public sphere and the country's Protestant public theology. This is the main purpose of Chapter 9. In this chapter, I draw several implications from the theoretical framework constructed to face several problems of Indonesia's public sphere indicated in Chapter 3, such as conjugal terrorism, the violation of religious freedom, the quasi-plural public sphere, the power of the media conglomerate, and the government's pressure over digital freedom.

Chapter 2

PUBLIC THEOLOGY AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

2.1 Introduction

Public theology presupposes the public sphere. It can be said that without the public sphere, public theology cannot exist. Therefore, the philosophy and theology of the public sphere is absolutely necessary for public theology. In this chapter, I want to show how public theology needs the philosophy of the public sphere, especially as thought by Arendt and Habermas, the principle of sphere sovereignty as articulated by Kuyper, and theology of the public sphere as an interpretation of the philosophy of the public sphere from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty. Before I come to the presentation of those vital necessities, I would firstly give a brief definition of public theology.

2.2 Brief definition of public theology

The term “public theology” was firstly coined by Martin E. Marty in his decisive article “Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theology and the American Experience” (Marty 1974, 332-359). However, in this article, Marty does not give an explicit definition of public theology. The definition would come later from other scholars of public theology. Here, I will make a survey of the definitions of public theology from six scholars. Ronald Thiemann defines public theology as “faith seeking to understand the relation between Christian convictions and the broader social and cultural context in which the Christian community lives” (Thiemann 1991, 21). According to Robert Benne, public theology is “the engagement of a living religious tradition with its public environment – the economic, political, and cultural spheres of our common life” (Benne 1995, 4). Sebastian Kim gives another definition of public theology as “Christians engaging in dialogue with those outside church circles on various issues of common interest” (Kim 2011, 3). While those scholars seem to give a more general definition of public theology, other scholars are going to have a more comprehensive and a more detailed definition. In Duncan Forrester’s view, public theology is “rather a theology, talk about God, which claims to point to publicly accessible truth, to contribute to public discussion by witnessing to a truth which is relevant to what is going on in the world and to the pressing issues facing people and societies today” (Forrester 2000, 127). E. Harold Breitenberg, Jr. defines public theology as “theologically informed descriptive and normative public discourse about public issues, institutions, and interactions, addressed to the church or other religious body as well as the larger public or publics, and argued in ways that can be evaluated and judged by publicly available warrants and criteria” (Breitenberg, Jr. 2010, 5).

For Max Stackhouse, the term “public theology” is used “to stress the point that theology, while related to intensely personal commitments and to a particular community of worship, is, as it most profound level, neither merely private nor a matter of distinctive communal identity. Rather, it is an argument regarding the way things are and ought to be, one decisive for public discourse and necessary to the guidance of individual souls, societies, and, indeed, the community of nations” (Stackhouse 2014, 116).

From these six definitions, we can draw several commonalities which are essential to public theology. Both the definitions provided and the commonalities will be used for further explanations below. First, public theology is rooted in a set of particular convictions. This point is indicated by some terms used by those scholars such as “faith seeking to understand”, “a living religious tradition”, “Christians”, “a theology, talk about God”, and “theology...related to intensely personal commitments and to a particular community of worship”. Second, public theology is differentiated from other branches of theology in that whereas the latter focus on the audience inside the private or particular communities, public theology is intended to speak to those who are outside particular religious communities. This essential point is exhibited through several audiences mentioned in those definitions such as “the broader social and cultural context”, “public environment – the economic, political, and cultural spheres of our common life”, and “the larger public or publics”. Third, public theology is focusing on responding to or engaging public issues. This essential point is shown through the emphasis of those scholars while mentioning the themes of public theology as “various issues of common interest”, “the pressing issues facing people and societies today”, and “public issues, institutions, and interactions”. Fourth, public theology prioritizes a certain kind of public engagement between theologians and those who are in the public sphere. This kind of public engagement presupposes a communication that can be understood by those outside the circle of particular religious communities. Several scholars of public theology mentioned above emphasize this point while using the terms “faith seeking to understand the relation”, “the engagement”, “public discussion”, and “public discourse”. Public theology is expected to provide arguments that can be understood and examined by “publicly available warrants and criteria”. This can be called “publicly accessible truth”.

2.3 The necessity of the public sphere

Public theology, however it is defined, presupposes the public sphere. We even could call the public sphere a constitutive element of public theology. At least, the vital importance of the public sphere for public theology can be viewed from two points. First, the public sphere is a space for

public theology to operate. Second, the public sphere becomes the locus for public issues that are engaged by public theology. I am now exploring these points.

The public sphere is a space for public theology to operate. Public theology is differentiated from other branches of theology in that the former is intended for publication in the public sphere. It does not mean that all theology brought into the public sphere is essentially public theology. It does mean that all public theology is intended for being used in the public sphere, either its contents or its approaches. Katie Day is right when concluding, “Theology becomes public theology as it becomes a relevant participant in the public sphere” (Day 2017, 215).

The public sphere does not only become a space for public theology to operate but also becomes necessary in terms of providing public issues that would be engaged by public theology. Jürgen Moltmann claims, “Its subject alone necessarily makes Christian theology a *theologia publica*, public theology. It gets involved in the public affairs of society” (Moltmann 1999, 1). The locus for the public affairs of society is the public sphere. Thus, getting involved means entering and engaging public affairs in the public sphere. This understanding does not mean that public theology must remove its particular theological heritage. Indeed, public theology has two aspects, namely, the transcendent and the immanent aspects. In one sense, public theology brings a prophetic voice into the public sphere. These prophetic yet transcendent voices speak out from the filthy depths of a darkened society. In another sense, public theology gives a priestly response to weeping from below, a threnody coming from people in excruciating circumstances. I call the former the transcendent aspect of public theology while the latter its immanent aspect. Transcendent aspect of public theology is its distinctive and prophetic voices derived from its particular tradition. Immanent aspect of public theology contains of issues it takes from the public sphere and the approaches shaped by the public. We might conclude that the public sphere is vital for public theology in becoming a space for sharing the transcendent aspect of it.

The immanence of public theology in society involves the conveyance of issues from society to it. Public theology needs empathy in order to listen, pay attention, and understand the pressing issues in society. At the proper time, public theology takes part in this struggle. Public theology comes as a partner in cordial communication to share its distinctive contributions. The supply of issues from society to public theology in the public sphere does not necessarily crown society as the agenda setter. Forrester calls on public theology to decide from among the many issues “which seem most pressing at a particular time” (Forrester 2014, 6). Apart from a more ‘natural’ criterion, on the same page of his article, Forrester puts forward two more ‘supernatural’ criteria. Public theology should view “*sub specie aeternitatis*” and should “discern the signs of the times”. By these criteria, the transcendent aspect of public theology plays a pivotal role. The immanent aspect

is highlighted by Thiemann while applying Clifford Geertz's "thick description" method to public theology. A public theologian is called to "offer a careful and detailed" theological conviction that intersects with the issues and practices of contemporary public audiences (Thiemann 1991, 21-22). Thus, the public sphere is necessary for public theology in that it becomes the locus for sharing the transcendent aspect of public theology and for shaping the immanent aspect of it through the public issues received from the public sphere.

The vital importance of the public sphere for public theology led Kim, in doing public theology, to start his project by examining the nature of the public sphere (Kim 2011, 10-14). He refers to the work of Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. From this work, Kim derives certain aspects of the ontology of the public sphere, such as the definition of it and the recognition of rights. Kim writes, "Habermas regarded the 'public sphere' as an open forum that emerged in modern western societies in the situation where the state and the market economy predominated in daily life. It evolved in the 'field between state and society', protecting individuals and their families from both tyranny by the state and from the predations of the market" (Kim 2011, 10-11). Kim's attempt to involve Habermas' thinking should be appreciated due to his awareness of the importance of the public sphere for public theology and the significance of Habermas for the philosophy of the public sphere. If we intend to make a serious examination of the nature of the public sphere, we should go to a more mature definition which is the normative articulation of the public sphere as written by Habermas in the later work *Between Facts and Norms*. In this work, more importantly, Habermas proposes the notion of a two-track deliberative democracy where the informal public sphere might play a pivotal role in supplying public opinion to affect the law- and policy-making processes in the political system. Moreover, Kim is aware of the status of Habermas' work when he says, "Habermas's initial theoretical framework was based on emerging male bourgeois societies, and was therefore heavily criticized by feminist theorists, and many of his ideas need to be revised to meet the demand of the contemporary complex situation of plural societies" (Kim 2011, 11). In addition to these notes, Kim mentioned about "the tyranny of the state" and "the predations of the market" over individuals and their families. These notes invite us to go farther to dig inspiration from Habermas' theory of communicative action in which he delivers the concept of the colonization of the lifeworld by the power of money and politics. It is important that this notion be realized by public theology while operating in the public sphere.

A serious attempt to engage with Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere is not based merely on the fact of the necessity of the public sphere for public theology but more importantly

on the problem of translation which often haunts public theology. Habermas provides a wise way out for this problem.

2.4 The problem of translation

The definitions of public theology provided above indicate the intention to translate the language of theology to make it accessible to the public. This indication is made explicit by a finding that “most thinkers believed, religious convictions should be translated into a more properly ‘public’ vernacular before entering the public sphere” (Mathewes 2007, 3). The intention to translate theological language into language accessible to the public is based on the fact that public theologians are speaking beyond the walls of church and seminary. Thus, in engaging public issues, public theology must be done in a manner that is “genuinely public” (Cady 2014, 295). It means that public theology should be “adopting forms of reasoning that [are] compelling, at least potentially, to those who stood beyond the borders of the religious community”. “If theology [is] to reach a broader audience”, Cady writes, “it [is] necessary to move past the technical jargon that rendered it all but incomprehensible to those outside one professional guild”. The first step toward this translation is that public theology should learn “the language of the secular world in such away that Christian discourse relates to it” (de Gruchy 2007, 27). In short, a “good public theological praxis requires the development of a language that is accessible to people outside the Christian tradition” (de Gruchy 2007, 39).

The intention to translate the particular language and reason of public theology contains many problems. First, the translation of public theology into publicly accessible secular language contradicts the very nature of public theology itself as the opposition to the liberal thesis of the privatization of religion. Mary Doak even equates the scholars of public theology who require such translation with the “liberal rationalists, who oppose the inclusion of specifically religious beliefs in public policy debates on the grounds that religious beliefs lack the basis in shared rationality necessary for civil debate” (Doak 2004, 14). Marty speaks of public theology as part of public religion “to identify the imbrications of religion” which is an ideological rejection of the commitment to the privatization of religion (Cady 2014, 293-294). Public theology in particular, and public religion in general, can be identified as the “deprivatization of religion”. Jose Casanova in his important work on public religion defines the deprivatization of religion in two main aspects: the rejection of the privatization of religion and the inclusion of it into the public sphere. Casanova firstly means “the fact that religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which theories of modernity as well as theories of secularization had reserved for them” (Casanova 1994, 5). He then completes his definition of the

deprivatization of religion as “the process whereby religion abandons its assigned place in the private sphere and enters the undifferentiated public sphere of civil society to take part in the ongoing process of contestation, discursive legitimation, and redrawing of boundaries” (Casanova 1994, 65-66). Public theology as part of the deprivatization of religion should reject the coercion to translate its own language and reason. When public theology subdues itself to translate its own language and reason, thus, it has accepted to be relegated to a sequestered place assigned by liberal rationalists.

Second, the intention to translate public theology into publicly accessible secular language might possibly cause the loss of certain distinctive contents of public theology (see Doak 2004, 14). As commonly known, to give a simple example, the target language does not necessarily have the various distinctive idioms of the source language. Furthermore, certain distinctive doctrines or perspectives of a religion cannot be easily translated into secular language. The possibility of loss in the translation process does not only occur in perspective but also in the purity of the Christian faith (Cady 2014, 296). Thus, the integrity of public theology is put at risk since the prophetic voices of public theology are compromised in order to serve the public agenda. Moreover, it is not uncommon that the purity of public theology is exchanged for facilities from the political elites in order to serve political agendas. Public theologians who are voracious to serve political agendas in their private interests are indeed “doing more salesmanship than theology” (Mathewes 2007, 5).

Instead of translating, public theology should dare to raise its head and speak its own language and reason in the public sphere. Stackhouse is convinced that theology is in itself public for two reasons (Stackhouse 1987, xi; quoted in Benne 1995, 4). First, Christian belief is not “esoteric, privileged, irrational, or inaccessible”. Rather, it is both “comprehensible and indispensable for all, something that we can reasonably discuss with Hindus and Buddhists, Jews and Muslims, Humanists and Marxists”. Second, Christian theology might possibly give “guidance to the structures and policies of public life. It is ethical in nature”. The avoidance of translation is not only based on the public nature of Christian theology in particular but in general, “the fact that theology is not ‘neutral’ does not disqualify it from participation in public discussion; on the contrary, because of its distinctive perspective, theological findings can make an effective contribution to public issues” (Kim 2011, 10). Therefore, “Christian truth claims should rather be described within their own frame of reference if one is to serve their persuasive power and if they are to have any value outside the community of faith” (Conradie 1993, 40; quoted in Swart & de Beer 2014, 9).

As mentioned above, the intention to translate the religious language and reason of public theology firstly comes from the pressure of the thesis of the privatization of religion which endorses a kind of public sphere which is committed to neutrality. There is however also a possibility of empowering public theology which comes from a kind of public sphere which warmly welcomes religious language and reason. This kind of public sphere is the postsecular public sphere as described by Habermas. Though certain adjustments should be made on the religious side, the idea of postsecular opens more space for religious language and reason in the public sphere compared to the liberal thesis of the privatization of religion. The idea of postsecular as firstly a description of sociological facts is marked by “the rediscovery of the sacred *in* the immanent, the spiritual *within* the secular” (Cox 2009, 2; his emphasis). In Kim and Day’s expression, “Religion has re-emerged in the public square in higher relief and in new forms” (Kim & Day 2017, 18). Describing this turn, Cady states, “In the academy religion was largely ignored: that is not our world. In recent decades the public face of religion has exploded, nationally and internationally. It is not just that there is a greater recognition of religion’s public role, though that is certainly part of it; we have also witnessed a notable resurgence of religion in public life, a resurgence that has caught most scholars and analysts by surprise” (Cady 2014, 297). The postsecular public sphere is a potential option for empowering the presence of public theology in particular and religions in general into the public sphere to bring their particular voices. We might go to Habermas’ philosophy to dig inspiration concerning the postsecular public sphere since he invites us “for a way we might re-imagine a public sphere in which religion has re-emerged as a potent repository for political ideas and cultural imagination” (Baker & Graham 2017, 407). By these statements, we find that Habermas could propose a wise way out for the problem of translation faced by public theology. This problem is very close to another problem, namely, the pressure and temptation to compromise. Public theology is often haunted by these pressures and temptations.

2.5 The pressure and temptation to compromise

Public theology as defined above in engagement with various publics runs the risk to compromise its prophetic voices for several reasons, first of all, because of pressures from governmental and market power. Pressures occur because public theology that comes out from the church or seminary sometimes critically addresses the social injustice of the state and the market, through the prophetic voices that continue to be voiced in the public sphere. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was forced out of radio broadcasting, after Hitler came to power, for criticizing Hitler on the radio. Second, the opposite of the first, governmental and market power may not exert

pressure but instead provide tempting offers so that the voice of public theology is no longer as sharp in the public sphere. Political elites can give public offices to religious leaders or theologians especially if they come from the religion of the majority. The political power can also provide funding facilities and permits for the construction of houses of worship. The market gives money and other luxurious facilities to theologians so that they no longer speak out in the public sphere. Third, the compromise of public theology can also occur due to the public pressure within the public sphere. For example, it is not easy for public theology in Macao or Las Vegas to criticize gambling and its related crimes because most of the population get their income from gambling and its derivative businesses.

Compromise will end up adjusting public theology to the public contents, approaches, and agendas. In some senses, adjustment can only be made in the immanent aspect of public theology, namely, the issues and the approaches. No adjustment can be made to the transcendent aspect of public theology, namely, its prophetic voices. The adjustment of its prophetic voices contains many risks. First, it will destroy the nature of public theology. Public theology presupposes the distinctive and constructive voices brought from the Christian community into the public sphere. By nature, public theology is a ministry to bring sound biblical doctrines to bless the common people in the public sphere. Adjusting theological voices decreases its distinctiveness. Second, the adjustment of the transcendent aspect of public theology destroys the nature of pluralism. Pluralism presupposes diversity instead of a uniformity of voices in the public sphere. Public theology's compromise is a part of making society uniform instead of plural. Third, the twist of the core of values of public theology destroys the communal creativity and cultural heritage. It impoverishes society.

By these notes, we have to remember the warning of scholars of public theology. Kim says, "for the authentic and sustainable engagement of the Church in the public sphere, the Church needs to guard against the temptation to take pragmatic approaches and to measure the result of ministries in numbers or external appearances, and to develop a public theology suited to the issues and relevant to the context" (Kim 2011, 10). While Kim reminds us of the temptation, Thiemann reminds us of the pressure. He says, "Public theology is a genuine risk-taking venture. By opening the Christian tradition to conversation with those in the public sphere, public theology opens Christian belief and practice to the critique that inevitably emerges from those conversation partners" (Thiemann 1991, 23). Thiemann follows David Tracy for the model of the relation between public theology and the publics, namely, "the mutual criticism". It does not mean that public theology will easily adjust its theological core to the publics. Thiemann reminds us that "Such radical reshaping of the tradition should take place only after prolonged and rigorous

inquiry, but openness to that possibility is an essential element of a faith that honestly seeks critical understanding”.

The invitation of public theology to maintain its authentic identity and its prophetic voices is vital due to the differentiation between public theology on the one hand and civil religion on the other hand, as originally intended by Marty when he first coined the term. In Marty’s context, the notion of civil religion was popularized by the American sociologist, Robert Bellah (Bellah 2006, 225-245). Civil religion is here understood as a “public religious dimension”, that is “expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals”. Based on the analysis of the American context, Bellah perceives that there are “certain common elements of religious orientation” that are shared by the great majority of the citizens. Bellah mentions several examples: the citation of the divine names and attributes in U.S presidential inaugurations and in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Civil religion also has some articles of belief such as the sovereignty of God though those articles are not collected in a formal creed. Although civil religion absorbs many beliefs and values from the majority religion of a country, it is not necessarily identified with that religion. Civil religion is not a kind of a sectarian denominational group inside the religion of the majority and also is not intended to be substituted for it. In the American context, for example, its civil religion is not Christianity since the founding fathers or the presidents never mentioned Jesus Christ’s name in their official addresses or documents. The purposes of civil religion are to provide the right feeling for political responsibility to the state and loyal sociability to the nation; and to provide symbols as the expression of “the primal freedom of the ‘people’” and the cultivation of a ‘general will’” (Stackhouse 2014, 191).

There are some criticisms toward civil religion which Marty uses in articulating public theology. I explain those criticisms by referring to the scholars who take those criticisms from Marty’s article. The Durkheimian roots of civil religion which are “envisioning a homogenous religion uniting a nation”, according to Cady, are “failed to do justice to the pluralism” and are “too easily appropriated for the sacralization of the state and society, rather than for its critique and transformation” (Cady 2014, 294). Pluralism presupposes theological convictions and religious traditions that must be differentiated from the solitary model of civil religion. Uniformity as assumed by civil religion demolishes the unique identities of religions as well as the wealth of a religions’ rituals, ceremonies, heritages, traditions, confessions, and so forth. The sacralization of the state and society could lead to the rise of totalitarian or despotic regimes and could endangering democracy. Religious legitimation that is used by the state may exacerbate its crime against humanity. Even a mere political and legal legitimation of the state has very powerful authority that can be misused if left unchecked. We remember Lord Acton’s famous sentence,

“Power tends to corrupt, absolute power corrupts absolutely”. The calling of public theology is not to “celebrate the social system and its culture” as whatever they are, but rather, to change them (Stackhouse 2014, 195).

In addition to these criticisms, in my opinion, by using religious values to sacralize the state, civil religion is at the same time de-sacralizing religions. Religious values are separated from the main focus of religions, which is the spiritual-supernatural-transcendental activities. Religious values come under the agenda of political-natural-earthly activities. Not only that, civil religion is also separating religions from their inherent identities. Religious values are borrowed while religions’ identities are killed off. Continuing this line of argument, civil religion in some senses can be categorized as a softer secularization because religion is not involved institutionally in the public sphere. The classic example of this is the politicization of Christianity by the Roman Empire. German public theologian, Wolfgang Huber writes, “In the term of dialectics, this Christianization of the Roman empire effected simultaneously the secularization of Christianity and the definitive emancipation of Christianity from its Jewish roots. The radical nature of the Christian mission was thereby weakened” (Huber 1996, 49). When Christianity was adopted as the Roman Empire’s state religion it at once became secular. Christianity, directly or indirectly, was adjusted to come in line with the political agenda and interest of the Roman Empire. In this context, Christianity as a whole religion, when taken by the Roman Empire, was weakened. Moreover, if the universal values of Christianity were taken to form a civil religion, it would be even more weakened.

In order to differentiate itself from civil religion which contains many problems, public theology should maintain its authentic identity and its prophetic voices without compromising with the publics, either political power, economic force or social pressure. Public theology needs a theoretical framework that might empower its authentic presence in the public sphere which at the same time might relocate the state and the market in their own spheres to stop them becoming predators and invading other spheres. The principle of sphere sovereignty as thought by Kuyper is vital to fill this need. Public theology as it comes out from churches and seminaries is a part of civil society (Von Sinner 2017, 245). Thus, public theology needs a theoretical framework that endorses the structural pluralism of society in which civil society is empowered according to the nature and purpose of each institution. Moreover, public theology as part of a confessional group needs a theoretical framework that endorses confessional pluralism in a society in which each religious group is empowered to have various public manifestations. Here, Kuyper’s principle of sphere sovereignty with the principle of structural pluralism and the principle of confessional pluralism could be utilized to empower public theology in particular and civil society in general.

2.6 Public theology and civil society

Public theology is not intended for a specific and narrow audience. The aforementioned definitions of public theology indicate the audience of public theology is related to “the broader social and cultural context” (Thiemann 1991, 21) which at least consists of “the economic, political, and cultural spheres of our common life” (Benne 1995, 4). The term “public” in public theology thus must be expanded to more than only politics or the state but also include “exploring normative questions about societal life” recognizing “the significant role that ‘mediating structures’ can play” (Mouw 2009, 433). This is precisely the difference between public theology and political theology. Public theology believes that “the public is prior to the republic, that the fabric of civil society, of which religious faith and organization is inevitably the core, is more determinative of and normatively more important for politics than politics for society and religion” (Stackhouse 2014, 197). Political theology as indicated in this differentiation believes the opposite. Political theology, according to Stackhouse, is rooted in Aristotle’s philosophy which saw “the political order as the comprehending and ordering institution of all of society” (Stackhouse 2014, 192). Long story short, the new wave of political theology after Auschwitz was advanced on the European Continent, mainly working through Vatican Council II and World Council of Churches (Stackhouse 2014, 193). The prominent thinkers of this new wave are the Catholic theologian Johannes Baptist Metz and the Protestant theologian Jürgen Moltmann. According to Stackhouse, the heirs of this new wave remained committed to “a rather centralized state, a state not focused on colonial expansion or military conquest or nationalist solidarity, but on an integrated and politically managed economic policy”.

A similar differentiation between public theology and political theology is drawn by Breitenberg, Jr. While political theology should “confine its interests and focus primarily or exclusively to politics and political institutions, the rights of individuals within specific nations, or the relationship between Christians and the political realm”, public theology “especially in its constructive, descriptive, and normative forms, is concerned with a variety of other publics, including economic, artistic, environmental, academic, medical, and technological publics” (Breitenberg, Jr. 2010, 15). It is obvious that the publics of public theology do not consist only of the state. We could recall David Tracy’s classic classification of three publics, namely, the church, the academy, and society (Tracy 1981). Stackhouse expands and criticizes Tracy’s three forms of publics. For Stackhouse, the Western classification of publics which consist of “the authentic religious public” (main quest: holiness), “the political public” (justice), “the academic public” (truth), and “the economic public” (creativity) is “still much too narrow and shallow” (Stackhouse

2014, 117, 118, 131). Considering the criticisms coming from various sources, there must be “the redefinition of a broader public” in which “the great philosophies and world religions, which have demonstrated that they can shape great and complex civilizations over centuries must have a place” (Stackhouse 2014, 131-132). The development of public theology that follows this redefinition should “include a much enlarged conversation”. Despite this criticism, Stackhouse is imagining a crowded public from which can emerge the conversational partners for public theology.

This differentiation does not imply necessarily that public theology is “anti-political”. The arrangement of the building of the political, educational, judicial, medical, and other institutions is necessary (Stackhouse 2014, 197). Nevertheless, what public theology is to do, according to Stackhouse, is “to guide choices about the just and unjust use of coercive force” and to direct the political power “to be limited servant of the other institutions of society, not their master”. This means that while political theology “inclines to have a political view of society”, public theology “tends to adopt a social theory of politics” (Stackhouse 2014, 199-200). Public theology can at the same time be equated with and differentiated from socialism. It can be equated to socialism in term of viewing that “the fabric of society as decisive for every area of the common life”. On the contrary, Stackhouse differentiates public theology from socialism for two reasons. First, public theology does not accept “the polarization of the classes as the fundamental characteristic of society – either in theory or in fact”. Second, it also does not expect “the state to control economic life by centralized planning and capitalization”.

In view of these lines of argument, a key question appears. Does Christian public theology, especially for Protestants, have a theoretical framework that can organize a complex society in which civil society is strengthened? Stackhouse names Johannes Althusius’ “consociation of consociations”, which is “a federation of covenanted communities” and Kuyper’s “basic theory of the relative sovereignty of the spheres of life” (Stackhouse 2014, 201). The principle of sphere sovereignty as articulated by Kuyper, earlier posited by Althusius and later developed by Herman Dooyeweerd, emphasizes “the sovereignty of independent spheres such as the family, schools, and workplaces are expressions of the sovereign will of God. Each sphere has a relative autonomy and specific character that needs to be respected. Government has a role in ordering and protecting the general good but it does not have the authority to interfere with or determine the character or *telos* of each sphere. In turn, the state is bounded by the sovereignty of other spheres.” (Bretherton 2017, 103-104).

The principle of sphere sovereignty especially as articulated by Kuyper is needed by public theology in order to strengthen civil society by which public theology is also empowered. Thus, participants in the public sphere coming from several social spheres could contribute according

to their own *telos*. Not only that, what is more important is that the principle of sphere sovereignty provides a framework for strengthening the public sphere that is most needed by public theology. The principle of sphere sovereignty empowers the public sphere not only by strengthening civil society as its participants but ontologically empowering it by interpreting it as a sovereign sphere in which megastructures such as the state and the market must not intervene. This will be discussed in the theology of the public sphere. In short, Kuyper's principle is needed to empower the public sphere that is necessary for public theology. The kind of public sphere that fits public theology is not a liberal one but rather a discursive model.

2.7 Public theology and the discursive model of the public sphere

As indicated before, public theology requires a kind of public sphere which is open to the plurality of voices, and this is crowded. Thus, the liberal public sphere with its requirement of neutrality seems unfit for public theology. There must be another model of the public sphere where public theology might get involved and make a contribution. In this section, I will set out the studies of Myra Marx Ferree, William A. Gamson, Jürgen Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht (Ferree et al. 2002). They differentiate four models of the public sphere, namely, the representative liberal model, the participatory liberal model, the discursive model and the constructionist model. I will give preference to the discursive model as serving the aim of this project. More importantly, I choose not to explore the last model since Ferree et al. themselves recognized that the constructionist model is “more pessimistic” and is “frustratingly abstract with its alternative solutions undeveloped” (Ferree et al. 2002, 306, 315).

The representative liberal theory is better than the despotic or totalitarian model of the public sphere since the former requires a free and open public sphere, while the latter closes it tightly to various voices especially those who criticize the incumbent government. Nevertheless, the representative liberal model is greatly emphasized from the elitist and conservative stance and because “much fear the participation of the ‘rabble’” (Ferree et al. 2002, 290-295). Thus, this model undervalues citizens' ability and longing for political participation in the public sphere. For the theorists of this model, citizens are “poorly informed”, having “no serious interest in public affairs”, and “are generally ill equipped”. This is a deeply realist theory of public participation. Under this democratic model, the representative liberal theory asks citizens, as their main participation, to choose among the competing political parties those capable of exercising public authority as public office holders, in the periodical general elections. Outside general elections, the representative liberals force the political parties and elites to involve in public discourses on

public problems which are technically so complicated that citizens do not have sufficient ability or strong enough desire to discuss them.

Though generally closed to uninformed, unable, and citizens unwilling to take part in public discourse, the representative liberal theory opens the public sphere to exceptional citizens, namely, the experts, both those who are included in the political process in general or those who are mastering the substantive matter under discussion. It is unfortunate to know that though the representative liberal is open for the exceptional experts, they close the public sphere to those who are in conflict with the stakeholders and those who have political agendas. Though the representative liberals open the public sphere as “the free marketplace of ideas”, there are some restrictions. Based on the proportionality principle, ideas held by small minority are legally excluded. Ideas that are too extreme or anti-democratic, and other ideas that are categorized as hostile to the constitution, are formally excluded.

Based on these explanations, public theology is not warmly welcome in the representative liberal model of the public sphere, apart from on matters of religious language which I will discuss later. Public theologians and Christians who want to contribute in the public sphere can be rejected since they can be categorized as poorly informed on the matters under the discussion and as not mastering technically complicated public issues. Although public theologians are acknowledged for their expertise by Christians inside churches and seminaries, they can be considered lay people in public affairs that are mostly technical and not religious. Not only that, particular theological arguments are sometimes blamed as anti-democratic ideas. This is truly unfortunate because public theology can at least play an important role in providing “a moral and spiritual inner architecture to the emerging, complex civilization” (Stackhouse 2014, 118).

Regardless of the problems arising from representative liberal theory for public theology, in my opinion, this theory does contain a number of problems, or at least, two shortcomings. In practical implementation, it is quite difficult to fulfil the very high demand on the perfectness of political representatives. Moreover, the over-generalization of incapable and uninterested citizens seems unfit for the factual reality of citizenry. Therefore, we have to look upon the second model, namely, the participatory liberal model of the public sphere (Ferree et al. 2002, 295-299). The participatory liberals repair the shortcomings of the representative liberal theory on the public participation. Participatory liberals open the public sphere for public participation in order that citizens might be involved in the processes of making public decisions which impact their life. While the representative liberal model is one of a strong elitism, the participatory liberal theory is “strong democracy” – to borrow Benjamin Barber’s term. Strong democracy in Barber’s understanding is literally a “self-government by citizens”. Though it is not necessarily implied at

all levels and in all conditions, the participatory liberals try to ask for public participation as widely as possible and can be seen “frequently enough and in particular when basic policies are being decided and when significant power is deployed”.

Though the participatory liberal theory is more developed than the representative liberal model, there is still a strong flavor of realism and centralism. Participatory liberals believe that in complex modern democracy and society we cannot expect citizens to spend much time discussing public issues and deciding public policies. Thus, there must be “delegation or mediators who aggregate and articulate one’s discursive interests in the public sphere”. These mediators are provided by political parties or representatives. While the representative liberal model is an elite driven, the participatory liberal model is “staff driven rather than member driven”. The aggregated and articulated aspirations will be firstly collected by the political elites before they are brought into the direct processes of policy-making.

Public theology gets more space to have a voice in the participatory liberal model of the public sphere though there are still certain restrictions connected to its realism and centralism. Public theology will be warmly welcomed in the discursive model of the public sphere in which Habermas is “the most commanding figure” (Ferree et al. 2002, 300). I am not intending to explore this theory in detail here since I will do that in later chapters. What I am showing here are the distinctive features of the discursive model compared to the representative liberal and the participatory liberal models. These distinctive features will foster the work of public theology in the public sphere.

Both the participatory liberal and the discursive model share the value of “popular inclusion” but the participatory liberals view it as “a means to a more deliberative public sphere rather than as an end in itself” (Ferree et al. 2002, 306). The discursive model makes popular inclusion an end in itself since every citizen is invited to be involved in the “justification of the terms and conditions of association proceeds through public argument and reasoning among equal citizens” – to quote Joshua Cohen’s explanation (Ferree et al. 2002, 300). It means that political processes must include those who are at the “periphery”, not only those who are at the centre of the political system, as explained by Habermas and quoted by Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, and Rucht. Habermas includes the citizens at the periphery so does not limit to those who are in civil society but also those who are gathered in grassroots organizations. Arriving at this point, we can see how Habermas’ discursive model provides an extraordinary opportunity for public theology to involve and to contribute to the public sphere.

The representative liberal model does not believe in the possibility of consensus as a realistic goal in the democratic political processes in the public sphere (Ferree et al. 2002, 306). The

representative liberals are going to follow Bruce Ackerman's principle of "conversational restraint", "avoiding fundamental normative disputes and looking for a working compromise rather than consensus". Instead, the discursive theorists believe in the possibility of consensus and so open public discourses for fundamental normative arguments. Public theology precisely provides such kinds of fundamental normative arguments.

Besides Ackerman, the commitment to neutrality in the public sphere is also found in the theoretical scheme drawn by John Rawls, another main contemporary liberal thinker. Rawls proposes the idea of public reason that can be utilized in the public sphere. It is "an idea of the politically reasonable addressed to citizens as citizens" (Rawls 2005, 441-445). Realizing the fact of pluralism with its conflicting "comprehensive doctrines" in the public sphere, Rawls suggests there be a legal duty for legal officials, government officials, and political candidates to use public reason in the public sphere. Rawls then broadens his implementation to citizens as a moral duty to use pluralism sensitive to public reason. He avoids imposing it as a legal duty since it must be incompatible with the freedom of speech. Therefore, in the liberal public sphere, it is unsuitable to use language and reason of a comprehensive doctrine such as religious arguments.

Rawls bases his idea of public reason on the fact of pluralism. Therefore, he proposes the naked public sphere where neutrality is maintained to the utmost. Even so, Richard Mouw and Sander Griffioen detect and list several problems, especially based on Richard John Neuhaus' analysis (Mouw & Griffioen 1993, 50-51). First, the exclusion of religions from the public sphere is an exhibition of "a hostility to normative culture". Second, Rawls' project creates persons who are nothing more than "anonymous, deracinated, dehistoricized rational beings defining justice behind 'a veil of ignorance'". Third, it will result in a kind of "sterile monism" which actually violates the principle of pluralism itself. Mouw and Griffioen write, "Protecting the peaceful coexistence of a plurality life-styles and values against the divisive effects of debates about actually leads to the very opposite of a genuine pluralism: a mere juxtaposition of ideas bereft of their truth-claims, a deliberate indifference to the ideals and values that people actually profess".

By these lines of argument, I want to show that the public sphere needed and presupposed very much by public theology must not be a liberal one. Public theology needs the Habermasian discursive model of the postsecular public sphere which even endorses the idea that secular citizens should learn from their religious fellow citizens. While public theology in the theoretical context needs other theoretical frameworks, I will show in the next chapter that the Indonesian context of the public sphere and public theology shows the same need.

Chapter 3

PUBLIC THEOLOGY AND INDONESIA'S PUBLIC SPHERE

3.1 Introduction

The need for a theology of the public sphere is not only necessary for public theology in general, as I have described in the previous chapter, but also necessary for both the public sphere of the Indonesian society and Protestant public theology in Indonesia. In this chapter, I want to expose this need. Firstly, I will describe Indonesia's public sphere in two main elements, both its potentiality and also its challenge. Secondly, I will describe Protestant public theology in Indonesia with all its potentiality and challenge. All these potentialities and challenges ask for several theoretical schemes which are strung together in a theology of the public sphere that must be articulated to interpret, justify, and empower the public sphere in Indonesia and Protestant public theology. This chapter then starts by exploring the notion of deliberative democracy as contained in the fourth principle of *Pancasila*, Indonesia's national ideology.

3.2 *Pancasila* and Deliberative Democracy

Deliberative democracy has become the main preference of *Pancasila*,¹ Indonesia's national ideology. The fourth principle of *Pancasila* is "Kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh hikmat kebijaksanaan dalam permusyawaratan/ perwakilan" (Popular sovereignty led by wisdom in deliberation/ representation). There are four elements in this principle: *kerakyatan* (popular sovereignty), *hikmat kebijaksanaan* (wisdom), *permusyawaratan* (deliberation), and *perwakilan* (representation). I will briefly explore these elements. Soekarno (1901-1970), who proclaimed the country's independence and was its first President, says that the fourth principle refers to democracy (Soekarno 2006, 234). Democracy as he meant it is the principle of popular sovereignty. Popular sovereignty, according to Mohammad Hatta (1902-1980), another of those who proclaimed the country's independence and the first Vice President, is not a Rousseauist individualist but a collectivist idea (Latif 2011, 385). This means that the principle of popular sovereignty is applied in the spirit of *tolong-menolong* (mutual-help; Latif 2011, 416) or *gotong-*

¹ *Pancasila* is a combined Sanskrit term from *panca* meaning five and *sila* meaning principle. Thus, *Pancasila* means "five principles". The first principle is "Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa" (The One and Only Lordship). The second principle is "Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab" (Just and Civilized Humanity). The third principle is "Persatuan Indonesia" (Unity of Indonesia). The fourth principle is "Kerakyatan yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan/ Perwakilan" (Popular sovereignty led by Wisdom in Deliberation Discussion/ Representation). The fifth principle is "Keadilan Sosial bagi Seluruh Rakyat Indonesia" (Social Justice for all Indonesians). *Pancasila* was articulated mainly by Soekarno and other founding fathers and was declared on 1 June 1945.

royong (mutual-cooperation; Latif 2011, 389). These terms express the spirit of kinship as asserted by Soekarno (Soekarno 2006, 236-237).

The next element of democracy according to *Pancasila* is deliberation (*permusyawaratan*). The term *permusyawaratan* is derived from the root *musyawarah* which mainly means deliberative discussion. *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (The Large Indonesian Dictionary) defines *musyawarah* as “pembahasan bersama dengan maksud mencapai keputusan atas penyelesaian masalah; perundingan; perembukan” (discussion together to reach decision for solving problems; negotiation; consultation). Thus, *musyawarah* has a strong nuance of mutual discussion rather than personal consideration. M. Yamin (1903-1962), a former minister of the country who played a key role in writing the national constitution, in his speech to the members of *Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Investigating Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesia’s Independence of which Yamin was a member), states that deliberation is a distinctive power to provide opportunities for stakeholders and to foster responsibility and the participation of citizens (Aning 2017, 20). Yamin says, “by deliberation, therefore the country’s burden is not shouldered by a person...but is bear by all groups...thus...together form the state as a torso” (Aning 2017, 21). In Yamin’s view, deliberation is directed at avoiding the possibility of failure by a single person (as in the problem of monarchy) and bringing the country to the wisest policies. Though Yamin based his notion of deliberation on Muslim doctrine, he sees that Indonesia’s democracy has a distinctive character regarding “the original character of Indonesia’s civilization” that there are “village’s order, society’s order, land’s right order that rest on the common decision named resolution together for the sake of society” (Aning 2017, 22-23).² This resolution together is a kind of *mufakat* (agreement) that is a consensus taken together (collectively) instead of individual decisions (Yamin in Aning 2017, 23). Democracy occurs in the long history of Indonesia in small political communities such as *desa* in Java, *nagari* in West Sumatra and *banjar* in Bali were the historical foundation of deliberative democracy in Indonesia. The tradition of *musyawarah* to reach *mufakat* (deliberation for reaching agreement) has been developed over centuries and is continued in the form of meeting under the direction of the village head, usually held in the village meeting hall, and every adult citizen has the same right to attend and to have a say (Latif 2011, 388).

Musyawarah is held to reach *mufakat*. In order to reach *mufakat*, there must be *hikmat kebijaksanaan* (wisdom). For Yamin, wisdom in the fourth principle of *Pancasila* is categorized as rationalism (Aning 2017, 27). Yamin says, “Indonesia must be constructed based on logic as a

² “susunan desa, susunan masyarakat, dan susunan hak tanah yang bersandar kepada keputusan bersama yang boleh dinamai kebulatan-bersama atas masyarakat”.

result of a healthy rationalism” (Aning 2017, 27). This healthy rationalism can release the country from anarchy, liberalism, and colonialism (Yamin in Aning 2017, 28). The eminence of rationality in Indonesia’s *musyawarah* and *mufakat* began 14-16 centuries ago in the smallest political communities in some areas of Indonesia. For instance, in *Minangkabau*’s tradition, in West Sumatra, there was a famous proverb, “The people are ruled by the headmen, the headmen are ruled by agreement, agreement is ruled by order and appropriateness”³ (Latif 2011, 387). Order and appropriateness are actually kinds of rationality which can be used to reach a final decision. Moreover, the king’s decisions can be rejected if they contradict common sense and the principles of justice (Latif 2011, 387).

In Soekarno’s view, democracy is not only a tool for articulating political decision. Rather, democracy is a *geloof*,⁴ a belief serving to “achieve a form of society as we aspire to” (quoted in Latif 2011, 475-476; cf. Soekarno 2006, 236, 270). In Latif’s own words, democracy in Indonesian thinking is not only “a technical tool, but also a reflection of the natural psyche, personality, and national ideals” (Latif 2011, 475).⁵ Thus, Soekarno asks the Indonesian people, in their daily life, to stand upon “the principle of kinship, deliberation, democracy, which we call the people’s sovereignty” (quoted in Latif 2011, 476). This means that the fourth principle of *Pancasila* must be implemented firstly in village democracy (*demokrasi desa*). Hatta says, “Consensus as practiced in the villages is to make decisions by agreement, with the agreement of all after the problem is discussed at length” (quoted in Latif 2011, 478). At most, Indonesian democracy acknowledges the presence of the highest consultative body, *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat* (MPR/ The People’s Consultative Assembly) (Latif 2011, 481). In Latif’s explanation, MPR is the embodiment of the expression of the highest people’s sovereignty or locus of sovereignty. Since MPR is an actualization of the fourth principle of *Pancasila*, i.e., democracy, with the principle of kinship, MPR should not be monopolized by one political element only but must be accessed by all people’s stakeholders. Thus, MPR consists of the representatives of various political parties and regions. According to the 1945 Constitution, MPR consists of DPR and DPD. DPR or *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (The National House of People’s Representative) is the lower house. DPD or *Dewan Perwakilan Daerah* (The House of Regional Representative) is the upper house. MPR, DPR and DPD are the embodiments of the principle of representation. The principle of representation connects to the fact that Indonesia is a large country with a big population and consists of thousands of islands in a maritime archipelago. According

³ “Rakyat ber-raja pada Penghulu, Penghulu ber-raja pada Mufakat, dan Mufakat ber-raja alur dan patut”.

⁴ Soekarno uses a Dutch term originally.

⁵ “Bukan hanya ‘sekadar alat teknis, melainkan juga cerminan alam kejiwaan, kepribadian, dan cita-cita nasional”.

to the 2010 Population Census by Statistics Indonesia, Indonesia's population was 237.641.326.⁶ According to the same source, Indonesia has 17.504 islands.⁷ In between village democracy and the highest representative bodies, there are some regional representative bodies, namely DPRD. DPRD is *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah* (The Regional House of People's Representative) which exist in *kabupaten* (regency) and *propinsi* (province). The political processes inside those representative bodies must be held in *musyawarah* in order to reach *mufakat*. The people, both individual and communal, can deliver opinions to those representative bodies, hopefully to have an impact on the law-making processes.

Democracy as mandated by the fourth principle of *Pancasila* is intended to emphasize deliberative discourses with the authority of reason. Hatta says, "The democracy (*kerakyatan*) held by the Indonesian people is not a democracy who seeking the most votes, but a democracy led by wisdom in the deliberations of representatives" (quoted and explained in Latif 2011, 477-478). This does not mean that Indonesian democracy rejects the most votes at all. Rather, Hatta realizes the difficulties of national democracy, compared to village democracy which might prioritize deliberative discourse and consensus over voting. For him, at the national level (such as in DPR) where there are many political parties and disputes, it is so difficult to reach a consensus. The last choice is the decision-making with the most votes.

Latif proposes four prerequisites for a political decision to be taken, according to Pancasila's democracy (Latif 2011, 478). First, a political decision must be based on the principle of rationality and justice, and not only based on ideological subjectivity and interest. Second, a political decision is intended for the public or the people's interest and not for the private individual or communal interest. Third, a political decision must be oriented towards long-term interest, instead of short-term interest coming from transactions of political commodities in order to accommodate several interests destructively. Fourth, a political decision must be impartial and inclusive, in that it must involve or consider all opinions, including minority opinions. These four characteristics mark Pancasila's democracy as a deliberative democracy in the contemporary political sense. Even Latif himself acknowledges this. He says, "The conception of *demokrasi permusyawaratan* Indonesia precedes and resembles what would be later called as the model of 'deliberative democracy' which was firstly introduced by Joseph M. Bessete in 1980" (Latif 2011, 458-459). Hardiman is in a line with Latif when he says that the conception of deliberative democracy has been implied in the fourth principle of Pancasila (Hardiman 2012, kompas.com).

⁶ Badan Pusat Statistik, "Sensus Penduduk 2010" (<http://sp2010.bps.go.id>), accessed 03 April 2018.

⁷ Badan Pusat Statistik, "Luas Daerah dan Jumlah Pulau Menurut Provinsi, 2002-2016"

(<https://www.bps.go.id/statistictable/2014/09/05/1366/luas-daerah-dan-jumlah-pulau-menurut-provinsi-2002-2016.html>), accessed 03 April 2018.

Deliberative democracy as mandated by the fourth principle of Pancasila implies the Habermasian model. Thus, in order to strengthen the implementation of the fourth principle of Pancasila, we need to dig inspiration from Habermas' philosophy of deliberative democracy. According to Hardiman, the uniqueness of Habermas' model is his emphasis on "the implementation of democratic procedure which is not only limited to a formal and organized political system" but also "could be stretched to the unorganized and informal opinions formation in the civil society" (Hardiman 2009, 132). This model is well-known as the "two-track deliberative democracy". This model is implied in the fourth principle of Pancasila as indicated above but still not yet well articulated. Thus, we may well take this model from Habermas in order to make clear the message of the fourth principle of Pancasila and then implementing it to Indonesian society.

According to Hardiman, Joko Widodo (or commonly called Jokowi), the seventh president of Indonesia, when he was mayor of the city of Solo, in Central Java, had dozens of hearings in forums before articulating public decisions (Hardiman 2012, *kompas.com*). Those kinds of public deliberations in the public sphere must also be done in connection with the law-making processes in the parliamentary bodies in order to assure the legitimacy of public laws and policies. So far, in the post-Soeharto political system, there has been a change in the design of political institutions in order to accommodate the relation between the people and their representatives outside of the general election. Those new institutions include *Jaring Aspirasi Masyarakat* (*Jaring Asmara*/ The Aggregation of People's Aspiration) and the consultation room in the parliamentary buildings (Marijan 2010, 121-123). Every four months all the members of parliament visit their constituency to gather together the public aspirations of their constituents. In addition to that, in each parliament building there are several rooms and forums provided for deliberative discourses between the people and the members of parliament. In practice, according to Kacung Marijan's study, *Jaring Asmara* and the consultation forums are not very effective. They are even considered to be merely nominal. There are several problems why they efforts are not very effective. Firstly, DPR does require its members to visit their constituencies, but unfortunately it does not require them to inventory the result of their visits and to discuss and examine them as input for articulating laws and policies (Haliim 2016, 24). Secondly, for instance, according to the experience of several NGOs, they find it difficult to meet members of parliament, and some forums even had no follow up at all. Thus, in order to have more public participation in laws and policy-making, there must be a reinvigoration of the public sphere so it becomes a political public sphere which is autonomous and self-sufficient apart from the support of the administrative power or the capitalistic-economic power (Hardiman 2009, 135). In this kind of

public sphere, citizens come to discuss their ideas freely in order to shape their desires and opinions that will then be channelled into the political system. This revitalization is done by Habermas in his later conception of the public sphere. Habermas certainly expects a free and open public sphere which in a certain sense is now occurring in Indonesia.

3.3 Indonesia's contemporary public sphere

3.3.1 The public sphere in the period of Reformation (after 1998)

Indonesia's contemporary public sphere is a public sphere in the social and political constellation post New Order, that is in the period of 1998 until now. The New Order regime is the regime led by the late General Soeharto in the period 1966-1998. Soeharto, a former army general, was the second President following Soekarno.⁸ Soeharto's government often tried to repress the public sphere. His government restricted democratic freedom and individual rights, mainly those of the critics of his regime. The most widely circulated newspaper, *Kompas*, was banned in 1978 together with other six newspapers. At that time, there were some anti-government protest movements mainly involving students. Some media reported that those demonstrations were held mainly to criticize the corruption of Soeharto's family (Hill 1994, 38-39). The most famous social political weekly magazine, *Tempo*, was banned twice in 1982 and in 1994 because it criticized the incompetence of Soeharto's government (Ricklefs 2008, 640, 679). In short, the New Order or Soeharto's regime is the regime during which there were democratic restrictions and transgressions in many aspects. Corruption, violation of human rights, fraud in the electoral process, the restriction of the public sphere and others marked the 32 years of Soeharto's government.

The New Order and Soeharto's regime were overthrown by the huge student demonstrations in May 1998. There were the worst riots in Indonesia's modern history following the shooting of four students at *Trisakti* University, in West Jakarta. There were extensive pillaging of Chinese shops and raping of women (Ricklefs 2008, 690). "The period of Soeharto's rule", the Singaporean historian, M.C Ricklefs writes, "ended with disaster and disgrace" (Ricklefs 2008, 691).

Though bitter, the overthrowing of Soeharto's rule brought a breath of fresh air for the democratization in this country of thousands of islands. Following the fall of Soeharto, for instance, the media in general began to expose the abuses of power that occurred during Soeharto's presidency which were generated by his family empire of political and business power

⁸ Soekarno's rule is called the "Old Order" while Soeharto's rule the "New Order". The post-Soeharto period is called "the Reformation Order".

(McCoy 2019, 70). Since the New Order period, there has been an empowerment of the democratic public sphere. This empowerment is shown in such things as the social-political and the social-cultural empowerment of Indonesia's civil society (Hardiman 2014, 659-660). The social-political empowerment is seen in the permission of the freedom of the press and the freedom to form new political parties and the restriction for the army getting involved in practical politics.⁹ Freedom of the press in particular is commonly known as a mark of the health of a democracy (McCoy 2019, 140). While President B. J Habibie played an important role in this empowerment, President Abdurrahman Wahid made vital contributions to the social-cultural empowerment of civil society by showing a strong commitment to the recognition of the fact of pluralism and multiculturalism and by endorsing mutual understanding among the different ethnic and religious groups. By these empowerments, the free public sphere has been secured since the people can openly express their opinion through the public channels. In short, in this contemporary post-Soeharto era, "the public sphere is free and open" (van Klinken & Berenschot 2018, 152). This character can be firstly seen in the topographical public sphere.

3.3.2 The topographical public sphere

Since 1998, the topographical public sphere such as plazas, fields, streets and so forth have been used for expressing opinions freely and openly. The request for total reformation in Indonesia increased in line with the people's criticisms toward corruption, collusion, and nepotism by Soeharto's family and in line with the economic crisis. The students' protest started on campuses then spread to the streets in the big cities (Ricklefs 2008, 689). Since then, Indonesians commonly use the topographical public sphere for sharing public views. The post-Soeharto governments have secured this possibility by issuing Law No. 9/1998. In Article 5, the Law guarantees citizens' freedom to convey their thoughts freely. The Law requests the government apparatus to protect human rights, to respect the aspect of legality, to appreciate the principle of the presumption of innocence and to administer security for the public presentation of opinions (Article 7). The Law asks each public presenter to respect others' rights and freedoms, to obey laws and regulations, to maintain public order, and to keep the unity of the nation (Article 6). Article 9 (1) regulates the forms of the public presentation of opinions such as free platforms (*mimbar bebas*),¹⁰ demonstrations, public meetings, parades and so forth. Each topographical public sphere is allowed to be used for the public presentation of opinions except on vital subjects

⁹ In the New Order period, Indonesia's Army has two functions (*dwi-fungsi*), military and political functions. The New Order regime allowed the Army to form the Army and Police Fraction in the representative bodies and them to involve in the political contestations such as for reaching the office of governor or mayor.

¹⁰ A stage is provided by a committee for anyone who wants to share his or her opinion in public.

such as hospitals, the presidential palace, airports, stations, worship centres, and similar sites (Article 9 (2)). The Law requests an easier way to hold such public presentation by only addressing a written notice to the Indonesian Police (Article 10 (1)).

After the huge demonstrations in 1998, some demonstrations, both large and small, used public places such as streets, fields or squares. In Jakarta, the favourite public places for demonstration are *Bundaran HI* (Hotel Indonesia's Roundabout), *Lapangan Monas* (National Monument Square) which is in the front of the presidential palace, *Istana Merdeka*, and *Halaman Gedung DPR/MPR* (House of People's Representative's Square). In other big cities, people usually use fields or squares in front of the city hall or governor's office. There is at least one *alun-alun* (central open field) in every town or city in the island of Java and at least one big square in each town or city outside of Java. *Alun-alun* are usually located in the front of the post office, a big mosque, or the city hall. There are some fields or squares that are famous in the history of public presentation of opinions in Indonesia such as *Lapangan Gazibu* in Bandung, *Lapangan Merdeka* in Medan, *Lapangan Simbang Lima* in Semarang.

In this period of the twenty years after Soeharto's rule, the biggest demonstrations were held on 4 November 2016 (411 demonstrations) and 2 December 2016 (212 demonstrations) by Muslims (especially the Hardliners). They accused Ahok of blaspheming against Islam. Those demonstrations were held in *Bundaran BI* (Indonesian Central Bank Roundabout), which is connected to *Lapangan Monas*. According to the analysis of CNN Indonesia, the participants attending *212 demonstration* were about 550 thousand people (cnnindonesia.com, 5 December 2016). As well as these demonstrations, the Mayday demonstration on 1 May usually has a huge turnout. It is held in all the big cities in Indonesia to demonstrate for the welfare of laborers or workers, and is widely reported by radio, television, magazines, online news and spoken about in social media.

3.3.3 Radio, Newspaper/Magazine, and Television as the public sphere

There was a drastic increase in the establishment of new media in the post-Soeharto period. For instance, the number of magazines drastically increased from 300 at the end of the New Order regime to more than 1500 (Haryanto 2014, 686). The number of radio stations also drastically increased from 898 to 1.362 (Samuel 2017, 197). These increases give more opportunity to the people to get involved in the conventional media in a free and open way.

With the advancement of technology and the increasing freedom of the press, citizens can then use radio, television, and newspapers for sharing their opinions publicly. The closest example is citizen journalism. It is a form of citizens' participation in delivering journalistic reports without

having a journalistic background and without being contracted by any media institution. Some radio stations such as *Elshinta* (90.00 FM) in Jakarta and its network in the whole country and *Suara Surabaya* (100 FM) in Surabaya open the opportunity for citizens to report public issues including traffic flow. *Elshinta* station even has 151.000 listeners (Kurniawan & Loo 2007, 98). Some of them then become its citizen journalists. I am also one of those citizen journalists. I have been interviewed many times by *Elshinta* station on many issues especially traffic reports. *Elshinta* station also opens discussions between a citizen journalist with the public authority to solve the problem that is reported by that citizen journalist.

There are two kinds of public participation in television. First, through citizen journalism, by sending amateur videos regarding events that have news value. Second, television stations open a space for citizens' participation to discuss or to comment on any public issue through the telephone line, short message service or social media such as *Whatsapp*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*. *New Line* program at *Metro TV*, and *Citizen Journalism* at *Kompas TV* are examples of citizen journalism on Indonesian television. An example of public participation for discussing public issues is *Editorial MI* program at *Metro TV*. *Editorial MI* is actually the editorial of the newspaper *Media Indonesia* which is under the same group as *Metro TV*. *Editorial MI* usually discusses contemporary issues either inside Indonesia or international news.

Public participation in newspapers or magazines is mainly expressed through opinion columns and letters to the editor. Opinion columns are written by experts or practitioners with a strong emphasis on expertise or experience. Though the articles published are popular science, most of articles are written by experts, lecturers at universities, researchers, and practitioners, whose competence is acknowledged by the editors. Editors often ask researchers or practitioners who are in a political line with the editor to write articles. There are more than a hundred articles sent to the editor of *Kompas* since it is the most widely circulated newspaper. There is a circulation of about 500.000 copies of *Kompas* newspaper every day. *Kompas* publishes 4-6 articles every day on pages 6-7 (*Opini*) while *Koran Tempo* newspaper 1 publishes one article in the *Pendapat* column.

I have even written several articles published in national newspapers. For instance, on 28 January 2008, I wrote an article published on *Jawa Pos*, a national newspaper with a circulation of 300 thousand which contains a reflection on the decease of the former president Soeharto, who died on 27 January 2008. While promoting forgiveness, I explored the reality of sin in human beings and the sense of relationship and fellowship (quoting Stephen Tong's biblical anthropology). I also explained that Soeharto had received several punishments, social, political and historical. He will receive what I called "the theological punishment" which means God's

eternal and final punishment. By pointing to these punishments, I endorsed Indonesian society's forgiveness of Soeharto and his family.

There is another alternative for the public to share their opinions in the conventional media through *Surat Pembaca* (readers' letters) which is provided in almost every newspaper or magazine. People can send letters to the editors, not only about public services (banks, hospitals, airports and so forth) but also about public issues.

In fact, radio, television, and newspaper/magazine function more as the source of news and information for citizens to discuss those issues in other forms of the public sphere. The conventional media can only function as a space for civic protest or citizen journalism. The discursive level of these media is very low. Nevertheless, civic protests or citizen journalism appearing in these media can trigger deliberative discussions through other channels in the public sphere.

One big challenge for the use of the conventional media in Indonesia as the public sphere is the mastery of media by capitalist groups. In the period of Reformation, there are at least nine business groups who own media such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations, and online news (Haryanto 2014, 685).¹¹ The concentration of media ownership causes crises for the public sphere in Indonesia mainly for the entanglement of the economic and political interests of the owners. For instance, newspapers or magazines owned by a business group in fact are more company newsletters than mass media in the journalistic sense since their contents are full of business promotions of their groups (Haryanto 2014, 688-689). Other than that, Surya Paloh, the leader of *Media Group*, is the chairman of *Partai Nasional Demokrat* or *Nasdem*, a political party. Hary Tanoesoedibjo, the leader of *MNC Group* is also the chairman of *Partai Persatuan Indonesia* or *Perindo*, a contestant for the 2019 general election. Thus, their media are often used to promote their political party or personal interests. There is no independence anymore of journalists or the media. True journalism is replaced by "slave journalism" (*jurnalisme budak*; Haryanto 2014, 698). Therefore, citizens find it difficult to use the media for sharing their public opinions and even more to criticize the media's owners or their political or economic interests.

¹¹ I give some examples that I take from Ignatius Haryanto (Haryanto 2014, 685) and add some new information. *Kompas Gramedia* group owned by Jacob Oetama has newspapers (*Kompas*, *Jakarta Post*, *Warta Kota* and 11 local newspapers), magazines (37 magazines and 5 publishers), radios (*Sonora* and *Otomotion*), television (*Kompas TV*), cybermedia (*kompas.com*), and also Gramedia bookstores in many big cities. *Media Nusantara Citra* or *MNC* owned by Hary Tanoesoedibjo has a newspaper (*Sindo*), magazines (*Genie*, *Trust*, and others), radio (*Trijaya FM* and others), television (*RCTI*, *Global TV*, *MNC TV*, and other cable television), cybermedia (*okezone.com*). *Jawa Pos* group owned by Dahlan Iskan has newspapers (*Jawa Pos*, *Fajar*, *Rakyat Merdeka* and more than 90 local newspapers), magazines (23 magazines), radio (*Fajar FM* in Makassar), televisions (*JTV* in Surabaya and 3 other local stations). *Media* group owned by Surya Paloh has newspapers (*Media Indonesia*, *Lampung Post*, *Borneonews*), a magazine (*Prioritas*), radio (*SAI 100 FM*), television (*Metro TV*), cybermedia (*medcom.id*). *Berita Satu Media* group owned by James Riady (chairman of *Lippo* group owns real estate, hospitals, and others) has newspapers (*Jakarta Globe*, *Investor Daily*, *Suara Pembaruan*), magazines (*Majalah Investor*, *Globe Asia*, and others), radio (*B1 Radio*), television (*Berita Satu TV*), cybermedia (*beritasatu.com*).

3.3.4 Internet and social media as the public sphere

The existence of internet has raised new hope for easier access to information and communication among human beings. Through online news and online information, message and letter services and social media, internet has been becoming a new public sphere with a wide possibility for people to get involved in wide political participation. The first internet connection was made by the University of Indonesia in the 1980s and the first permanent internet address was set up by *Badan Pengkajian dan Penerapan Teknologi* (Agency for the Assessment and the Application of Technology) in 1994 (Lim 2014, 710-711). Internet was first used by the public in 1995 with about 15.000 users and was limited to a certain social class who could pay for telephone and internet networks with their own personal computers (Lim 2014, 711). Since then, internet has been widely used by people, and electronic mail and mailing lists have become social phenomena. Political participation was empowered by those services. A mailing list, *Apakabar*, was founded by an American citizen, John McDougall, to deliver news or articles on Indonesia to his customers in the whole world (Lim 2014, 712-713). This mailing list became a new political power since news or articles circulated in it were not available in Indonesia since they were very critical of the New Order government. George Aditjondro, an Indonesian lecturer based in Australia, became the main source for news and information unavailable in Indonesia. He sent thousands of emails criticizing Soeharto's rule and opening the eyes of the Indonesian public to the damage caused by the New Order regime (Lim 2014, 713).

After Soeharto's rule, in accordance with the wind of freedom in Indonesian politics and the development of information technology, Indonesia was "overall overcome by Internet" (Hamid 2014, 734).¹² Internet users drastically increased from 2 million in 2000 to 55 million in 2012 (Hamid 2014, 735). By the advance of technology, social media such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *Whatsapp* exist as spaces for people to get entertainment, to have self-expression and social interaction, and to participate politically. Based on the data of *Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia* or *APJII* (Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association), throughout 2019 there are 171 million people connected through Internet services (kompas.com, 16 May 2019). From a national population of around 264 million people, internet users are 64,8%. Indonesia is the fourth largest *Facebook* user in the world after India, the US, and Brazil (kompas.com, 02 March 2018), with 130 million users. Jakarta was named as "the world's most active city on *Twitter*" (Lipman 2012 in Jurriëns and Tapsell 2017, 1). By the massive usage of internet and social media in Indonesia, in the context of social and political discussion, "digital platforms are

¹² "secara keseluruhan sudah terlanda internetisasi".

being used to organise rallies, assist with election monitoring and generally provide *a space for greater freedom of opinion and expression* on a variety of issues, contributing in no small way to the country's rambunctious democracy" (Jurriëns and Tapsell 2017, 2; my emphasis). In cases such as #Prita, #Cicak vs Buaya, and #SaveKPK, public discussions on social media had become public voices as forms of political participation. In short, "new public sphere formed through social media can be strategically utilized in order to expand civic activism" (Hamid 2014, 735).¹³

Indonesia's government passed Law No. 11/2008 on "Information and Electronic Transaction". In Article 4, the government is sure that with information technology an electronic transaction can be used for glorious purposes such as to "educate the life of a nation"¹⁴ and to "advance thinking and ability in the usage and the utilization of information technology as optimal as possible and responsible".¹⁵ Article 27 asserts some prohibitions in transmitting information and electronic transaction such as the prohibition of information containing blackmail, threats, insults, defamation, indecent content and gambling materials. Article 28 asserts some prohibitions on transmitting information containing falsity, apostasy, and information triggering hostility between religious, ethnic, and racial groups. The threat of punishment can reach 6 years in prison or a fine of Rp. 1 billion (more than US \$ 71.000). Alas, this Law raises some controversies. Criminal threat in this Law regarding insults or defamation are often used by powerful individuals or institutions to sue the common people who criticize them on social media or personal communication such as electronic mail or the short message system (Postill and Saputro 2017, 129). *Freedom House's* report (2016) stated that this Law has been used to "intimidate and to silence critics" (quoted by Postil and Saputro 2017, 129). Apart from that controversy, regarding insults or defamation, the criminal threat from Law 11/2008 reaches 6 years in prison, much more than the Criminal Code (*KUHP*) which only reaches 4 years in prison. Thus, without a strong political commitment to democracy and respect for human rights by the government, Law 11/2008 can restrict the use of internet and social media as the new political public sphere.

3.3.5 Indonesia's public sphere and the need for a theology of the public sphere

Indonesia's public sphere after 1998 is a free and open public sphere compared to the Soeharto's era. This free and open public sphere has been functioning as an arena for discussing political and public issues to fulfill the democratic agendas. In Franz Magnis-Suseno's view, this kind of the public sphere has been used by the people, for instance, to resist DPR's stubbornness

¹³ "Ruang publik baru terbentuk melalui media sosial sangat strategis untuk dimanfaatkan dalam rangka memperluas aktivisme kewargaan".

¹⁴ "Mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa".

¹⁵ "Memajukan pemikiran dan kemampuan di bidang penggunaan dan pemanfaatan Teknologi Informasi seoptimal mungkin dan bertanggungjawab".

who wanted to constitutionally weaken the corruption eradication institution (Magnis-Suseno 2015, 71-72). This kind of public sphere is needed, Magnis-Suseno continues, in order to differentiate a dictatorial from a democratic government. In this analysis, he recognizes the importance of Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere.

Nonetheless, contemporary Indonesia's public sphere is not without problems. As have been explained, the conglomerate of media, both electronic and printed media by capitalist groups and the restriction of the information and electronic transactions by the government's law might threaten the sustainability of a democratic public sphere which is directed by Indonesia's national ideology, *Pancasila*. Therefore, there is a big need for a theoretical scheme which can strengthen Indonesia's public sphere with the result that it should be an autonomous and democratic public sphere, detached from the invasion of the power of money (the capitalist market) and the power of politics (the government). The need for such a theoretical scheme is urgent to secure that public theology in Indonesia might be able itself to fully contribute to the common good of the society. If not, public theology, whether tempted or threatened by the power of money and politics, will fail in itself. Indeed, the theoretical schemes that empower the public sphere are articulated by Arendt, Habermas, and Kuyper as I will elaborate in the next chapters. Arendt's thought is needed to strengthen the public sphere with several ideas: her critique toward totalitarianism, the criticism of the invasion of the private interests into the public sphere, and her constructive theory of the public sphere firstly as a dramatic setting and later as a discursive setting. Habermas thought is vital in terms of his criticism toward the idea of refeudalization of the public sphere by the state and the market, the criticism of the colonization of the lifeworld by the power of money and politics, his historical sketch of the bourgeois public sphere as a seed of his later and more mature conception of the public sphere as an important setting for democratic life. Kuyper is needed to strengthen civil society, the dominant player in the public sphere by his principle of sphere sovereignty. Moreover, in the Kuyperian scheme, we may view the public sphere as a sovereign sphere independent of the state and the market. The Kuyperian scheme is also vital to empower civil society in Indonesia.

3.4 The public sphere and Indonesian civil society

Civil society is made up of the networks of organizations and institutions in-between individuals and the state in which citizens gather and share opinions freely, including criticism of the government's policies. Civil society in Indonesia was empowered after the downfall of Soeharto's regime. This empowerment reached its culmination in the election of Abdurrahman Wahid (1940-2009), the leader of *NU* becoming the country's President by *Majelis*

Permusyawaratan Rakyat in 1999. Civil society's leader was elected as the leader of the state (Azra 2006, 42). In this recent period, Ma'ruf Amin, a former leader of *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (The Muslim's Clergies Organization) was just elected as the vice president for the term 2019-2024. The empowerment of civil society in the era of Reformation was continued by the issue of the Law on *organisasi kemasyarakatan* or *ormas* (mass or social organization). There are two Laws issued on mass organization, Law No. 17/2013 and Law No. 16/2017, a revision of the previous one.¹⁶ Article 4 of Law No. 17/2013 concerns the voluntary, independent, and democratic character of mass organization. Article 5 and 6 of Law No. 17/2013 state that mass organization functions as the channel of people's aspirations and as the tool for empowering society and have goals such as developing solidarity (*kesetiakawanan*), mutual cooperation (*gotong-royong*) and tolerance among the people. Article 29 of Law No. 17/2013 endorses the implementation of deliberative democracy inside mass organizations by proposing deliberation (*musyawarah*) for reaching agreement (*mufakat*) in the election of committees or the chairman of an organization.

Indonesia's civil society consists of various organizations and institutions with its multicultural and multireligious character. This fact is consistent with Indonesia's national motto, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*,¹⁷ diverse but one, one country but Indonesia consists of diverse ethnic and religious groups. The society of Indonesia is a heterogeneous society. *Badan Pusat Statistik* (Statistics Indonesia) reports that there are 87,18% Muslims, 6,95% Protestants, 2,90% Catholics, 1,68% Hindus, 0,71% Buddhists, 0,04% Confucians.¹⁸ With 207.176.162 Muslims, Indonesia is the most populous Muslim country in the world.¹⁹ Indonesia has 1.340 ethnic groups with 95,2 million Javanese, 36,7 million Sundanese, and 8,5 million Batak people.²⁰ These are the most populous ethnic groups. The fact of multiculturalism or pluralism provide the possibility for various organizations and institutions and certainly the crowded voices in Indonesia's public sphere to be recognized.

We can see the existence of civil society in Indonesia through the free formation of political and social organizations which are the place for people to gather, to associate and to share their opinions in the autonomous public sphere which can be free from the intervention of the state and the market. Generally, there are two kinds of voluntary organizations in Indonesia's civil

¹⁶ Law No. 16/2017 revises the steps for dissolving a mass organization, making it easier or more simple than Law 17/2013.

¹⁷ *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, the national motto was formulated by Mpu Tantular in his book *Sutasoma*. Mpu Tantular lived in 14th century in the ancient *Majapahit* Kingdom. See Tantular 2009, 505; Latif 2011, 267; Intan 2006, 69n3.

¹⁸ Badan Pusat Statistik, "Penduduk Menurut Wilayah dan Agama yang Dianut" (<https://sp2010.bps.go.id/index.php/site/tabel?tid=321&wid=0>), accessed 03 April 2018.

¹⁹ The second largest Muslim country is Pakistan with 174.082.000 Muslims. See "The World in Muslim Populations; Every Country Listed" in *The Guardian*, 2016 (<https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2009/oct/08/muslim-population-islam-religion>), accessed 16 May 2018.

²⁰ See 2017 Political Statistics, 151.

society, political and the social organizations. The political organizations are the political parties. There were 16 national political parties that joined in the 2019 general election, such as *PDIP*, *Golkar*, *Nasdem*, *Demokrat*, *Gerindra*, and *PKB*.²¹ There are many kinds of social or mass organizations (*organisasi masyarakat – ormas*). According to 2019 official data, there are 431.465 social organizations in Indonesia (Kompas.com, 25 November 2019). There are religious organizations in every religion.²² There are also organizations based on jobs such labor and teacher organizations.²³ There are some *lembaga swadaya masyarakat* or *LSM* (non-governmental organizations or NGOs).²⁴

The freedom for civil society in Indonesia can be seen through the appearance of religious organizations in the public sphere. I give examples from Muslim organizations. The involvement of Muslim organizations or leaders in the public sphere can be divided into two types: The Moderate Muslims and the Hardliner Muslims' voices (Azra 2006, 55-64).²⁵ There were the huge demonstrations that "contain not only anti-American sentiments,²⁶ colored by religious feeling, but also some dissatisfaction towards the Indonesian government" (Azra 2006, 56). These

²¹ There are 9 political parties that have seats in *DPR* (2019-2024). *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* or *PDIP* (Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle), *Partai Golongan Karya* or *Golkar* (Party of the Functional Groups), *Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya* or *Gerindra* (Great Indonesia Movement Party), *Partai Nasional Demokrat* or *Nasdem* (National Democratic Party), *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* or *PKB* (National Awakening Party), *Partai Demokrat* (Democratic Party), *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* or *PKS* (Prosperous Justice Party), *Partai Amanat Nasional* or *PAN* (National Mandate Party), and *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* or *PPP* (United Development Party). The political parties who have no seats in *DPR* are *Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat* or *Hanura* (People's Conscience Party), *Partai Bulan Bintang* or *PBB* (Crescent Star Party) and *Partai Keadilan dan Persatuan Indonesia* or *PKPI* (Indonesian Justice and Unity Party), *Partai Solidaritas Indonesia* or *PSI* (Indonesian Solidarity Party), *Partai Persatuan Indonesia* or *Perindo* (Indonesian Unity Party), *Partai Gerakan Perubahan Indonesia* or *Garuda* (Change Indonesia Movement Party), *Partai Berkarya* (Working Party).

²² In Muslim, there are *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* or *MUI* (Council of Indonesian Islamic Scholar), *Nahdlatul Ulama* or *NU* (a traditionalist Sunni Islam movement in Indonesia), *Muhammadiyah* (a modern Muslim movement), *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* or *ICMI* (Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals), *Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam* or *HMI* (Islam Students Association), *Front Pembela Islam* or *FPI* (Islamic Defenders Front), *Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia* or *HTI*, and so forth. Couple of years ago, HTI has been banned by the Indonesian government. There are some Christian organizations in Indonesia: *Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia* or *PGI* (Communion of Churches in Indonesia), *Persekutuan Gereja dan Lembaga Injili Indonesia* (Communion of Evangelical Churches and Organizations in Indonesia), *Persekutuan Intelektual Kristen Indonesia* or *PIKI* (Fellowship of Christian Intellectuals in Indonesia). *Konferensi WaliGereja Indonesia* or *KWI* (Bishops' Conference of Indonesia) is the main organization for Catholics in Indonesia. Buddhists are gathered in *Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia* or *Walubi* (Representative of Buddhists in Indonesia). Indonesia Hinduism Society is the organisation for Hindus which in Indonesian is *Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia* or *PDHI*. Under President Wahid's administration, Indonesia's government recognized Confucianism as a legal religion. Its main organization is *Majelis Tinggi Agama Konghucu Indonesia* or *Matakin* (Supreme Council for the Confucian Religion in Indonesia).

²³ There are many labour organizations in Indonesia. After Soeharto fell, there was a significant increase in labour organizations from one in 1998 growing to 90 in 2010 (Tjandra 2014, 821). Generally, labour organizations are classified into two levels: regional and national organizations (Tjandra 2014, 790-791). There are also other job organizations such as *Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia* or *PGRI* (Teachers' Association of the Republic of Indonesia), *Himpunan Kerukunan Tani Indonesia* or *HKTI* (Indonesian Farmers' Association), *Persatuan Advokat Indonesia* or *Peradi* (Indonesian Advocates Association), *Ikatan Dokter Indonesia* (Indonesian Medical Doctors Association), and *Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia* or *PWI* (Indonesian Journalists' Association).

²⁴ There are some NGOs that are very famous in Indonesia: Indonesia Corruption Watch or *ICW*, *Yayasan Lembaga Konsumen Indonesia* or *YLKI* (Indonesian Consumers Foundation), *Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia* or *YLBHI* (Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation).

²⁵ Azyumardi Azra articulates an analysis on this division especially in the tenure of President Megawati Soekarnoputri (2001-2004). Megawati Soekarnoputri (1947 -) was the eldest daughter of the former President Soekarno and is the leader of the Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle (*PDIP*). She was the Vice President of President Wahid. She took over the presidential office after the impeachment of Wahid due to some cases. Azra found that the Hardliners refused President Megawati based on the gender issue. They considered the incompatibility of woman leader with their literal interpretation of Islam.

²⁶ The Hardliners' demonstrations were based on the US confrontation with the Taliban and Osama bin Laden.

demonstrations were held by the Hardliner groups such as *FPI*, *HTI*, and so forth. The Hardliners usually use the public sphere to protest against certain individuals or groups regarding specific issues (anti-American or anti-Western or anti-Israel sentiments; Palestinian independence; a woman leader in case of Megawati, or blasphemy of Islam or of Al-Quran in case of Ahok),²⁷ combined with dissatisfaction with the incumbent (for ignorance on some issues, injustice of policies or so forth. There were huge demonstrations to protest Ahok's case on 4 November 2016 (well known as the 411 demonstration) and 2 December 2016 (212 demonstration) using *Monumen Nasional*²⁸ or *Monas* square which were attended by hundreds of thousands of participants. They also criticized President Jokowi regarding his close relationship with Ahok. In some cases, the Hardliners also do sweeping to persons or offices or institutions considered as in opposition to Muslims (Azra 2006, 58).²⁹

Different from the Hardliner Muslims, the Moderate Muslims, who are the mainstream of Indonesian Muslims, try to appear in the public sphere "with a smiling face" (*Newsweek*, 23 September 1996, quoted in Azra 2006, 60). The public voices of the two largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, *NU* and *Muhammadiyah* represent the tolerant and moderate position.³⁰ Their leaders eventually promote democratic values against the Hardliners' requests. In the case of US confrontation with Taliban in Afghanistan, KH Hasyim Muzadi, who was the leader of *NU*, and Ahmad Syafii Maarif, who was the leader of *Muhammadiyah*, oppose the Hardliners' invitation for Indonesian Muslims to do *jihad* (holy war) in Afghanistan (Azra 2006, 61).³¹ In the case of *MUI's fatwa* against secularism, liberalism, and pluralism, *NU*, through one of its Chairmen of the Executive Board, Masdar F. Mas'udi, asked *MUI* to cancel its *fatwa* (nu.or.id, 2 August 2005).³² In case of Ahok's statement accused as blasphemy, Maarif protected him by saying that using common sense (*akal sehat*), comprehensive listening and understanding of the whole speech, he concluded that Ahok did not insult Islam (tribunnews.com, 8 November

²⁷ Ahok or Basuki Tjahaja Purnama was the Governor of Jakarta, the country's capital. Ahok was the Vice Governor and coming up to the position replacing Jokowi who ran for Presidential office and won that position in 2014. Ahok quoted a verse from Al-Quran which was considered by Muslims as a blasphemy. In 11 October 2016, *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* published a *fatwa* (a legal pronouncement) that Ahok's statement is a blasphemy (detik.com, 11 October 2016).

²⁸ *Monas* is located in the front of the presidential palace, *Istana Merdeka*. This place nowadays has become the favourite place for demonstrations, in addition to *Bundaran HI* (Hotel Indonesia's square). In Ahok's rule as Jakarta's Governor, *Monas* was closed for demonstrations. But in Anies Baswedan's rule, the new Governor, the former Minister of Education fired by Jokowi, endorsed by the opposition parties, opened *Monas* for demonstration.

²⁹ "Sweeping" is a popular term in Indonesian society to describe how religious or other mass organizations come to a certain place to raid things that they think are contrary to the teachings of their religion/ the conviction of their organization or against the government's laws. For instance, *FPI* did sweeping to Americans and other Western foreigners in Jakarta in case of confrontation between the US and Osama bin Laden. It is also usual for the Hardliners to invite Muslims to boycott some American or Western products (see Azra 2006, 58).

³⁰ Each of these organizations claim to have at least 35 to 40 million members. See Azra 2006, 61.

³¹ Muzadi proposes the moderate concept of *jihad*, that it does not certainly mean holy war but also can be understood as efforts for developing Islam and the Muslims. Maarif criticized *MUI's* call for *jihad* since that calling "will only raise Muslims' emotions and provoke radicalism". See Azra 2006, 61.

³² In July 2005, *MUI* issued a *fatwa* condemning the notions of liberalism, pluralism, and secularism (see Kersten 2015, 1). On debating secularism by Indonesian Muslims, see Carool Kersten (Kersten 2015, 137-178).

2016). Maarif also criticized *MUI* for delivering the careless *fatwa* triggering huge demonstrations by Muslims.³³

The vital and free role of mass or social organizations in the public sphere is also shown by other organizations. Though there are many problems such as a structural problem in the labour movement in Indonesia (Tjandra 2014, 821), labour organizations still play a pivotal role in fighting for the welfare of laborers. For instance, various labor organizations are always involved in the adoption of a minimum wage in a regency or province (Tjandra 2014, 793). Many mass organizations also actively participate in keeping the country from experiencing democratic recession (Mietzner 2014, 166). For example, many voluntary and independent organizations were on the front line to protect the existence of *Komisi Pemilihan Umum* or *KPU* (General Elections Commission) and *Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi* or *KPK* (Corruption Eradication Commission) (Mietzner 2014, 166-170). When political parties' elites wanted to dominate *KPU* or when the national parliament members wanted to dissolve *KPK*, various organizations used the public sphere to protect those institutions.³⁴ Thus, we may conclude that "campaigns launched by civil society is a proof that Indonesia's democracy is not being stagnated, but is healthy and strong" (Mietzner 2014, 170).

In spite of the freedom of civil society and its contribution within Indonesia's public sphere, there are several problems. Indonesia's public sphere is still dominated by the religion of the majority, especially the radicals/ the Hardliners. According to a more recent study, the desire to retain conservative aspirations remain strong among the Muslim activists, especially the Hardliners, as shown through several indications such as the rejection of non-Muslim candidates in the local or national leaders' elections, the demand or support for a ban on religious minority groups, and the persecution against the LGBTQ+ community (Alvian 2019, 79). The negative appearance of the Hardliner Muslims has brought bad side effects to Indonesia's democratization. The Hardliner Muslims do not only oppose the other religious minorities such as Christians but also the Moderate Muslims and the Muslim minorities such as Ahmadiyya and Shia groups. The Hardliners even use the Ministry of Religion to prohibit Islamic minorities, which would be followed by violence (Intan 2019a, 235). Intan even mentioned the case of the attack of the members of Ahmadiyya on 6 February 2011 in Cikeusik and the attack on the members of the Shia Islamic group in Sampang on 26 August 2012. The presence of the Hardliner Muslims in the public sphere certainly makes the religious minorities feel reluctant to get involved in the public

³³ *MUI* is a council consisting of the representatives of various Muslim organizations (Azra 2006, 61). Nevertheless, *MUI* often gives controversial *fatwa* or decisions opposing democratic values. Not only calling for *jihad* in the case of Afghanistan but also delivering a *fatwa* stating that Ahok insulted Muslims by his statement or his quotation of a verse from Al-Quran.

³⁴ Many activists came to *KPK*'s office to show their defence to this institution and the hashtag *#SaveKPK* was a trending topic *Twitter* (see tempo.co, 23 January 2015).

sphere. Moreover, a religion research center, the *Setara Institute*, concludes that in 2018, there were 202 cases of religious oppression toward minorities which were mostly (72 cases) done by state staff (kompas.com, 31 March 2019).

One important issue to be mentioned is the problem of conjugal terrorism. What I mean by the term “conjugal terrorism” is the misuse of the family to make it a terrorist basis for spreading terrorist ideology and for generating suicide bombers. In the terrorist attacks on several churches and a police office in Surabaya on 13-14 May 2018, two terrorist couples brought their children. One reason why attackers choose to involve children as well as women is that adults with women and children do not generally arouse too much suspicion, are less likely to be dismissed, and are frequently less examined by security officers (kompas.com, 17 May 2018). In addition to these problems, though civil society’s organizations have tried to protect democracy, the anti-reformation or anti-democratic elites have been trying to reverse these processes (Mietzner 2012 in Hanif & Hiarij 2016). For instance, in 2009, Indonesia’s government tried to slow the stream of support from foreign institutions for Indonesia’s non-governmental organizations (Mietzner 2014, 171).

These notes indicate that the Indonesia’s public sphere is not a quite-plural, but, rather a quasi-plural public sphere since it is open for all religious citizens but dominated by the religion of the majority, especially the radicals or the hardliners. There is a big need for the empowerment of civil society primarily through a theoretical scheme that might ontologically strengthen civil society’s organization. Eventually, civil society’s organizations including religious minorities might flourish and make contributions in the public sphere for the common good of society. Public theology would come to speak freely in the public sphere. One of the most important theoretical schemes that empowers civil society is the principle of structural pluralism as articulated by Kuyper. His other principle, namely, the principle of confessional pluralism, can be used to justify and to empower Protestant public theology in Indonesia.

3.5 Protestant public theology in Indonesia’s public sphere

Protestants have been contributing to Indonesia’s public sphere since before independence and until now in the post-Soeharto era. In the post-Soeharto era, Protestants get some fresh air to contribute more to the public sphere for the common good of the society. At least there are two important characteristics describing Protestant contribution to Indonesia’s society (see Intan 2006, 144). Firstly, that they come to speak in the public sphere not as minority but as citizens of their country. Secondly, that they come to speak in the multicultural society and public sphere without compromising their faith, rather, they try to be faithful to their teaching.

I will divide this section into two parts. The first part consists of several general overviews, namely, the general overview of Protestant politician, Protestant organization, and the Protestant pastors who speak in the public sphere. This section is not intended to provide a comprehensive history and analysis of the Protestant voices in the public sphere. Such a kind of study needs another research project which is not the aim of this research. What I am doing now is to provide a general overview of the contemporary Protestant voices in the public sphere in order that we might have a big picture on the Protestant voices in the public sphere. In the second part, I will do a deeper analysis on the articles written by the Protestant theologians on *Kompas* daily, the largest circulated printed newspaper in Indonesia. By these exposés, I then come to articulate the need of other theoretical schemes in order to fill the gap, to solve the problem, to justify the voice, to develop the contribution of the Protestants, and so forth. Firstly, we look upon the general overview of the Protestant voices in the public sphere.

3.5.1 A general overview of the Protestant voices in Indonesia's public sphere

3.5.1.1 Protestant theologians' quotations in the public sphere

Protestant theology does not only appear through reflection or opinion articles on mass media but also through the extensive reporting on Christian seminars or services led by pastors or theologians. For example, mass media extensively report the National Easter Service 2017 held in Tondano, North Celebes, both through live broadcast of *TVRI*³⁵ and also through cybermedia. At this service, the speaker was Stephen Tong, the leader of Reformed Evangelical Movement and Church and a world-acclaimed evangelist who has preached in over six hundred cities on six continents to more than thirty-two million people.³⁶ In that service, Tong shows how the power of the resurrection of Christ has been bringing hope for humankind (national.tempo.co, 24 April 2017). He also emphasizes the supremacy of the death and the resurrection of Christ in the redemption of humankind. Tong says that when Jesus was born, "politics manipulated religion" while when Jesus died, "religion manipulated politics".³⁷ Therefore, he calls the political and religious leaders to have wholehearted repentance and to serve God. He also invites the political

³⁵ *TVRI* is an abbreviation of *Televisi Republik Indonesia* (Republic of Indonesia's Television). It is the oldest television channel, a state-owned public network broadcasting.

³⁶ Stephen Tong has been invited to preach in many international meetings as a plenary speaker such as in the Second Lausanne Congress in Manila, and the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation held by the Ligonier Ministries in Orlando. He is actually a renaissance man. He is a conductor of the Jakarta Simfonia Orchestra and Jakarta Oratorio Society. He composes many Christian hymns. He also is an architect which has designed more than 40 church buildings. With more than 80 books in Chinese and Indonesian, he is also a well-known theologian especially among the Chinese- and Indonesian-speaking worlds. Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia granted him a honorary doctor of divinity in 2008.

³⁷ Tong means by "politics manipulated religion" (*politik memperalat agama*) things such as the act of Herod the Great asking information from priests in Jerusalem about the birth of Messiah. Tong means by "religion manipulated politics" (*agama memperalat politik*) things such as the acts of chief priests, the scribes, and the elders who used Pilate to fulfil their hatred and malice of Jesus.

leaders to serve the people with honesty, justice and love. At the same occasion, he also invites governors, rectors, lecturers, and so forth to stop corruption.

Stephen Tong is also frequently quoted by the wide-range media mainly through the seminar held by the Reformed Center for Religion and Society (RCRS/ *Pusat Pengkajian Reformed bagi Agama dan Masyarakat*). This is a think tank established by Stephen Tong and Benyamin F. Intan, the leaders of the International/Indonesia Reformed Evangelical Church (*Gereja Reformed Injili Indonesia/Internasional/ GRII*). In a seminar in August 2016, Tong says that a good government is a government that fears the Lord since the principle of the fear of the Lord brings respect to the people who are created by God (satuharapan.com, 6 August 2016). A good government, Tong continues, also has respect for its people who are created as the image and likeness of God. A good government that fears the Lord does not have excessive ambition for power or, in the Indonesian idiom, *tidak gila kuasa* (does not have a crazy-like desire of power). Such kind of ambition might bring animal-like abuse and killing of each other. In other words, Tong says, a good government that fears and honours God will hunger for the welfare of its nation. In another seminar held by RCRS in August 2017, Tong says that the Christian contributions in the fighting for the nation's independence and the building of Indonesian nationalism are beyond doubt (beritasatu.com, 19 August 2017). He then encourages the Christian church members to get involved in the building of the nation's nationalism in this recent time. A deteriorated nationalism of Indonesia must be also the responsibility of Christians.

In addition to the publication of Stephen Tong's lectures and speeches, I want to mention the publication of another Protestant theologian who frequently speaks to journalists, namely, Andreas Anangguru Yewangoe. He is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Pancasila Ideology Development Council (*Badan Pembinaan Ideologi Pancasila/ BPIP*) established by the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, in February 2018. He was a pastor of *Gereja Kristen Sumba* (Sumba Christian Church) and was chairman of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (*Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia/ PGI*) for ten years.

In the context of the 2013 East Nusa Tenggara governor election, Yewangoe points out that churches must stay away from practical politics, pastors must not avoid being a successful team of governor candidates, and biblical verses must not be manipulated for political interests (beritasatu.com, 25 January 2013). The main task of churches is moral politics rather than practical politics, which is the church's dignity. In critical cases, the church must involve itself in practical politics, especially whenever the state is threatened with collapse through various sources or reasons. In the context of the 2016 election of Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara's city major, when religions and religiosity were utilized to increase the number of votes, he suggested

that religion must not be mingled with politics since politics prioritizes professionalism which means intellect and skill must be preeminent over religious background (satuharapan.com, 22 July 2016). In the 2019 Easter service in front of the governor's office in Manado, Yewangoe says, "Human life is not merely a technical matter. Without love, human life is not a true life. God has loved us as evidenced in the Easter. Thus, we have to show our love to others" (manado.tribunnews.com, 21 April 2019). Yewangoe still speaks in Indonesia's public sphere even if he is no longer the chairman of the largest Protestant institution, *PGI*. The institution has been experiencing a significant transformation during recent years and has become braver in speaking out in Indonesia's public sphere.

3.5.1.2 The Protestant institution

In addition to the voices of individual Protestant leaders and theologians, the voice of Protestant organizations has also been heard in Indonesia's public spheres. I mention one organization here to represent others: *Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia* or *PGI*. From the beginning, PGI has been playing the role of "the representative [of churches] before the national government" (van den End & Weitjens 1998, 390). Though churches have usually and directly engaged with the government, PGI still plays a central role in political issues and ecclesiastical life. Sadly, along with the New Order regime, PGI has compromised and taken sides with Soeharto's government such as by accepting *Pancasila* as the only principle or *satu-satunya asas* (Intan 2000, 177-178). In line with that, in 1998 PGI showed respect to Soeharto by offering money and gold collected from congregations although the people and congregations were stricken with a great financial crisis and the New Order government had lost its political legitimacy (Intan 2000, 194). In short, during the New Order government, "the churches in Indonesia [read: PGI]...did not only lose their critical function and their corrective role, but also as a spiritual institution [PGI] had been politicized" (Intan 2000, 177-178). Therefore, during the New Order regime, the voice of PGI in the public sphere was not a critical-corrective voice.

PGI usually speaks in the public sphere through pastoral letters and press conferences. Pastoral letters are mainly sent to churches or organizations as members of PGI and will be read or published through church bulletins. Press conferences are mainly published through print, electronic channels and online media. For instance, in responding to the bomb attacks at three churches in Surabaya on 13 May 2018,³⁸ PGI voiced certain opinions such as inviting religious leaders to anticipate and be aware of the emergence of radicalism among religious believers and

³⁸ On Sunday morning, 13 May 2018, one family consisting of a father, a mother, and three children divided into three groups attacked three churches in Surabaya: an ecumenical church *GKI Diponegoro*, a Catholic church *Gereja Santa Maria Tak Bercela*, and a Pentecostal church *GPPS Arjuno* (bbc.com, 13 May 2018).

inviting people not to distribute pictures and videos of victims to avoid the spread of fear, which is the main purpose of the terrorists (antaranews.com, 13 May 2018). On the same occasion, PGI also asked the political elites to stop agitating the social atmosphere by politicizing the terrorist attacks (cnnindonesia.com, 13 May 2018). One important appeal from PGI was the rejection of the *Monas* field for the Christmas service of the Jakarta province because of the possibility it would be politicized (news.detik.com, 15 December 2017). Facing the direct and simultaneous regional election, 27 June 2018 in 171 regional and provinces, PGI asked the churches not to enter the practical political arena in terms of supporting certain candidates (kabar24.bisnis.com, 15 January 2018). In short, compared to the era of the New Order regime, in this Reformation Order PGI has had a more critical and corrective voice toward the government and has given a more supportive tone to the civic democratic values in Indonesia's public sphere. A sharp criticism might emerge that PGI has tried to keep things sweet in every age: in the New Order regime, it was silent because it was afraid of the government, while in the Reformation Order era, it was brave because it went along with the current that dared to criticize the government. A braver step than what PGI did has been taken by Ahok, a Protestant politician, who dares to bring the biblical-unique verses and voices into the public sphere.

3.5.1.3 Protestant politician

Last but not least, there have been many Protestant politicians that had or have been involved in the public sphere in order to contribute for the common good of Indonesian society. In the 21st century we may mention several names such as Christianto Wibisono, and Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), and Luhut Binsar Panjaitan. For the sake of brevity, I will explore only Ahok's words in the Indonesian media.

Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok is one of the most famous Protestant politicians in recent years. In 2005-2006, he was the regent of East Belitung, an island close to Sumatra. When the recent president Jokowi was standing for Jakarta's governor elections in 2012, he chose Ahok to be his vice governor candidate. They were elected, becoming the governor and the vice governor for the term 2012-2017. Ahok then became the vice governor in 2012-2014. In 2014, Jokowi was elected as the president of the country. Ahok then continued his office as the governor of the capital of Indonesia until the end of the term in 2017. Ahok is a devout Protestant and according to Singgih, he belongs to the Reformed Evangelical congregation (Singgih 2019, 28). Until this time, he has never become a member of the Indonesia Reformed Evangelical Church founded by Stephen Tong. He was a member of *Gereja Kristus Yesus* (GKY/ Jesus Christ Church) in Pluit, Jakarta, and was even elected as a deacon. Though he does not belong to the Reformed

Evangelical church, he has been most influenced by Stephen Tong by listening to his tapes and attending his seminars. Ahok confesses that he is deeply influenced by Reformed/ Calvinist thought, especially in political thought. Ahok often acknowledges that he reads the writings of John Calvin and Abraham Kuyper (Panggabean 2016, 34). He even declares that “I am a Reformed” (Panggabean 2016, 189). Most of all, Ahok is deeply influenced by Stephen Tong who led him to Reformed thinking (Panggabean 2016, 189). Ahok is also well known as being very close to Stephen Tong, who is praised in Christianity as a pastor who clearly keeps his distance from money and political power (Panggabean 2016, 198). In short, Ahok can be recognized as “a spiritual son of Stephen Tong” (Aritonang 2018, 264). Ahok’s contributions to the nation and his courage to bring biblical voices into the public sphere inevitably aroused praise in spite of the controversy among Christians concerning his divorce and remarriage. As recently recognized by Ahok himself, Indonesian Christians and Chinese people have been strongly criticizing, accusing, and opposing his divorce and remarriage and making him not as well-liked as before, especially among those groups.

Ahok says that in serving as a public official, he always uses the Bible as the guide (merdeka.com, 17 January 2015). Through the Bible, God leads him to build the world according to his will. This is why when he was jailed for two years, his main activity was reading the Bible (tribunnews.com, 7 February 2018). Reading the Bible has been his favourite spiritual activity since he was young. Ahok then often quotes the Bible in the public sphere. In a seminar held by the *Reformed Center for Religion and Society*, a Protestant theologian, Benyamin F. Intan, asked him whether he wanted to be president or not (kompas.com, 17 January 2015). He actually wanted to quote a Bible verse but forgot the reference and just partially mentioned the content of the verse. The verse was 1 Timothy 1:12: “I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service”³⁹. When he was facing difficulties in his candidacy for the 2017 governor election, he quoted Matthew 6:34, “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (satuharapan.com, 17 March 2016). When Jokowi, who politically is very close to Ahok, chose Ma’ruf Amin, a former leader of the Indonesian Ulema Council, a Muslim organization, who delivered a *fatwa* (decree) which accused Ahok of blasphemy to Islam’s Quran, Ahok sent a Bible verse (surabaya.bisnis.com, 10 August 2018; also solopos.com, 11 August 2018). Ahok quoted Luke 6:27-28, in which Jesus teaches us to love, to bless, and to pray for our enemy. The content of the verses was explicitly mentioned in the public sphere.

³⁹ All biblical verses quoted in this dissertation are taken from the English Standard Version, in www.esv.org. The usage of other translations will be noticed.

Ahok not only quotes the Bible, but also often cites Jesus Christ's name in the public sphere. Facing the 2014 general election, Ahok, in a seminar held by the *Reformed Center for Religion and Society* in the Indonesian Reformed Evangelical Seminary, Kemayoran, Jakarta, said that *blusukan* (a Javanese term for entering villages) which was popularized by Jokowi, was actually inspired by Jesus himself (tempo.co, 5 April 2014). For Ahok, the key to success for Jesus' ministry is visiting villages to share his goodness. During the court session for the case of religious blasphemy, Ahok was accused of being an infidel (tribunnews.com, 24 January 2017). Ahok replied that he is not an infidel. He believes in Jesus Christ as Lord. When the final judicial process of his case ended with a sentence of two years in jail, Ahok said his suffering was nothing compared to Jesus Christ's sacrifice, suffering and crucifixion (cnnindonesia.com, 4 April 2018). It is not only Ahok who is bringing the biblical voices into the public sphere; several Protestant theologians are also doing the same thing, mainly through publishing their articles in the most widely circulated newspaper in Indonesia, *Kompas*.

3.5.2 Protestant theologians' articles in *Kompas* daily

I will now focus my research on articles by four Indonesian Protestant theologians in *Kompas* daily, mostly in the opinion section. *Kompas* is considered to be "Indonesia's most prestigious and largest-selling daily...[the] largest 'quality' newspaper in South-East Asia", and has "earned a reputation for analytical depth and polished style" (Sen & Hill 2007, 57). *Kompas* had even reached 700000 copies (Hill 1994, 141) before the explosion of information technology which led many readers to read the online version. In this context, I should say that *Kompas* has also a very influential opinion section. Articles in *Kompas* are usually used as references by the government, observers, the public and lecturers at the universities. According to Sri Hartati Samhadi, an editor of *Kompas* who handles the opinion section, *Kompas*' opinions are accessed by the decision makers in the government and in business companies, university professors, educational lecturers, students, researchers, non-governmental organizations, other intellectual groups, and the common people (Samhadi 2017). The opinions in *Kompas* are the best storefront to stage ideas related to important issues for the lives of the nation, the state and society. According to Samhadi, out of the 50-90 articles sent to the editors, only 3-6 articles are accepted for publication on the *Kompas* opinion page.

Here I will analyse the articles of four Protestant theologians who have written in *Kompas*, namely, Benyamin F. Intan, Yonky Karman, Martin Lukito Sinaga, and Anwar Tjen. Intan is the President of The International Reformed Evangelical Seminary (*STT Reformed Injili Internasional*) in Jakarta. Intan got a Ph.D from Boston College, USA. Karman is a lecturer of

Jakarta Theological Seminary (now becoming *Jakarta Theological and Philosophical Seminary*). Karman finished his master's degree at *Calvin Theological Seminary*, USA, and his doctoral degree at *Evangelische Theologische Faculteit*, Belgium. Sinaga is a lecturer at *Jakarta Theological Seminary*. He formerly worked at the *Lutheran World Federation* and is a pastor of *Simalungun Protestant Church* (GKPS). Sinaga did all of his theological degrees at *Jakarta Theological Seminary*, including his doctorate, which was awarded by *Southeast Asia Graduate School of Theology*, a consortium of seminaries including *Jakarta Theological Seminary*. Tjen is a leader of the *Indonesia Bible Society* and did his doctoral studies at *Cambridge University*, UK.

There are several analytical notes from their articles. First, though these theologians write in the public sphere and can be accessed by various readers, including those who are not Christians, they still use Protestant theological reflections. They do not try to avoid using their particular Protestant language and reasons in the multireligious public sphere of Indonesia. I will now give some examples. In these examples, it is clear that public theology is functioning well. Public theology indeed is an effort to bring forward the Christian or Protestant theological heritage in order to engage with public issues. For instance, in an article published on 2 November 2017, Sinaga writes a reflection on the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation entitled "After Five Centuries of Protestant Reformation" (*Setelah Lima Abad Reformasi Protestan*). Sinaga begins his article with a historical analysis of Martin Luther's "crisis of faith" about "the selling of indulgences" by referring to Luther's *On Christian Liberty* (1520). Departing from the doctrine of *sola fide*, Sinaga shows the impact of the salvation of human beings in the presence of the "ethic of gratitude" which is shown in doing good things to others. "The freedom of faith" results in the equality of each person before God. This freedom of faith becomes a counterbalance to the authority of religious leaders. The subjectivism is developed through the personal interpretation and the contemplation of religious narration. This is "an initial process of social emancipation" where "the continuity of society happens", not in the form of religious or social hierarchy but "born in a form of public sphere". Sinaga then leads readers' opinion to two important impacts of the ecclesiastical Reformation, namely, the idea of religious tolerance and the notion of the separation of religious institutions from political institutions, mainly through Luther's teaching of two kingdoms. The idea of religious tolerance and the institutional differentiation as the fruits of the Protestant Reformation become very vital in the context of Indonesian society which is multicultural and in which there is a politicization of religion.

An Easter reflection on 26 March 2016 written by Tjen is interesting since the editors of *Kompas* daily published it on the first page. Usually, the Easter or Christmas reflections published on the first page are written by Catholic bishops or pastors since *Kompas* was originally very close

to the Catholic community. *Kompas* was established in 1965 by “Chinese and Javanese Catholic journalists on the initiative of the Catholic Party in an attempt to present a Catholic voice in the cacophony of 1960s Indonesian politics...” (Hill 1994, 83). For instance, the Easter reflection on the first page of *Kompas* on 20 April 2019 was written by Mgr. I Suharyo, the leader of the Indonesian Catholic church who had just been ordained as a cardinal by Pope Francis in September 2019. The Christmas reflection on the first page of *Kompas* on 24 December 2019 entitled “The History of God, the Story of Human Being” (*Sejarah Tuhan, Kisah Manusia*) was written by Haryatmoko, a well-known Catholic pastor and philosopher. Recently, *Kompas* published the 2020 Easter reflection written by Sinaga on the first page entitled “Like Puncturing a Finger in a Healed Scar” (*Bagai Mencucukan Jari di Bekas Luka yang Sembuh*, 11 April 2020). In this article, Sinaga brings his Protestant-biblical reflection on the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ and implies them on the covid-19 pandemic context.

Tjen writes an article entitled “Meet him who rose at the table in Emmaus” (*Bertemu Dia yang Bangkit di Meja Emaus*). As a biblical scholar, Tjen includes popular biblical studies in his writing. Calling Galilee “the territory of ‘other’ (*goyim*) nations” and the reference to Josephus about the crucifixion of thousands of Jews confirm Tjen’s biblical scholarship. Not only that, he also begins his article by paraphrasing biblical narration before writing his critical reflections. A biblical text is given before its interpretation, very similar to a commentary book. Tjen’s reflection also draws together the biblical text anchored in its context and contemporary context of the readers. For example, he draws together “the worst news from a world surrounded by death” which often weighed down on the pilgrims in Jesus’ day, and “the context which until now is marked by multi-face of anti-life violence”. He then gives concrete examples of various violent episodes in Indonesia. In the obituary of Stephen Hawking (20 March 2018), Tjen explains the doctrine of common grace with specific reference to Matthew 5:45 which is one of the most important texts on the doctrine. By the common grace of God, Hawking, who did not believe in God, still had great humanitarian visions: opposing military invasion of other countries, accusing the destructive effects of technological efficiency and productivity which is actually built upon an “egocentric dream”, and the universe as a shared or common house.

Second, the articles written by Protestant theologians in the public sphere do not necessarily contain praise of the church. Rather, those articles often contain an auto-criticism of the church itself. In his Easter reflection, Tjen criticizes the church as being interested in “the golden-crowned Messiah rather than the thorny-crowned Messiah”. Here, he is condemning the prosperity gospel and bemoaning the fondness of the church for the luxurious and expensive decoration in its magnificent buildings. Tjen says, “The Emmaus narration asks us to have auto-

critic". This auto-criticism is based on the notion of "God who travelled the miserable path". Sinaga also practises auto-criticism relating to the golden-crowned Messiah in his article "The truth governing in our heart" (*Kebenaran Memerintah dalam Hati Kita*, 23 December 2017). For him, Christmas must be authentic through the peace given by God and work itself out across communities and across religions. Here, the truth about peace must govern the hearts of the children of God to embrace their neighbours peacefully. Christmas, in Sinaga's reference to Vaclav Havel, must be a form of "living in truth". "If Christmas is exaggerated or its prestige is sparkled", Sinaga criticizes, "people will respond to it as the news of the falsity of Christmas". Just as Tjen echoes the news about the thorny-crowned Messiah, not the golden-crowned, Sinaga echoes the news about Christmas that came in a peaceful manger, not in a splendid palace. In his more recent article regarding the covid-19 pandemic which sweeping the world in the early of 2020, Karman criticizes the incorrect and narrow view of the church which considering virus as God's tiny creature to punish human being ("Plague Anthropodise"/ *Antropodise Wabah*, 13 April 2020).

Third, even though Protestant theologians depart from the theological thinking of a particular religious community, when speaking in the public sphere they encourage the positive role of religions in general. Intan sees that as a *Pancasila* state, Indonesia is different from a secular or religious state. The secular state guarantees freedom of religion only at the private level. The religious state guarantees the activities of the majority religion in the public sphere while restricting the works of other religions. The *Pancasila* state is "neutral-public" (*netral-publik*) in that the state "guarantees the freedom of all religions, not only limited to the private sector, but also includes the public sphere" ("Dialogue" Public Religion "/ *Dialog Agama Publik*, February 5, 2010). For Intan, religious freedom is actually secured by the second to fifth principles of *Pancasila*, but the first principle, "The One and Only Lordship" is unique in terms of its encouragement of the progress of religious activities in the public sphere. Following Gus Dur, Intan sees that the public role of religions is primarily "social ethics" (*etika kemasyarakatan*). At the level of civil society, religions as social ethics are trying to empower their potential strengths to engage with the public issues of society. One of them is the positive role of religion in making the political life of the nation more moral and ethical. In addition to moral and ethical issues, the public role of religions, in Intan's view, must be carried out in dialogue to form a "common good" ("Pluralism and Common Good"/ *Pluralisme dan Kebajikan Bersama*, 27 February 2009). Borrowing Rawls's idea of an "Overlapping Consensus", Intan sees that this common good can be a dialogue with the great virtues of each religion that include cooperation, fairness, rationality,

and tolerance. This common good is a unity of the partial good in every religion that is not contrary to the beliefs and teachings of each religion.

Fourth, of course the writings of these Protestant theologians also contain constructive criticism toward government policy and the practice of state administration. In an article entitled “Indonesian Resilience” (*Resiliensi Indonesia*, 21 April 2018), Karman criticizes the slow pace of bureaucratic reform in the regions as evidenced by the corruption of their political elites. For him, removing structural barriers, for instance, brought about by eradicating corruption and bureaucratic reformation are the main pre-conditions for Indonesia to be able to move forward. Bureaucratic reformation at the national level has shown significant progress, but it is still slow at the regional level. Bureaucratic reformation and the eradication of corruption are based on the mental revolution of the state administrators. Karman considers that not all state organizers are statesmen in the sense that they are not professional in taking care of the country so that it slows down the progress of the state (“Liberal Democracy Returns”/ *Demokrasi Liberal Kembali*, March 21, 2018). He gives an example. Laws produced by the legislative institutions are not only far removed from the targets they themselves set, but also the laws produced tended to be done in a hurry and without going through public examination so that they later caused chaos in the state administration. The non-statesmen governmental organizers can occupy public positions because from the beginning there are many impromptu candidates who have no “statesman track record” (“Post-Election Republic”/ *Republik Pasca Pemilu*, 12 April 2019). They only capitalize on their popularity, the support of parents who are former officials and their own financial support but do not understand the intricacies of state administration. Their purpose in appearing on the political stage is to try their luck, for their own sake. No wonder, when they take office, they actually “hijack the welfare quota that is actually the people’s right” (*membajak jatah kesejahteraan yang sebenarnya hak rakyat*).

Fifth, Protestant theologians appear in the public sphere especially in *Kompas* daily with the courage to criticize free market doctrine. “Free market doctrine”, Karman writes, “is a deregulation as perfect as possible and a regulation as minimum as possible (*laissez-faire*)” (“State Privatization”/ *Swastanisasi Negara*, 1 March 2008). The conviction of market fundamentalism forbids intervention in the market by the state. On a positive level, this belief leads market participants to strive for competence and efficiency in the expectation that consumers will in turn reap benefits, and economic and social problems are resolved on their own. This belief is not necessarily perfect in its implementation. Karman gives an example. Free competition is not successful in reducing the price of goods because there are cartels controlling the market and the competition from behind like Godzilla. Karman’s criticism of the state and the market marks the

need for other theoretical schemes to justify and empower not only him but also his fellow Protestant theologians in particular and other religious thinkers in general to bring criticism of the state and the market from religious points of view.

3.5.3 The need for other theoretical schemes

Although Christianity, especially Protestants, might speak in Indonesia's multicultural public sphere, there are some problems or notes that need other theoretical schemes to solve them. First, religious voices are very loud in Indonesia's public sphere, even the voices of the Protestant minority, using their own particular language and reasons. This means that Indonesia's public sphere must not be a liberal one since in order to defend the principle of neutrality, this model of the public sphere does not allow all religious justifications. Referring to Seyla Benhabib's study, Casanova sees that his thesis of the deprivatization of modern religion does not fit the liberal public sphere since the liberal model of "public dialogue" and its "neutrality" impose certain "conversational restraints" which excludes everything called private matters, including religious discourse (Casanova 1994, 64-65). In Indonesia's history, according to Latif's study, there was a liberal government in the second part of the 19th century, endorsed by private businessmen and middle class, which tried to promote the secular public sphere in the Dutch East Indies (Latif 2011, 60). However, the privatization of religion actually triggered the revival of the public role of religion with "the ideological tendency of religion and the mobilization of its role in the public-political arena" (Latif 2011, 62-63). Hence, the liberal model of the public sphere does not fit Indonesia's history and society. Rather, a theoretical scheme is needed to interpret and justify the religious voices of such as the Protestants. That theoretical scheme is a theory of the postsecular public sphere. The core of postsecularism is a complementary learning process between the religious and the secular citizens in a multicultural society (Hardiman 2018, 192-193). For F. Budi Hardiman, this complementary learning process is not unfamiliar for Indonesia since it is included in the national ideology, *Pancasila*. He says that *Pancasila* is indeed the national and state worldview that has a dialogue between Lordship (the first principle) and the second to fifth principles which concern various dimensions of civilization, namely, humanitarianism, nationalism, democracy and social justice. He then concludes, "Without being noisy with postsecularism, Indonesia is actually postsecular, at least in its blueprint". One of the thinkers who pays a great deal of attention to the notion of postsecularism is Habermas. Hardiman finds, "Habermas's thesis in his old age of postsecular society opens a new dimension that is very useful for understanding the relation between the state and religious groups in a plural society such as Indonesia" (Hardiman 2018, 196).

Second, though the minority Protestants may speak in the public sphere, it does not mean that Indonesia's public sphere is in fact a quite-plural public sphere. Instead, it is, as I called it earlier, a quasi-plural public sphere. Even after the 1998 Reformation, the public sphere of Indonesia is dominated by the religion of the majority. Militant groups are trying to occupy the public sphere. These efforts are evidenced, for instance, by the accusation of blasphemy against Ahok, the former Governor of Jakarta, with huge demonstrations in the public square, and the demand to remove Christmas decorations from the public sphere (see Singgih 2019, 25-39)⁴⁰. Meanwhile, Indonesia is not a religious state. Instead, it is a Pancasila-based state. Thus, Indonesia's public sphere is *Pancasila*-based which, according to the aforementioned Intan's study, is open to the involvement of all religions. The first principle of *Pancasila* does not only guarantee but also encourage the progress of religious activities in the public sphere. In concluding his explanation of the first principle of *Pancasila*, Latif asks us to bring back religions' ethics and prophetic mission into public life in order that religions make a big contribution to "the creation of the democratic culture and the progress of the nation" (Latif 2011, 120). Therefore, we need a philosophical empowerment of the *Pancasila*-based public sphere since the conception of plurality in the public sphere is vital for making it necessary for the participants to communicate with each other. This kind of conception is found in Arendt's notion of the public sphere. Moreover, facing the thesis of the privatization of religions as proposed by the liberals, we need a philosophical empowerment to find at least the cognitive potential of religions that might contribute in the public sphere by emphasizing the authority of better arguments as thought by Habermas. In addition to these philosophical empowerments of the *Pancasila*-based public sphere, on the side of the Protestants we need a theology that might accommodate confessional pluralism or at least a friendly approach to pluralism as described by Kuyper. It is not a coincidence that *Pancasila*'s pluralism, according to P. Eric Louw, was shaped by a theology of pluralism, namely, Kuyperian pluralism (Louw 2004, 210 quoted in Intan 2019, 62). In Benyamin F. Intan's study, the principle of sphere sovereignty with its principle of structural pluralism and confessional pluralism as articulated by Kuyper fits the Indonesian context. Since Indonesia is not a secular country, the state should acknowledge the public role of each religion especially in that Indonesia's history has proven that various religions in Indonesia made a vital contribution to the country's independence. Thus, for Intan, "the idea of confessional pluralism may flourish in a *Pancasila*-based state" (Intan 2019, 72). On the other hand, since Indonesia is not a theocratic

⁴⁰ In the context of the Jakarta's provincial election 2017, Ahok or Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, a Chinese, Christian, even a Reformed Evangelical incumbent who quoted a verse of the Qur'an was accused by the Muslim radicals as blasphemous. This accusation ended up with the imprisonment of Ahok himself. While close to the time of Ahok's case, the radicals came again to fight against the usage of Christmas decorations, such as Santa Claus' hat, in the public sphere. See the study of Emanuel Gerrit Singgih in Singgih 2019, 25-39.

state, which implies that religion cannot officially control the state, hence, “*Pancasila* appreciates the idea of structural pluralism”. In short, the idea of confessional pluralism as thought by Kuyper endorses each confessional group, i.e., religion having public expression through various social institutions. The idea of structural pluralism believes that as each social institution receives its sovereignty from God it thus becomes a sovereign sphere, in which other social spheres may not intervene.

Third, I have explained above how Protestant theologians launched criticisms of the church, the state and the market. In order that such criticisms might continue and theologians or religions carry out their social functions well, it is necessary to strengthen the public sphere through a theoretical framework that understands the public sphere as being “undifferentiated”, and in which religion can carry out deprivatization properly (Casanova 1994, 65-66). Criticism in the public sphere presupposes an ideal public sphere where there is no restriction of the themes of public dialogue by the state, the market, or the church. This is exactly one of the characteristics of the ideal public sphere as proposed by Habermas. In addition, the core of the criticisms of Protestant theologians are directed against the extravagant church, the corruption by political elites, and free market doctrine in which financial benefits hurt humanity: in these three areas there are the invasions of private interests into those entities which are by nature public. Here, we should pay attention to Arendt’s criticism of the invasion of private interests in the public sphere and her empowerment of it in order to provide a notion of public sphere which is free of private interests. Habermas continues Arendt’s criticism in his criticism toward the refeudalization of the public sphere. The notion of refeudalization means that the state and the market return to hegemonic interventions into the public sphere, whereby it loses its autonomous and critical character (Hardiman 2010, 194-195). For F. Budi Hardiman, Arendt’s and Habermas’ analysis about the refeudalization of the public sphere and private expansion into the public sphere are very relevant for the post-Soeharto Indonesian society (Hardiman 2010, 198-199). Hardiman suspects the expansion of market interests in the public sphere in this Reformation era (after 1998), for example through the commercialization of citizens’ conversations in the public sphere (Hardiman 2010, 199-200). In addition, the invasions of private interests are evidenced through the large investment of the media and the bureaucracy elites to secure their private interests and through the change of parliament’s function, for instance, from a place for exercising political activities becoming a place for exchanging political commodities.

Fourth, the theoretical schemes needed for various reasons must be articulated in a theology of the public sphere. The building of the theology of the public sphere may function not only to strengthen Indonesia’s public sphere in a more radical and foundational legitimacy but

also to justify the voice of religious people in general and the voice of Protestants in particular (read: public theology) in the public sphere. Because theoretical schemes that are currently used now are not strung together into a coherent theoretical building, there is a gap that which prevents public theology to become a more effective force in contributing to the present struggle. Thus, we are now moving on to the next chapters where I will elaborate the thoughts of Arendt and Habermas on the public sphere and the Kuyperian principle of sphere sovereignty, which will end up with constructing a theology of the public sphere.

Chapter 4

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE ACCORDING TO HANNAH ARENDT

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have indicated how public theology in general, Indonesia's public theology and the public sphere, in particular, need Arendt's philosophy of the public sphere. In this chapter, I intend to explore her philosophy of the public sphere.

Arendt's contribution to the philosophy of the public sphere is widely praised, both her philosophy and her influence on Habermas as the most important philosopher of this theme. Seyla Benhabib is right when she says, "Without doubt Hannah Arendt is the central political thinker of this century whose work has reminded us with great poignancy of the lost treasures of our tradition of political thought, and specifically of the loss of public space, of *der öffentliche Raum*, under conditions of modernity" (Benhabib 1992, 74). Hence, Arendt and also Habermas come forward to solve the problem. The primary goal of Arendt's political philosophy and Habermas' critical theory, according to Dana R. Villa, is "the recovery of the public realm" (Villa 1992, 712). Their attempts certainly designate Arendt and Habermas becoming the most prominent thinkers of the theme (cf. Calhoun 2001, 701).

Arendt is considered as a significant philosopher of the public sphere, mainly, because of her influence on Habermas. Craig Calhoun recognizes that in articulating his theory of the public sphere, Habermas involves in certain vital dialogues with other key works, mainly that of Arendt (Calhoun 1992b, 4). Benhabib summarizes the vital influence of Arendt on Habermas when she says, "Jürgen Habermas is indebted to Hannah Arendt not only through the latter's rediscovery of the concept of the public space - *der öffentliche Raum*. Habermas's crucial distinction between 'labor' and 'interaction', which is at the origin of his concept of 'communicative action', is deeply indebted to Arendt's critique of Karl Marx in *The Human Condition* and to her own differentiation between work, labor, and action" (Benhabib 2000, 199). In short, Benhabib concludes, "Arendt's discovery of the linguistic structure of human action...gave one of the principal impetuses to Habermas's subsequent theory of communicative action. Arendt's concept of public space is the second and equally important conceptual legacy that she imparted to Habermas".

Both fulfilling the needs of public theology and Indonesia's public sphere and the vital importance of her philosophy of the public sphere urge me to go to explain her philosophy in detail. In short, this chapter consists of the philosophical description of the public sphere and the

crises of the public sphere. I would first describe two important notions that defining the term “public”, namely, space of appearance and the common world.

4.2 The public sphere as space of appearance and the common world

The term “public” is explained by Arendt in two interrelated non-identical phenomena: the space of appearance and the common world. By the notion of space of appearance, Arendt explains, “Everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity” (HC, 50). This audio-visual emphasis indicates that Arendt understands the public sphere as space with a dramatic setting for action and speech. “Wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action” then the “space of appearance comes into being” (HC, 199). The public sphere becomes like a theatrical stage where “noble and courageous deeds” are performed; and “memorable words” are uttered (D’Entrèves 1994, 153). By the expectation of “the widest possible publicity” of political actors, Arendt then avoids concealed actions or speeches and endorses the storytelling and “artistic transposition” of those matters. This definition indicates three constitutional elements of the dramatic public sphere: the visible actions and audible speeches of political actors; the audiences and hearers, or in a Pythagorean word used by Arendt, “spectators” (LKPP, 55);⁴¹ and the interconnection between them through seeing and hearing. As far as there are actors, audience, action, and speech, the space of appearance come into existence.

In her second definition of the term “public”, Arendt connects it to “the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our private owned place of it” (HC, 52). Arendt makes two differentiation regarding the notion of the common world. First, it is distinguished from the private world. Second, it is also distinguished from earth or nature as a habitat for organic creatures. The common world refers to human artifacts. It is fabricated by human hands that providing the world opening for all. Arendt says, “To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common”. Arendt uses a table as the metaphor to describe the world of things in-between, relating and separating human beings at a time.

⁴¹ Arendt says, “I shall give it to you in the simplest, least sophisticated form, in the form of a parable ascribed to Pythagoras: ‘Life... is like a festival; just as some come to the festival to compete, some to ply their trade, but the best people come as spectators [*theatai*], so in life the slavish men go hunting for fame [*doxa*] or gain, the philosophers for truth’. The data underlying this estimate are, first, that only the spectator occupies a position that enables him to see the whole; the actor, because he is part of the play, must enact his part—he is partial by definition. The spectator is impartial by definition—no part is assigned him. Hence, withdrawal from direct involvement to a standpoint outside the game is a condition sine qua non of all judgment. Second, what the actor is concerned with is *doxa*, fame—that is, the opinion of others (the word *doxa* means both “fame” and “opinion”). Fame comes about through the opinion of others. For the actor, the decisive question is thus how he appears to others (*dokei hois allois*); the actor is dependent on the opinion of the spectator; he is not autonomous (in Kant’s language); he does not conduct himself according to an innate voice of reason but in accordance with what spectators would expect of him. The standard is the spectator. And this standard is autonomous.” See LKPP, 55.

By establishing a space between individuals, connecting and separating them at the same time, the common world, which is “the world we hold in common”, “provides the physical context within which political action can arise” (D’Entrèves 1994, 142). Here, the common world is the concrete context for the space of appearance. In addition to this, the common world also provides permanency and durability for the space of appearance. The common world permanently exists and is “what we enter when we are born and what we leave behind when we die” (HC, 55). Political action and speech that are shown in the space of appearance have the unavoidable character of temporariness. In Arendt’s own words, great deeds and words will “leave no trace” and cannot “endure after the moment of action and the spoken word has passed” (HC, 173). This temporariness is rooted in the fact that human beings are “mortals - the most unstable and futile beings we know of” (BPF, 195). Meanwhile, those great deeds and words that are shown in the public space of appearance cannot be possessed only by one and living generation but “must transcend the life-span of mortal men” (HC, 55). Through the help of *homo faber* such as artists, poets, historiographers, monument-builders, or writers, deeds and words are well recorded for the next generations (HC, 173). In the context of the dramatic setting of the public sphere, Arendt dreams of the immortal⁴² performances and utterances of excellent political actors.

An actor who delivers speech and action herself is not the author. Through a story or a biography, the “somebody” of a hero is told (HC, 186). “*Who* somebody is or was”, Arendt writes, “we can know only by knowing the story of which he is himself the hero - his biography”. Arendt differentiates between the biography of a hero and everything else including the works or the writings left behind we can know about that hero. The former is the knowledge of *who* while the latter gives the knowledge of *what*. By a biography, the courage as a feature of freedom of action and speech of a hero can be presented (HC, 186). By a story as documented in a biography, the brightness of the glory of a hero is beamed and the name is cited (HC, 187). The story of a hero sometimes is played through a drama in the theater. Thus, the public sphere can become a space for self-disclosure.

4.3 The public sphere as space for self-disclosure

Arendt designates the public sphere as space for self-disclosure through action and speech. Becoming space for self-disclosure confirms the dramatic role of the public sphere like a theater in which many figures and characters are shown. Self-disclosure through action presupposes the plural public sphere because action corresponds to the human condition of plurality. This

⁴² Arendt differentiates between eternity and immortality. By the latter, she means, “endurance in time, deathless life on this earth and in this world as it was given” (HC, 18). By the former, she means, endurance out of time, outside of mortal life, in the life span of God. See HC, 17-21.

correspondence differentiates action from labor and work as three fundamental human activities. These activities correspond to the basic condition of human life on earth. Labor done by *animal laborans* is “the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body” (HC, 7). To have physical maintenance of the human body, human beings have to fulfill their vital necessities. Necessities make labor lose its freedom. In addition to that, labor usually requires solitariness without speaking together in order with full concentration to pursue productivity’s target set by the factory manager. Each laborer is charged to produce the same product as designed by the factory manager. Therefore, the user of the product cannot recognize the unique identity of a laborer. The impulse of necessity combined with the target of productivity makes the public sphere of labor cannot be a space of self-disclosure. Thus, each laborer may not freely share her own unique identity.

Work done by *homo faber* is “the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence” (HC, 7). To overcome human mortality, work provides “an ‘artificial’ world of things” distinguished from his or her natural habitat. Housing and all artificial tools fabricated by human hands are provided to transcend human mortality. While the human condition of labor is human life itself, the human condition of work is worldliness. The most important thing in work (either *techne* or *poiesis*) is that artificial tools can be utilized to overcome the limitation generated by human and nature’s conditions. Human being independently and secludedly employs his/her reason and creativity to think and to compose fit tools for helping human life. Generally, a tool constructed by a worker does not show his/her unique identity for the eminence of a tool is not its uniqueness but for its efficient function. Hence, the public sphere of work is not a space of self-disclosure.

While labor and work are activities which can be done by a human person alone without being related to others, action done by *zoon politikon*⁴³ is “the only activity that goes on directly between men...corresponds to the human condition of plurality” (HC, 7).⁴⁴ Plurality is not only the condition corresponded by action but also the *conditio sine qua non* and *conditio per quam* for all political life. As an indispensable and causative condition, plurality provides the possibility for political action. Arendt finds the most elementary form of plurality in the creation of the human being when Genesis 1:27 records the creation of male and female, the creation of them (HC, 8).

⁴³ In Aristotle’s work, *zoon politikon* is understood as “political animal”. Arendt rues Thomas Aquinas’ translation, “*homo est naturaliter politicus, id est, socialis*”. In her translation, “man is by nature political, that is, social”. Aquinas’ translation then becomes the standard translation. For Arendt, this unconscious translation “betrays the extent to which the original Greek understanding of politics had been lost”. See HC, 23.

⁴⁴ In her article, “What is Freedom”, Arendt says that action “is neither under the guidance of the intellect nor under the dictate of the will...but springs from something altogether different which...I shall call a principle” (BPF, 152). George Kateb finds that this principle is “a commitment, whether chosen or assigned, that has a kind of logic to which one submits, but the submission feels like an expansion, not a constriction” (Kateb 2000, 138).

Plurality then “is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live” (HC, 8). By this explanation, Arendt indicates that plurality has equality and distinction as its twofold character (HC, 175-176). Equality provides the possibility of mutual understanding among human beings. Distinction provides the necessity of mutual understanding among them. By her explanation, Arendt shows the position of equality and distinction as parts of the condition as the context for action and speech. Equality is not derived internally from human nature but outside of it (HC, 215). The existence of equality is artificially made. Arendt says, “We are not born equal;⁴⁵ we become equal as members of a group on the strength of our decision to guarantee ourselves mutually equal rights” (OT, 301). Arendt differentiates between distinction and otherness. Otherness is discovered only in “the sheer multiplication of inorganic objects”. While distinction can be found in all organic objects. Even though, only human beings can share their distinction with one another. Arendt then concludes, “Speech and action reveal this unique distinctness”.

The public sphere as a space of self-disclosure can only happen when several conditions are met. First, this kind of public sphere presupposes the equality of its participants. The recognition of equality as a given condition of human being is needed to maintain the publicness of the public sphere. Without equality, as in the feudal society, the public sphere becomes the space for the disclosure of the nobility of the royals and the peers and peeresses. Second, this kind of public sphere presupposes the distinction of its participants. The recognition of distinction as an artificial achievement is needed to develop the crowdedness and the richness of the public sphere. Without distinction, as in the mass society in which the individual unique identity has been killed, the public sphere becomes the space where the atomized persons are collected in uniformity. Thus, self-disclosure is demolished altogether.

⁴⁵ Arendt’s position of equality is different from the common understanding of it. For instance, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (Article 1) and Abraham Lincoln’s famous speech, “all men are created equal”. I believe in that we are born equal, especially as the image of God. While Arendt’s position, according to Jeremy Waldron, is that “[e]quality is a matter of value, decision, and attitude; it is not itself a fact” (Waldron 2010, 20). For Arendt, Waldron says, “facts themselves do not dictate values or principles”. Waldron in other work writes, “Arendt’s rejection of all theories of a natural basis for human equality is no doubt the reason that her observations about slavery and other forms of subjugation are expressed with sadness but not surprise: on the one hand, nothing forces a community to extend isonomy to all humans within its orbit; and on the other hand, a theory of natural equality runs the risk of holding that our natural similarities and dissimilarities are the ones that matter, whether they turn out finally to support the notion of equality or not” (Waldron 2000, 209). Hereafter is my view. Arendt herself believes in the universal human condition of natality with its capacity to initiate a new beginning. Arendt says, “The miracle that saves the world, the realm of human affairs, from its normal, “natural” ruin is ultimately the fact of natality, in which the faculty of action is *ontologically rooted*” (HC, 247. My emphasis). The human condition of natality is corresponded to action. Thus, I would say, for Arendt, every human being is born with the equal condition of natality and its capacity to initiate a new beginning, that is the capacity of freedom. Arendt herself believes in the bare fact that human beings are born equal. Arendt’s ambiguity is shown here. Waldron uses the philosophical concept of supervenience to assess Arendt’s position. He concludes, “My point the is that Arendt need not to be read as denying that equality supervenes upon certain facts simply because she denies that any facts about our nature compel us to adopt the principle” (Waldron 2010, 22).

To make explicit the unique distinctness and identity, action needs speech. Both action and speech have the same function in supplying the conscious and initiative distinction. These are the modes of human beings' appearance in a plural community. For Arendt, "A life without speech and without action...is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men" (HC, 176). Without action and speech, life becomes vanity in the sense of the biblical term in the book of Ecclesiastes. While action and speech that provide distinction make human being as human being, labor and work do not have that feature. Labor and work can occur without the presence of others, without being distinctive to others, even may be unjust, but the life of exploiter or slave-holder or parasite certainly still are human.

Apart from this similarity, Arendt differentiates between action and speech. Action corresponds to the fact of natality while speech corresponds to the fact of distinctness. Speech is the actualization of the human condition of plurality through which it discloses the uniqueness of a human being among the equal others. In addition to equality, Arendt truly believes in the presupposition that each man/woman is unique so that "with each birth something uniquely new comes into the world" (HC, 178). The pinpointing of speech is important since without speech the public sphere fails to be a space for self-disclosure. Speech even makes sure the crowdedness of the public sphere inhabited by many distinct individuals. We should say that Arendt does not desire a quiet public sphere. Therefore, the public sphere as understood by Arendt is not certainly just a geographical empty space accessible by citizens such as an empty square, or plaza.

Action needs speech to provide the answer to the question asked of every newcomer: "Who are you?" (HC, 178). In other words, speech discloses who somebody is. The existence of speech differentiates a political subject from a performing robot and brings out the revelatory character of an action. Hence, without speech, the public sphere becomes the storehouse of robots. Action without speech makes it remain incomprehensible to others. Arendt thus says, "Speechless action would no longer be action because there would no longer be an actor, and the actor, the doer of deeds, is possible only if he is at the same time the speaker of words" (HC, 178-179). Arendt states that in action and speech, human beings "show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world" (HC, 179). This unique personal identity is a disclosure of "who" as a contradistinction to "what". The quality, gift, talent, and shortcoming of a person can be shown through words and deeds. By this explanation, we may infer that the purpose of the public sphere is to become a space for disclosing who somebody is, for showing the unique personal identities of political actors.

Action needs speech not only for the disclosure of a unique identity but also to show the shining brightness of glory that is only possible only in the public sphere. This glory certainly

appears through the citation of a name. “Action without a name, a ‘who’ attached to it”, Arendt says, “is meaningless” (HC, 180-181). In this sense, action is differentiated from labor and work. While action needs the citation of a name, the results of labor and work remain relevant without the name of the slave or the art worker. We may imagine the public sphere in Arendt’s dream as a space full of excellency and glory, where heroic deeds and memorable words are delivered, where the name of political actors is exalted.

No wonder, action and speech are delivered in the public sphere with “a fiercely agonal spirit” (HC, 41). Arendt explains that by this spirit, “everybody had *constantly* to distinguish himself from all others, to show through unique deeds or achievements that he was *the best* of all (*aien aristeuein*)” (my emphasis). The word “agonal” derived from the Greek *agon*, *agonia* means “contest”. There is a constant contestation to present the best deeds or achievements, to present not only the distinction but the excellency of a private person among others so he or she will be acclaimed as the best of all. The Greek phrase *aien aristeuein* is taken from the sixth book of Homer’s *Iliad* meaning “to strive always to be the best” (Homer 2006, 130). Seyla Benhabib brings the characteristic of agony from merely spirit in Arendt’s thought becoming even the name of her model of the public sphere. Benhabib names Arendt’s model of space as the agonistic space.⁴⁶ This is “a competitive space” in which “moral and political greatness, heroism, and preeminence” are displayed to compete for “recognition, precedence, and acclaim” (Benhabib 1992, 78). For being able to participate in this competitive space, an actor has to have courage as part of freedom. This “competition” surely presupposes the freedom of political actors. This competitive space, thus, is a space for exhibiting courage as part of freedom.

4.4 The public sphere as space for freedom

The public sphere as the dramatic space is a stage for presenting freedom. This understanding is shown through her excavation of the notion of *polis* from the ancient Greek philosophy and culture and locating it as the important input for her notion of the public sphere. Arendt tries to bring out the *polis* from its geographical city-state model to a metaphorical space of appearance.

⁴⁶ The agonistic public sphere should be differentiated from agonistic pluralism proposed by the postmodern political philosopher such as Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau. The diametrical opposition of agonistic pluralism is deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy favors the discursive space instead of the dramatic setting in which the agonistic competition held. On agonistic pluralism, Mouffe writes, “Democratic citizenship can take many diverse forms and such a diversity, far from being a danger for democracy, is in fact its very condition of existence. This will, of course, create conflict and it would be a mistake to expect all those different understandings to coexist without dashing. But this struggle will not be one between ‘enemies’ but among ‘adversaries’, since all participants will recognize the positions of the others in the contest as legitimate ones. Such an understanding of democratic politics, which is precisely what I call ‘agonistic pluralism’, is unthinkable within a rationalistic problematic which, by necessity, tends to erase diversity. A perspective inspired by Wittgenstein, on the contrary, can contribute to its formulation, and this is why his contribution to democratic thinking is invaluable.” See Mouffe 2000, 74. Though different, Mouffe acknowledges that in building her idea of agonistic pluralism she receives the influences from the agonistic theorists such as Nietzsche and Arendt through William Connolly or Bonnie Honig (see Mouffe 2000, 107n31).

Based on a famous Greek expression “Wherever you go, you will be a *polis*”, Arendt sees the possibility of a *polis* whenever participants do “acting and speaking together” (HC, 198). At this point, it is clear for us that Arendt does not simply bring back the ancient Greek notion and puts it into the modern context. Arendt uses the notion of *polis* transformatively. The public sphere then has at least a very significant difference with the *polis*. Arendt adds the informal nuance of the public sphere to the formal reality of the ancient city-state, the *polis*. Thus, the public sphere now has the spatio-temporal multi-context which is not restricted only to single context such as in the ancient meaning of *polis*.

The sphere of *polis* as distinguished from the sphere of *oikos* (household) is dominated by freedom and equality (HC, 30-31). In a household, family members do not have freedom and equality to introduce their unique capabilities and identities since they are under the constraint of the necessity to cling to life. They are afraid of the condition of hunger and sickness. Therefore, under those necessities, they are willing to be under subjection, coercion or even violence. Meanwhile, in the sphere of *polis*, everyone has freedom and equality. At least she is free from the physical necessity and free from the domestic subjection (HC, 32). Equality then is strongly connected to freedom. Equality is “the very essence of freedom: to be free meant to be free from the inequality present in rulership and to move in a sphere where neither rule nor being ruled existed” (HC, 33). In the sphere of *polis*, every participant is free and equal to present his/her great deeds and to have great words. Arendt then wants to bring forward the sphere of *polis* as a solution for the crisis of the public sphere that resulted from modernity. The ideal of *polis* as the space for freedom must be the model of the public sphere in contemporary society (Benhabib 1992, 75). In the space of appearance dreamed by Arendt, “*freedom and equality reign*” (D’Entrèves 1994, 140; his emphasis).

Arendt differentiates freedom from liberation (BPF, 148). For her, liberation precedes freedom. Before freedom exists, there must be liberation from the necessities of life. Even though, liberation is automatically not followed up by freedom (OR, 19). A common public space is needed for certain free individuals to insert their deeds and words. Hence, without an open and free public sphere, freedom is non-existent. In other words, the public sphere is set up as a stage for the presentation of freedom.

For Arendt, freedom surpasses “a phenomenon of the will” (BPF, 151). The faculty of the will was discovered theoretically by St Paul in his letter to Romans (LM, II:6; Romans 7:18B) when he experienced its impotence. He states, “For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not” (BPF, 161). Therefore, Arendt sees the gap between willingness and ability. With this gap, there is no freedom. Arendt gives a solution, “Only where the I-will

and the I-can coincide does freedom come to pass” (BPF, 160). Freedom consists of inclination and capability. Arendt concludes, “Political freedom...consists in being able to do what one ought to will” (BPF, 161). The capability to act on one’s inclination will be shown through action. Arendt says, “Men *are* free...as long as they act...for to *be* free and to act are the same” (BPF, 153; her emphasis). Action as an experience of freedom is a kind of performance (BPF, 146, 153). Like the performing arts such as dance, play-acting, music, the artists require a certain audience to perform their virtuosity, political actors also need “a publicly organized space”, that is a space of appearance, the presence of others to show their action and speech (BPF, 154). Thus, freedom does not appear in all communities (BPF, 148-149). There is no freedom in the sphere of *oikos*, a tribal community, a despotically ruled community, and so forth. When human beings gather together without forming a body of politics or without the scene for action and speech then freedom does not come into reality. For Arendt, freedom “becomes the direct aim of political action, is actually the reason that men live together in political organization at all. Without it, political life as such would be meaningless. The *raison d’être* of politics is freedom, and its field of experience is action” (BPF, 146). Arendt wants concrete instead of abstract freedom. And this concrete freedom appears in the reality of the political community as the theater where human beings may show their action and speech. Here, “immediacy” has vital importance for Arendt’s idea of political freedom (Kaufman 2020, 115). Political freedom, as Arendt emphasizes elsewhere, depends “on the presence of others and on our being confronted with their opinions” (APP, 127). Immediacy is embodied when the polis “made room for and encouraged persons ‘acting and speaking directly to one another’” (Kaufman 2020, 115; Kaufman quoting Arendt from HC, 183; Arendt’s emphasis).

Freedom applied in front of others through action and speech requires the virtue of courage, a virtue we earlier touched upon briefly. As one of the cardinal political virtues, courage is “indispensable for political action” (BPF, 156). Courage is needed to liberate human beings from their comfort zone of the private realm, their protective security and their fret about daily consumptive and reproductive life to enter the dramatic public sphere to share new and unpredictable action and speech. The virtue of courage is shown in the moment of revolution. The revolutionists had “dared to defy all powers that be and to challenge all authorities on earth, whose courage was beyond the shadow of a doubt” (OR, 48). Even Maximilien Robespierre, the man highly associated with the French Revolution endorses Machiavelli’s writing: “We too ‘love our country more than the safety of our soul’” (OR, 27). The revolutionists dared to sacrifice their safety and security to initiate an entirely new beginning. In the term of the Arendtian understanding of revolution, Martin Luther, the 16th-century ecclesiastical reformer had courage

to oppose the entire existing Roman Catholicism to set up a new church (OR, 16). Even Jesus Christ was a revolutionist in whom we can see the courage to criticize and to resist the Jewish tradition and to constitute “a new beginning as well as a unique, unrepeatable event” (OR, 17). It is unavoidable to say that for Arendt, the public sphere is the space for the presentation of courage as an application of freedom.

Capacity to initiate a new beginning as found in Luther, Christ and the revolutionists is resulted by freedom. Freedom goes beyond the freedom of deciding among the existing choices to undergo spontaneity (BPF, 151, 166). Arendt explains freedom as the capacity to initiate a new and unexpected choice by relating it to the beginning which itself has the root in the etymology of action. Arendt writes, “To act, in its most general sense, means to take an initiative, to begin” (HC, 177). Arendt sees that the Greek word *archein* can be translated as “to begin”, “to lead”, and eventually “to rule”. The fundamental notion of supporting Arendt’s explanation is Augustine’s idea of *initium*. He says, “[*Initium*] *ergo ut esset, creatus est homo, ante quem nullus fuit*”. Arendt’s translation is, “that there be a beginning, man was created before whom there was no body” (HC, 177). The creation of man does not only bring the principle of beginning but also the principle of freedom into the world. The creation of human being and natality of the individual in the next generation reaffirm the initial beginning: “something new comes into an already existing world” (BPF, 167). Arendt says, “Because he *is* a beginning, man can begin; to be human and to be free are one and the same. God created man in order to introduce into the world the faculty of beginning: freedom”. This new beginning has the character of unexpectedness (HC, 178). The experience of a new beginning as resulted from freedom can be shown in the moment of revolutions “because revolutions are the only political events which confront us directly and inevitably with the problem of beginning” (OR, 11). For Arendt, it is crucial for the very nature of the modern revolution that “the idea of freedom and the experience of a new beginning should coincide” (OR, 19). Revolutions are the result of freedom in term of the capacity to initiate a new beginning of a space for freedom which has never existed. Therefore, *initium* and natality provide freedom as the capacity to initiate a new beginning that can be entirely unexpected.

The unexpected action and speech are deeply connected to spontaneity. Spontaneity is “the most joyous freedom” (Kateb 2000, 146). A free action must be free from “motives and intentions on the one hand and aims and consequences on the other” (HC, 205). The significant difference between action and work is that the former is not done after a design while the latter is based on good planning. While action loses its spontaneity then comes the victory of *homo faber*. Jerome Kohn says that action for Arendt is “by definition undetermined” (see Kohn 2000, 123-124). The spontaneity of action as an actualization of freedom may have two side effects: the

unpredictability and the irreversibility (HC, 243-247; HC, 236-243). Based on human spontaneity and the “darkness of the human heart”, Arendt sees that human beings have the inability to predict and to control “the consequences of an act within the community of equals”. While the unpredictability of action is the inability to control “the chaotic uncertainty of the future”, the irreversibility is the inability “to undo what one has done” (HC, 237). Arendt provides two solutions to these side effects of the spontaneity of action. First, the faculty of *promise* is employed to keep the identity and to bind the community. Second, the faculty of *forgiveness* is used to liberate from the burden of an actor and to release from the consequence experienced by others in a community. Arendt mentions the role of Jesus of Nazareth as the discoverer of the faculty of forgiveness (HC, 238-242). Arendt highlights Jesus’ radical teaching on the connection of human and God’s forgiveness,⁴⁷ the nescience of the trespasser,⁴⁸ the frequency of forgiveness,⁴⁹ and love as the source of it.⁵⁰

From these explanations, we may conclude that the public sphere of freedom is the space of crisis and is a dynamic space. In the space of crisis, there are the courage to sacrifice, the courage to deliver revolutionary speeches which have been unspeakable before. The public sphere turns into the space of crisis in which there are action and speech that shaking the amenities and stability of the present condition.⁵¹ In addition to this, the public sphere has a dynamic character in term of the spontaneity and unpredictability of action and speech. Therefore, the dramatic setting of the public sphere cannot be understood as a stable space under the instruction of a director. It is understood as “sudden and striking...exciting or impressive” as indicated by the dictionary’s definition of the term “dramatic”.⁵² The dramatic setting of the public sphere is not only a space for presenting freedom but also a space for generating power since for Arendt, power is released in the presence of an audience.

4.5 The public sphere as space for actualizing power

In Arendt’s political thought, power is “the human ability...to act in concert” and it is not an individual but a communal property (CR, 143). It continually exists as long as a community

⁴⁷ Matthew 6:14: “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you”.

⁴⁸ Luke 23:34: “And Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’. And they cast lots to divide his garments”.

⁴⁹ Matthew 18:21-22: “Then Peter came up and said to him, ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times’”.

⁵⁰ Luke 7:47: [Jesus said,] “Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven - for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little”.

⁵¹ Though Arendt experienced the political crisis in Europe in her first part of life, it is a fact also to be underlined that the later part of her life was in America, a stable Republic. Hans Jonas, her longtime friend, says that Arendt’s thought was also shaped by her experience in the United States. Jonas says, “America taught her a way beyond the hardened alternatives of left and right from which she had escaped; and the idea of the Republic, as the realistic chance for freedom, remained dear to her even in its darkening days”. Jonas is quoted in King 2016, 1.

⁵² See <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/dramatic>, accessed 12 September 2017.

remains. The locus of power is in between acting and speaking actors (HC, 200). Power only exists when action and speech are delivered in the space of appearance. Power does not exist in an individual laborer or solitary worker. Power even only exists when action and speech are utilized for noble political purposes. Power is present when words are not utilized in order to fulfill a vested interest but to reveal realities. Power is present when deeds are not utilized to demolish relations but to institute them and to create new realities. By locating power amidst human community, Arendt considers actualization as the nature of power. Without its actualization, power passes away. Power cannot be stored up; it cannot be materialized either in number or means.

The public sphere is undoubtedly needed by power. Power cannot exist without the just and open political public sphere. Thus, the flattening of the public sphere is not a manifestation of power but the elimination of power itself. Furthermore, the public sphere as space for presenting power can only be used for the utilization of action and speech for the nobler political purposes. The public sphere cannot be used for the private interests that in Arendt's theoretical scheme should be pursued in the private realm or *oikos*. The domination of the public sphere on behalf of private benefit is not showing how powerful the dominant party is but showing the elimination of power itself. The domination of the public sphere by private interests - as will be explained in more detail later - indicates the crisis of it.

Arendt's understanding of power is very different compared to the thought of many philosophers. Even Arendt herself is aware of this difference. Political theorists usually accept that "the essence of power is the effectiveness of command" (CR, 136). To give examples, Arendt quotes Voltaire and Weber. While Voltaire defines power as "making others act as I choose", Weber defines it as acting "to compel the opponent to do as we wish" (CR, 135). It means that power is understood in the commandment-obedience model or an instrumental model or a teleological model. The instrumental effectiveness of power requires the utilization of violence. No wonder, in this strand of understanding, power then is equated to violence or violence as the manifestation of power (CR, 134). Moreover, the Weberian understanding of the state as the legitimate holder of violence provides a way for a political power to make "the organization of violence" (CR, 134-135). Even though violence "can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate" (CR, 151).

Arendt differentiates between power and strength. While strength is "the natural quality of an individual seen in isolation", power is the communal quality of human beings seen in action and speech in the space of appearance (HC, 200). Strength is an inherent property and essentially independent from other entities (CR, 143). Strength then can be possessed since it resides in bodily

existence while power is physically boundless (HC, 201). Since power resides in between human beings' interaction, power then can be divided while maintaining its wholeness. Strength, on the contrary, cannot be divided. The condition of plurality plays different roles in the notions of power and strength. While power needs the condition of plurality to actualize itself, it puts a certain limitation on strength. The presence of others is the limitation for power since without it, power cannot exist. The presence of others is also the limitation for strength since it can check and balance the strength of individual.

Since strength is individual and power is communal, the only alternative for power is force (HC, 202). It means that force is located among individuals, in a community.⁵³ Force that is usually considered as the synonym to violence as a means of coercion actually is the release of energy by physical or social movements (CR, 143-144). Using the means of violence, a man can oppose others or can possess a monopoly (HC, 202). Violence can destroy power but cannot substitute it. Even violence can more easily demolish power than demolish strength (HC, 203). Violence can stop action and speech in the space of appearance while it cannot easily stop strength resided in the physical body. The political combination of force with violence as its means and powerlessness is known as tyranny. Quoting Montesquieu, Arendt sees that the main characteristic of tyranny was the isolation that is "the isolation of the tyrant from his subjects and the isolation of the subjects from each other through mutual fear and suspicion" (HC, 202). Tyranny is not only opposing the condition of plurality but also preventing the development of power. Tyranny is "always characterized by the impotence of its subjects, who have lost their human capacity to act and speak together" (HC, 203). While tyranny is the constant effort to substitute power with violence, ochlocracy or mob rule is a continual attempt to substitute power with strength.

This explanation has its implication for the notion of the public sphere especially in the critiques of tyranny and ochlocracy. Tyranny obliterates the public sphere in term of eliminating the possibility of acting and speaking together through infusing mutual fear and suspicion. This elimination incites the loss of the space of appearance. Tyranny also obliterates power by isolating subjects so that the human capacity to act and to speak cannot be applied altogether. At this point, the public sphere as space for presenting power has been annihilated. On the critique to ochlocracy, it is significant to emphasize that the public sphere is not a space for exhibiting individual strength. The logical consequence of Arendt's thought here is that she does not open

⁵³ Benhabib says, "Violence can occur in private and in public, but its language is essentially private because it is the language of pain. Force, like violence, can be located in both realms. In a way, it has no language, and nature remains its quintessential source. It moves without having to persuade or to hurt. Power, however, is the only force that emanates from action, and it comes from the mutual action of a group of human beings" (see Benhabib 1992, 78).

the possibility for mass demonstration (protest) with violence. In her explanation, the presence of others puts a limitation on individual strength. Burning used tires, boycotting public facilities and so forth cannot be tolerated since they are forms of the presentation of strength and not the presentation of power. Moreover, they are disadvantageous to others. If Arendt avoids the use of violence in the public sphere then the question of violence in revolutions comes to our mind. Arendt says, “But violence is no more adequate to describe the phenomenon of revolution than change” (OR, 25). Change is important in the moment of revolution since it has a sense of a new beginning. Violence can be used in revolution in order to constitute a new form of government. Even though, when the constitution of a new form of government needs the battlefield, for Arendt, then it is no more the presentation of power but the presentation of violence (OR, 82). When wars or revolutions justify violence then violence becomes their “political limitation”. For Arendt, the violent wars or revolutions are “no longer political but antipolitical” (OR, 9). Instead of becoming space for violent wars or bloody revolutions, the public sphere, rather, becomes a locus for political actions, as indicated above, and will be explored below.

4.6 The public sphere as locus for politics in relation to freedom and power

Arendt’s effort to reinvigorate the public sphere is not only limited to the designation of it as becoming the locus for freedom and power but also as becoming the locus for politics. I therefore describe this notion in relation to freedom and power. Arendt’s definition of politics⁵⁴ is indicated through these statements, “Politics is based on the fact of human plurality...Politics deals with coexistence and association of *different* men” (APP, 93; her emphasis). Arendt continues, “Politics arises *between* men...and is established as relationships” (APP, 95; her emphasis). While other scientific fields such as biology and psychology are concentrated on *man*, politics is concentrated on *men*. Thus, for Arendt, a man is apolitical. Plurality with its twofold aspect of equality and distinction is the *conditio sine qua non* and *conditio per quam* for all political life (HC, 7). Meantime, plurality is the human condition that corresponds to action. Action, in Arendt’s thought, cannot be separated from speech for its disclosure. Even most actions are “performed in the manner of speech” (HC, 178). At this point, politics and action presuppose the same locus which is plurality. Politics arises when men are acting and speaking together.

⁵⁴ As far as I know, Arendt mainly speaks about politics instead of democracy. Lefort says that “[Arendt] never shows any interest in democracy as such, in modern democracy”. Lefort surmises that perhaps modern democracy is a representative one and “the notion of representation is alien or even repugnant to her?” (see Lefort 1988, 55). Even though, it is interesting to look upon John McGowan’s reconstruction of Arendt’s understanding of democracy. He says, “‘Democratic,’ in Arendt’s sense, is an adjective that can be applied to any public sphere of activity in which participants are equal, in which their actions reveal their identity, and in which the activities of all the participants create and maintain the very space and the interrelations required for that activity to occur”. See McGowan 1998, 161.

Therefore, it is clear that politics happens in the public sphere as space for men to do acting and speaking together.⁵⁵

Moreover, politics needs freedom, in Arendt's view, because the latter is the *raison d'être* and the direct aim of the former. Arendt says, "Being free and living in the *polis* were, in a certain sense, one and the same" (APP, 116). Arendt also stresses, "The meaning of politics is freedom" (APP, 108). Meanwhile, freedom needs a public space for free individuals to present their action and speech. For Arendt, freedom has a definite space and whoever enters that space is free and vice versa (APP, 170). This space as told before is deeply derived from the ancient *polis* which is the sphere of freedom. Politics is "centered around freedom, whereby freedom is understood negatively as not being ruled or ruling, and positively as a space can be created only by men and in which each man moves among his peers" (APP, 117). Politics then is not a means to various ends. It is primarily an end in itself. At this point, we may obviously see that the public sphere has been elevated to the vital place where politics and freedom are actualized.

On the relation among politics, freedom, and power, Arendt says, "power is generated with the establishment of a sphere of political action" (APP, 143). Arendt also says that power "arises wherever people act in concert, and since people's concerted actions occur essentially in the political arena" (APP, 147). In her book, *On Revolution*, Arendt gives this statement, "power is the only human attribute which applies solely to the worldly in-between space by which men are mutually related" (OR, 167). Power cannot be possessed by one man, and cannot be materialized. Power is either actualized or disappeared altogether. Power as well as politics and freedom can only occur in the public sphere.

One important implication of Arendt's understanding of politics as closely related to power and freedom occur in the public sphere is the presence of citizens in the public sphere in order to have a political participation. Therefore, engaging in politics means actively joining and contributing in the public forums (D'Entrèves 1994, 147). A citizen may send a message in the public radio or public newspaper as a political action in order to share an important input for the government or for the public interest.

Another implication of this notion is that it gives a tool for analysis of the demolition of the free public sphere by the tyrannical and totalitarian government or the restriction for citizens to have public deeds and words. This demolition is not an application of political power but the decease of politics, power, and freedom. Contrariwise, Arendt considers this demolition or restriction as a type of violence. For her, "violence begins where speech ends" (EU, 308). The

⁵⁵ Cf. McGowan says, "The specific place of the political is the "public" realm; the identification of 'the political' with 'the public sphere' is so intense for [Arendt] that the two sometimes seem coterminous". See McGowan 1998, 38.

commercialization as a colonization of the public sphere by the capitalists for a huge advertisement is not an application of economic power but the invasion of the private interest into the public sphere. This invasion is the demise of politics, power, and freedom. In the condition when the state and the market take over the public sphere then we should say that the “light of the public” does not “obscure everything”. When “this light is extinguished” then the “darkness has come” especially when speech “does not disclose what is” and there is the degradation of “all truth in meaningless triviality” (MDT, viii).

The demolition of the free and open public sphere is the logical implication of the conception of power as the effectiveness of command. Power is the ability to make a command obeyed and implemented. Thus, the public sphere cannot be utilized as a space for protesting or resisting the holder of power’s command. The public sphere can only be used to announce commands, policies, or laws. This is the kind of public sphere under the feudalistic, tyrannical, or totalitarian regimes. The command-obedience model of power cannot be separated from the means-ends category. A commander has some ends to be achieved. In order to achieve these ends, he needs the obedience of the followers to his instructions. Their obedience can be considered as a means.

The means-ends category of power is typically indicated in Hobbes’ conception of power. He defines power as the individual “present means, to obtain some future apparent good” (Hobbes 1996, 58).⁵⁶ Hobbes is speaking on power prospectively that the future good cannot be realized without power and power cannot be actualized without means. What is meant by means and good is decided by the person who holds that power. Power is dependent on means or in the term of Frank Lovett’s expanded definition, “particular means” (Lovett 2007, 711).⁵⁷ While Arendt’s definition of power is dependent on the presence of others, Hobbes’ definition depends upon the presence of means.⁵⁸ Hence, in Arendt’s thinking, the public sphere is necessary for the actualization of power while Hobbes’ definition of power implies that the public sphere is only one among many means employed to achieve the apparent privately defined good. A simple presentday example of this could be the utilization of the public sphere for advertisement in order

⁵⁶ Arendt speaks about Hobbes philosophy mostly in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Arendt criticizes Hobbes’ Leviathan in implicating the private interest as similar with the public (see OT, 139). Arendt also finds that Hobbes’ political thinking would implicate on the rise of tyranny or then the rise of totalitarianism. She says, “Hobbes’s deep distrust of the whole Western tradition of political thought will not surprise us if we remember that he wanted nothing more nor less than the justification of Tyranny which, though it has occurred many times in Western history, has never been honored with a philosophical foundation. That the Leviathan actually amounts to a permanent government of tyranny, Hobbes is proud to admit: ‘the name of Tyranny signifieth nothing more nor lesse than the name of Sovereignty . . . ; I think the toleration of a professed hatred of Tyranny, is a Toleration of hatred to Commonwealth in general. . . .’” (see OT, 144). On Arendt’s reading of Hobbes, see Degryse 2008, 239-258. In this article, Degryse wants to prove that for Arendt, Hobbes is not only the father of totalitarianism but also of the social.

⁵⁷ Lovett’s expanded definition is, “The power of a person or group, in the most general sense, is their ability, as given by particular means in a particular context, to bring about, if desired, future states of the world”. Lovett embeds the particular means and context to the meaning of power and puts an ethical flavor on it.

⁵⁸ On the Hobbesian meaning of power, Arendt explains, “Power, according to Hobbes, is the accumulated control that permits the individual to fix prices and regulate supply and demand in such a way that they contribute to his own advantage” (see OT, 139).

to achieve a company's good. That company is the holder of power which is the power of money to use that means. In such kind of public sphere where the force of money dominates, the dramatic element is absent, and moreover the discursive setting of public sphere in its strictest sense is lost.

4.7 The dramatic and the discursive setting of the public sphere

It is clear for many of Arendt's reader that she works simultaneously with two models of the public sphere, the first is "a topographic" model and the second "an associational space" (Adut 2018, 21-23). By the first, the public sphere is understood as "an agonal space where greatness is achieved and displayed". The second refers to "any place where free and equal citizens act in concert". D'Entrèves names it as the "dramatic" and the "discursive" setting of the public sphere (D'Entrèves 1994, 18-19). By the dramatic setting, Arendt thinks of the public sphere as a space for "the performance of noble deeds and the utterance of memorable words, that is to say, for the display of the excellence of political actors". By the discursive setting, Arendt expects the public sphere to become a space where "people act together in concert, establish relations of equality and solidarity, and engage in collective deliberation through the medium of speech and persuasion".

The dramatic model of the public sphere recovered by Arendt is her favorite. Nevertheless, by emphasizing the expressive model of action and the dramatic setting of the public sphere, Arendt falls into unanticipated side effect, which can be described as the priority of the elite over the common people. When the public sphere becomes a space for presenting the excellency of political actors then it will be a space only for the political elite. As clearly indicated in *The Human Condition*, the Arendtian public sphere seems to fit a heroic conception of citizenship (D'Entrèves 1994, 154).⁵⁹ This elitism cannot come as a full surprise since by using the *polis* as the inspirational type in constructing the theory of the public sphere, Arendt refers to a model in which historically women, children, slaves, non-citizen residents, and so forth have been excluded. The priority of the elite in the dramatic public sphere can be viewed as an "antidemocratic project that can hardly be reconciled with the demand for universal political emancipation and the universal extension of citizenship right that have accompanied modernity since the American and French Revolutions" (Benhabib 1992, 75).

Though Arendt more emphasizes the dramatic setting of the public sphere,⁶⁰ we cannot close our eyes to the fact that she also has a very clear tendency on the utilization of it for the discursive

⁵⁹ Benhabib uses other terms to describe Arendt's models of the public sphere: agonistic and associational model. The first "represents that space of appearances in which moral and political greatness, heroism, and preeminence are revealed, displayed, shared with others". The second represents "the kind of democratic or associative politics that can be engaged in by ordinary citizens who may or may not possess great moral prowess but who acquire the capacities of political judgment and initiative in the process of self-organization" (see Benhabib 1992, 77-78; see also Benhabib 2000, 125).

⁶⁰ Dana Villa says, "I am correct in suggesting that the performative dimension has priority over the deliberative and dialogical". See Villa 1996, 56.

purpose. Living in a *polis*, for Arendt, that is to be political, means that everything has to be “decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence” (HC, 26; cf. BPF, 23). Persuasion as the way out to handle public affairs “presupposes equality and works through the process of argumentation” (BPF, 93). Arendt is indicating the usage of the public sphere for persuasion in order to achieve an agreement as a public decision.

Preferring public persuasion makes Arendt rejecting public opinion collected from unanimous polling or voting. For Arendt, such kind of “public opinion is the death of opinions” (OR, 220). Public opinion presupposes “the unanimity of the citizenry” (OR, 217) in which the disclosure of identity or of who somebody is or of the name of an actor is not needed while Arendt precisely wants to use the public sphere as space for self-disclosure. In addition to that, in collecting public opinion, Arendt sees “the overwhelming power of the many” and the loss of the strength of “the voice of the few” (OR, 218). No wonder, public opinion can be equated with tyranny, it is the tyranny of the majority. Otherwise, Arendt says, the representative “[o]pinions will rise wherever men communicate freely with one another and have the right to make their views public” (OR, 219). True and representative opinions must be validated in the public realm, under the presence of others, in which it must take into consideration other perspectives (BPF, 220).

Following Margaret Canovan’s analysis (Canovan 1978, 5-26), D’Entrèves finds a development in Arendt’s thought from preferring the dramatic space to opening the possibility for the discursive space. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt prefers the first model, especially when she is deeply influenced by the theory of mass society. Canovan points to her distrust to the common people. Under the impact of the Hungarian revolution of 1956, Arendt started to have more trust in the common people and seeing them as the “people capable of political action” (Canovan 1978, 160). Arendt finds in the 1956 Hungarian revolution “the principles of the council system”, even “the most disparate kinds of councils” (OR, 258). The existence of councils confirms “the intimate connection between the spirit of revolution and the principle of federation” (OR, 258). Obviously, the councils are the “spaces of freedom” (OR, 256) because in them the actualization of the “capacity to act and to form opinion” and the actualization of “the federal principle, the principle of league and alliance among separate units, arises out of the elementary condition of action itself” OR, 259).

According to D’Entrèves’ study, Arendt has never been able “to resolve the tension between these two conceptions of the public sphere” (D’Entrèves 1994, 153).⁶¹ For him, the root of

⁶¹ Cf. Villa says, “There appears to be basic and inescapable self-contradiction at the heart of [Arendt] theory of action, a contradiction between her Aristotle inspired image of a deliberative political based equality, plurality, and the absence of coercion and her Machiavellian praise of the great, the agonistic, the virtuosic (see Villa 1996, 56).

Arendt's problem is the fundamental duality of her theory of action, which are an expressive and a communicative one. Arendt is unable to make a successful integration of both. When action is interpreted in line with an expressive model, the public sphere becomes a dramatic space. When action is interpreted in line with a communicative model, the public sphere then becomes a discursive space. This is a vital problem in Arendt's theory of the public sphere. I would say that this unresolved tension seems to fit Arendt's "habits" of playing with many oppositions such as between action and labor/work, between power and violence, between the political and the social, between private and public realm, and so forth, a tendency which has as well been recognized by Claude Lefort (Lefort 1988, 51). The difference is that first mentioned oppositions are presented by Arendt as either-or opposition while the tension between the dramatic and discursive space should be presented as both-and relation.

Another problem is identified by Benhabib. She sees the weaknesses of the dramatic model or the agonistic in Arendt's term at least in two limitations: audience and issue. First, the dramatic model presupposes "a morally homogeneous and politically egalitarian but exclusive community" so that political action could be revealed (Benhabib 1992, 78). Alas, this kind of space can only be possible in the ancient or classical context and not in the modern form of politics with its heterogeneity of socio-political layers. Second, the dramatic model restricts the circulated issues in the public sphere only to political "public" issues (Benhabib 1992, 79). All issues classified as belonging to the household realm such as human slavery, women trafficking, child working cannot be addressed in the public realm. While exactly, these issues are the concern of the modern society under the category of 'social injustice'. Hence, Benhabib favors the discursive model or in her term "the associational model". She says, "The discourse model is the only one that is compatible both with the general social trends of our societies and with the emancipatory aspirations of new social movements, like woman's movement" (Benhabib 1992, 95). In her scheme, the discursive model is certainly the Habermasian one. Dana Villa disagrees with Benhabib. Villa believes that what is done by Arendt with the dramatic public sphere "must teach us about the nature of a healthy public sphere and the reasons for its contemporary decline" (Villa 1999, 130).⁶² From the point of view of the critique to the condition of modernity, Villa finds it important that Arendt is filling up the lacunae of modern social and political conceptions. From

⁶² In his chapter, "Theatricality and the Public Realm" (Villa 1999, 128-154), Villa employs Richard Tennett's explanation of the ideology of intimacy in the modern society then to emphasize the significance of Arendt's notion of theatricality. Villa writes, "The rise of a culture of intimacy means the decline of (social) theatricality; the decline of social theatricality means the decline of public life...As public life in urban centers of the nineteenth century came to be seen as morally inferior to intimate life, public/political credibility became a matter of superimposing private upon public imagery. Political actors still performed in public, but what they performed was their character, their feelings, the force of their personal convictions". Villa then infers, "By tying worldliness and theatricality so closely to culture and convention, both Arendt and Sennett deliver disillusioning news. They force us to acknowledge that the health of the political public sphere is in separable from the health of public culture generally". See also Tennett, 1976.

the point of view of the modern social and political reality, Benhabib is correct when she criticizes the lack of practical possibility of Arendt's theory.

To respond the 'dialogue' between Benhabib and Villa, I may give some notes. First, Arendt's utilization of the ancient *polis* and its differentiation from *oikos* cannot be fully accepted when we come to the task of developing a modern conception of the public sphere. One of its problems is that in the realm of the *polis*, women, slaves, children, non-citizen residents are not allowed to display public words and deeds. Moreover, the negligence of slavery in the realm of the ancient *oikos* seems not fit Arendt's conception of the sacredness of human life.⁶³ Second, Benhabib's critique to Arendt's conception can be followed up by a revision of Arendt's conception. While Arendt strictly rejects violence in her political theory, everything that is violently held can be categorized as a political public issue. Therefore, human slavery, woman trafficking, child prostitution and working, cannot be dislodged from the public political discussion. Third, in the context of multicultural modern society, the function of public sphere as space for a unique identity's disclosure as philosophized by Arendt becomes important. Since Arendt opens the public sphere for the truths of opinions, the distinctness of who somebody is, and the persuasion and argumentation of individual persons, the unique cultural identities of persons may be shown and various cultural contributions may be uttered. Fourth, what must be anticipated in implementing Arendt's conception of the public sphere into the modern multicultural context is the clash of the diverse cultural opinions. Moreover, Arendt less emphasizes on "traditional" notion of morality or more understanding of morality as something aesthetic. The public sphere in a multicultural setting will be full of the agonal clashes about identities and opinions without a moral restraint. One of these opinions and identities that can enter the public sphere is surely the Christian heritage, although Arendt most probably did not anticipate this, as will explained below.

4.8 The antipolitical/ antipublic characters of Christianity

In addition to her praises to Jesus' teaching on the faculty of forgiveness and to Apostle Paul's discovery of the faculty of the will, obviously, Arendt in general had a positive attitude toward Christianity. She was the student of a New Testament theologian, Rudolf Bultmann at Marburg University in 1924 though she did not agree with his demythologized Christianity (Kiehl 2016, 14-15). She acknowledged Jesus' role in God's work of salvation (cf. HAKJC, 221). She also directly showed her loyalty to Jesus as an example of life though she was not a Christian (cf. RASCE 1973). Apart from Bultmann, Arendt is also influenced by Karl Jaspers, who puts Jesus

⁶³ Margaret Canovan says, "Most fundamentally, the belief in the sacredness of the individual human being, which stood against slavery just as much as against concentration camps, had not been part of the Greek system of values but derived from the religious belief that human being were creatures of God". See Canovan 1992, 181.

among the “Great Philosophers” (Canovan 1992, 179; cf. Jaspers 1962, 74-96). Nevertheless, her admiration to Jesus and Christianity does not obstruct her from disagreeing with some Christian notions. In this part, I want to show Arendt’s criticism of the Christian notion of goodness. I will as well as give my critical comments on Arendt’s interpretation of Christianity.

In her explanation of the nature of politics, Arendt also criticizes “the consciously and radically antipolitical character of Christianity” (APP, 138). Regarding the public sphere, at least, there are two critiques given by Arendt toward Christianity. In the first, presented in her book *The Promise of Politics*, she criticizes the hidden character of Christian goodness. The second, given in her book *The Human Condition*, she criticizes the Christian brotherhood in love.

As explained above, for Arendt, the public sphere is a space for display, for performing great deeds and uttering great words (APP, 140). However, this notion of publicness seems unfit Christianity. Arendt quotes a church father Tertullian who says, “nothing is more alien to us Christians than what matters publicly” (APP, 136-137). The main reason for the withdrawal of Christians from the public realm, in Arendt’s view, is the teaching of Jesus on the ideal of goodness. The nature of goodness requires the hiddenness of it instead of its appearance in the world. This hiddenness is expressed in a strong metaphor that states that the left hand must not know what the right hand is doing (cf. Matt. 6:3). By being seen or heard in the public realm, all holiness suddenly becomes hypocrisy, no matter how hard a Christian tries to avoid this hypocrisy (cf. Matt. 6:2). By this exposure, we may infer that for Arendt, Christianity accuses the public sphere of being a space for hypocrisy.

Second, Arendt criticizes the brotherhood of Christians. For her, the main political task of early Christian philosophy is “to find a bond between people strong enough to replace the world” (HC, 53-54). Arendt says that in Augustine’s philosophy, there is an extension of the brotherhood from among Christians to all human relationships. This brotherhood is based on love or charity. Charity has a similarity with the world in-between that it belongs to the relationship between human beings. Nevertheless, charity is distinguished from the world in-between since it’s “general human experience of love” correspond to what Arendt calls “worldlessness”. In charity, there is no world relating and also separating human beings with and from each other. Apart from that, even robbers are implied in what Christians call as charity. Arendt furthermore identified the unpolitical (even antipolitical), non-public character of the Christian community when it is defined as a body, even the body of Christ, in which its members are related to each other in the brotherhood of a family. Even the word “body” can be connected to the necessity of life and labor. As a family, for Arendt, they are driven by the necessity of life. Meanwhile, as a Christian community, those familial activities are performed in the presence of others. I may infer that

Arendt feared of the invasion of household matters into the public sphere by the Christian emphasis on the brotherhood of its members or even of all human relationships.

What follows is my critical response to Arendt's critique of Christianity. Arendt says that according to Christian teaching, the nature of true goodness is opposed to the publication of action since its showing off may turn the public sphere becoming the space of hypocrisy. The context of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6 is the religious practices: giving, prayer, and fasting. Jesus is criticizing the Pharisees on their pursuit of vain glory through presenting their religious activities in the front of others. They are accused by Jesus as the hypocrites. For me, the main problem of hypocrisy is not in its public presentation but on its disintegration between the inward dimension (heart attitude) and the outward dimension (life practice). This conception can be seen through Jesus' other critiques to the Pharisees in the Gospel of Matthew especially Matthew 15:1-9 and 23:1-36. Therefore, Jesus desires the synchronization between heart attitude and life practice. Something good inside must be told to others publicly. This is clear through Jesus' teaching on Matthew 5:14: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden". He also says, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Jesus' teaching on public practice of goodness then has been followed by Paul (Gal. 6:10; Tit. 2:7), James (Jam. 3:13), and Peter (1 Pet. 2:12).

Even we can say that an authentic disciple of Jesus may bring good works impacting others (Turner 2008, 156). No wonder, Dietrich Bonhoeffer hardly states, "Flight into the invisible is a denial of the call. The community of Jesus which seeks to hide itself has ceased to follow him" (Bonhoeffer 1963, 132). If Jesus demands the authenticity of his disciples through publicly showing their goodness, then Jesus himself includes in his commandment. At the proper time, Jesus publicly appears himself (Luke 1:80) to obey God's will and to bless the human beings through preaching the good news and showing the merciful miracle.

The second critique of Arendt toward Christianity is on love. Apparently, Arendt is contradicted herself on the notion of love. On the one side, she criticizes the "general human experience of love" as corresponding to worldlessness, as a part of the realm of household. She says, "Love, by its very nature, is unworldly, and it is for this reason rather than its rarity that it is not only apolitical but antipolitical, perhaps the most powerful of all antipolitical human forces" (HC, 242). Arendt then is classified as "misamorism" which believes that love is not congruent to all political life (Kiess 2016, 112). Thus, she disagrees with the Christian conception of love. On the other side, she excavates an inspiration of love from Christianity in her explanation of the faculty of forgiveness as an anticipation the side effect of irreversibility in human action. Arendt

says, “only love has the power to forgive” because “only love is fully receptive to *who* somebody is, to the point of being always willing to forgive him, whatever he may have done” (HC, 242-243). Thus, Arendt praises Christianity mainly Jesus Christ of his teaching of love and forgiveness. Arendt then quotes Luke 7:47. In the translation she uses, “Her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (HC, 241-242). This dualism of the conception of love finally causes the swallow of the second notion by the big wave of her political theory. The result is the marginalization of forgiveness in her political theory (Kateb 2000, 142).

As I have written before, Arendt has the ambiguous figure of Christianity. On the one side she praises it, on the other side accuses it. According to Canovan’s research, she praises Christianity not only on forgiveness but also on selflessness and loving even enemy, and the power to perform miracle, that is something unexpected (Canovan 1992, 180-181). Even Canovan is courageous when saying that Arendt is owing crucial elements of political theory to the Judeo-Christian tradition more than the classical Greek (Canovan 1992, 181). For instance, Canovan says that the belief of the sacredness of human being against slavery is not derived from the Greek thought but from the Bible teaching of human being as created in the image of God. No wonder, as we have been seeing through this chapter, Arendt explicitly acknowledges the insights of Christianity in her thought. Nonetheless, when facing the so-called “worldlessness of Christianity” Arendt’s attitude becomes ambivalent. Arendt’s ambivalence, in fact, has been shown in her dissertation, *Love and Saint Augustine*. In this dissertation supervised by Jaspers, she wants to understand the Augustinian reconciliation between the otherworldly Neo-Platonism and this-worldly Christian command to love neighbor (Kiess 2016, 17; cf. Tsao 2010, 39-57). The Augustinian Neo-Platonic conception of Christianity makes Arendt seeing some parts of Christianity as other-worldly minded. The tension between other-worldly and this-worldly’s understanding of Christianity remains unresolved in Arendt’s thinking, similar to the insoluble tension between the dramatic and the discursive setting of the public sphere.

At the last point, I want to engage Arendt’s understanding of love as apolitical, even antipolitical, the most powerful antipolitical force, a faculty that must be located in the realm of *oikos*. In my view, the kind of love criticized by Arendt, regrettably, is the corrupted forms of love that are the “identitarian love” and “love as a process of unification”. These are the terms used by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (Hardt & Negri 2009, 182-183). By the first, Hardt and Negri mean of the familial love, “love of the same”. By the second, they mean the romantic love, “love making the same”. The problem of the first is the exclusion of the outsiders and lacking the Nietzschean “love of the farthest”. The problem of the second according to Hardt and Negri’s

analysis, is the merging in unity, “making the many into one, making the different into the same” and finally corrupting the common. Arendt refuses the first model of love because it is a part of the realm of household, held under the drive of necessity. Arendt criticizes the second model of love because it makes no space between human beings, without the common world relating and separating each other. Alas, Arendt is accusing the degraded forms of love.

Different from Arendt, Hardt and Negri proposes love as a power in political life since its capability to produce the common (Hardt & Negri 2009, 181). Getting inspiration from Spinoza’s *Ethics*, they believe that love “creates a new being, from poverty through love to being”. They say, “through love we form a relation to that cause and seek to repeat and expand our joy, forming new more powerful bodies and minds”. Then, being “refuses to be privatized or enclosed and remains constantly open to all”. Love “is joy, that is, the increase of our power to act and think”. While Arendt believes that love is the most powerful antipolitical force in human life, in my opinion, Hardt and Negri believes that love is the most powerful political force in human life.

Hardt and Negri’s critique to the familial or patriotic form of love and to the unification of love should be reviewed. They locate the familial love in a diametrical opposition with the love of the outsider. I have a different view with them. There is a possibility to have familial love coinciding with loving the outsider though in the different degree of love. Jesus Christ proposes the notions of loving self, loving fellow human beings, and loving enemy (cf. Matt. 22:39 & Matt. 5:43-44). There are many stories of a couple who has some children but at the same time they lead an orphanage. They can love their children as well as the orphans. Nonetheless, Hardt and Negri are right when they speak about “love as a philosophical and political concept” (Hardt & Negri 2009, 180), the familial love in its extreme understanding of the notion, cannot be used. No wonder, Arendt avoids to use love in her political thought except of the notion of forgiveness.

Hardt and Negri seem equating unity with uniformity in the second corrupted form of love. Actually, they mean of the uniforming effect of the corrupted model of love. A bad parent wants their children to become a certain model of person according to their beloved criteria. In my childhood, some parents wanted their children to be smart in Mathematics and other sciences, handsome or beautiful, good character, diligent, eager to save money, honoring and obeying parents and teachers and so forth. Hardt and Negri are right that the uniforming effect of love is unfit the plural political life. Arendt herself is strictly rejects the uniformity especially as showing in the mass society under totalitarian regime. For Arendt, in the realm of totalitarianism, there are the kill of the individual unique identity and the kill of spontaneity. Nevertheless, unity is totally different from uniformity. Hardt and Negri refers to the mystical union of the love of God and the merging effect of romantic love (Hardt & Negri 2009, 183). For me, even in the eternal love of

God (for God is love; cf. 1 John 4:8), there is the unity in diversity. The proper Christian doctrine truly believes the unity in diversity of the Triune God. Alister McGrath says that the approach *distinctio sed non separatio* (distinct but inseparable) “underlies so many aspects of [John] Calvin’s theology” (McGrath 2012, 255). We may use this approach in understanding the Triune God: each person, the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit is distinct, but they are inseparable. Thus, love is held in the context of unity in diversity. Love can be held without the uniforming effect. Arendt’s misunderstanding of Christian teaching can be solved but her struggle under the modern condition, especially, under the totalitarian regime attracts our sympathy. I want to show the crises of the public sphere which are not intellectually constructed by Arendt but rather existentially experienced by her.

4.9 The crises of the public sphere

Arendt analyses three ways in which the public sphere is destroyed in modern times: the rise of the social, the rise of totalitarianism, and the phenomenon of worldliness.

4.9.1 The rise of the social

For Arendt, a key element in her analysis of the crisis of the public sphere in modern times is what she calls as “the rise of the social”, which she describes as “the emergence of society - the rise of housekeeping, its activities, and organizational devices - from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere” (HC, 38). In other words, it means “the transformation of the private care for private property into a public concern” (HC, 68). Arendt defines the private realm of the household as the sphere driven by the efforts to fulfill the necessities of life in order to care for and to guarantee the individual survival and the persistent existence of the living organism of human being (HC, 45). Arendt explicates the sphere of the social as the submersion of two distinct spheres or realms, the private and the public (HC, 69).

The context of Arendt’s explanation of the rise of the social is her critique toward modern forms of social and political life. For her, historically speaking, the clearest indication of the rise of the social is the transformation of all modern communities into “societies of laborers and jobholders” (HC, 46). Those societies have as the only driving force of all activities: the necessity to sustain their life. Arendt clarifies that a society of laborers does not have to have each member working as a laborer or worker but all members work in order to maintain their individual and family’s life. In other words, “the only thing people have in common is their private interests” (HC, 69). Benhabib names this new model of space as “a pseudospace of interaction” where

individuals are stopped to “act” and “merely behave” as economic producers, consumers, laborers and so forth (Benhabib 1992, 75).

One important cause of the rise of the social is the increase of the population (HC, 43). Arendt compares this modern phenomenon with the ancient Greek city-state. The *polis*, where action and speech are for her at the heart of the political arena, can only function when the amount of the population is restricted. The augmentation of population generates a mass society in which there is an absorption of various social groups into one big family (HC, 41). By the rise of mass society, Arendt sees the victory of equality in which each member is equally treated but in which distinction then has been dislodged from the public sphere. The distinctiveness of citizens becomes a private matter. It means that mass society has swallowed distinct strata in a nation (HC, 45). For me, without distinction, mass society loses the human condition of plurality which itself consists both of equality and distinction. Action then cannot be performed in mass society for plurality as the *conditio per quam* for it is absent (HC, 7). Moreover, Arendt clearly avers that the common world, the world in-between that relates and separates private individuals in the public realm cannot be found in mass society (HC, 52-53). Not only destroying the public realm, mass society destroys the private realm as well. Mass society illegally produces “the mass phenomenon of loneliness, where it has assumed its most extreme and most antihuman form” (HC, 59). The individuals in a mass society are not only excluded from the world in-between but also uprooted from their private home.

The larger population evokes “an irresistible inclination toward despotism”, either despotism of a person or of majority rule (HC, 43-45). Despotism of a person refers to either a tyrant or a totalitarian leader. The despotism of the majority rule results in “statistical uniformity” according to which the only thing needed by the majority is not the performance of action or the utterance of speech but the maintenance of physical life. This uniformity can be related to the liberal hypothesis of a natural harmony of interests which is called by Arendt a “communistic fiction”. It refers to the presence of “one interest of society as a whole which with ‘an invisible hand’ guides the behavior of men and produces the harmony of their conflicting interests”. This “invisible hand” which is “pure administration” is accused by Arendt as “rule of nobody”. This is the complete victory of society when the impersonal bureaucracy in the modern context replaces the personal government or state in the traditional context. The impersonal administration is related by Arendt to the science of economics as behavioral science where its aim is “to reduce man as a whole, in all his activities, to the level of a conditioned and behaving animal”.

When the body of people becomes a family, whose main concern is the maintenance of life then a gigantic, nation-wide administration of housekeeping is needed to take care of its members’

everyday affairs (HC, 28). The scientific body of thought corresponding to this fact is not political science but national economy or social economy. Arendt calls the “collective housekeeping; the collective of families economically organized into the facsimile of one super-human family” as “society” and its political form as “nation” (HC, 28-29). Arendt then refuses to acknowledge the term “political economy”. For her, this is a contradictory term since everything economic is not political and everything political cannot be economic. While economics is related to everything private with its necessity of life, politics is connected to everything public with its freedom of action and speech.

As indicated through this explanation, the rise of the social, the trespassing of everything private into the public realm induces a crisis of the public sphere. This manifests itself in the loss of freedom of actors to perform great deeds and to convey great words, to show their unique identities, to present who somebody is in a plural community of equals.

Arendt raises this issue in her analysis of revolutions. For her, the social question in the modern era comes to play a revolutionary role when some individuals doubt the status of poverty as something inherent in the human condition and try to liberate themselves from that poverty, especially fighting against the few for whatever reason can liberate themselves from poverty (OR, 12). By this initial statement, Arendt criticizes the French Revolution. For her, this revolution is driven by the needs of the bodies of the poor (OR, 49). The necessity of life as a private motivation becomes the inspiration for the revolution. Arendt cries, “freedom had to be surrendered to necessity, to the urgency of the life process itself” (OR, 50).

Arendt finds that Robespierre’s declaration is diametrical opposed to the ancient Greek political theory (OR, 50-51). He declares, “everything which is necessary to maintain life must be common good and only the surplus can be recognized as private property”. The ancient theory is that “the citizens’ surplus in time and goods must be given and shared in common”. Robespierre then feels sorry when he cries “We shall perish because, in the history of mankind, we missed the moment to found freedom”. For Arendt, this loss of the historical moment to found freedom is not caused by the conspiracy of despotic governments but the conspiracy of necessity and poverty. By this explanation, we can conclude that for Arendt, it is the rise of the social in the moment of the French Revolution by which there is a crisis of the public sphere. In addition to this crisis, totalitarianism triggers another crisis.

4.9.2 Totalitarianism and the loss of spontaneity

In her explanation of totalitarianism, Arendt focuses on the masses which are needed by totalitarian movements (OT, 311). For her, the term “masses” can be applied to people with the

large number and/ or indifference that cannot be integrated into any social group based on a shared concern. The masses are characterized by the loss of “a consciousness of common interest” and the lack of a “specific class articulateness”. Masses provide the possibility for totalitarian movements to operate. The rise of the Nazi movement in Germany and the Communist movements in Europe after 1930 consists of the recruitment of the too-apathetic or too-stupid indifferent persons from their masses who never joined political parties or professional organizations (OT, 311-312). No wonder, Arendt argues that totalitarian movements much more depend on “the specific conditions of an atomized and individualized mass” (OT 318). She infers, “Totalitarian movements are mass organizations of atomized, isolated individuals” (OT, 323). This kind of mass consists of human individuals whose main characteristic is not “brutality and backwardness” but “isolation and lack of normal relationship” (OT, 317). Without the normal relationship to others and social affinity, totalitarian leaders can secure a “total, unrestricted, unconditional, and unalterable loyalty of the individual member” (OT, 323).

With an atomized and individualized mass, totalitarian movements do not desire the free and open public sphere where citizens may have concerns and interests in and opinions about the public affairs (OT, 308). In this kind of conditions, there is no possibility to openly utter public opinions (OT, 312). The only attitude demanded or allowed in the public sphere is the quiet assessment.

Masses then can be totally dominated by totalitarian regimes by organizing “the infinite of plurality and differentiation of human beings as if all of humanity were just one individual” and by reducing each person to “a never-changing identity of reactions so that these bundles of reactions can be exchanged at random for any other” (OT, 438). The first is an atomization as explained above. The second is the radical separation from a person everything that is his/her personality, character, and so forth (OT, 441). Totalitarian domination tries to achieve the atomization and the separation using ideological indoctrination and eventually even absolute terror in the camps. These approaches are examples of the application of the fundamental belief of totalitarianism that “everything is possible” (OT, 437).

The purposes of the camp, for Arendt, are not only exterminating people and degrading human beings but also eliminating spontaneity and transforming the human personality into a mere impersonal thing, even lower than animals (OT, 438). As explained before, spontaneity is deeply connected to freedom, even political freedom. For Arendt, spontaneity is an expression of human behavior and deeply related not only to freedom but also to life itself. No wonder, spontaneity cannot be eliminated under normal conditions but only through the absolute terror in the atrocious camps. The loss of spontaneity cannot be separated from the success of the

totalitarian regimes in transforming human personality into “uncomplaining animals” (OT, 439). In this new condition, human beings then will totally obey the totalitarian regimes. One example of this transformation is that if a person tries to criticize the concentration camps, after having returned to her habitat, she will even doubt her own truthfulness. So even a victim who tells the truth about her own experiences cannot be trusted, not even in her own eyes.

For Arendt, the real horror of the concentration and extermination camps therefore lies in the fact that by the stupor or unconsciousness resulted by terror, the detainees are “more effectively cut off from the world of the living than if they had died” (OT, 443). In these camps, murder is done in an impersonal way like hitting a mosquito or swatting a fly. In these camps, the detainees are treated as “living corpses” (OT, 447), their existence has been obliterated and incidents that befell on them are not believable for anybody (OT, 445).

Arendt explains how three essential steps are taken in order to debase human beings into living corpses that can be totally dominated by the totalitarian regimes. The first step is the killing of the judicial person in man (OT, 447). Through the tool of denationalization, the totalitarian regimes withdraw the people from under the protection of law. The concentration camps are managed outside “the normal penal system” and “the normal judicial procedure”. This kind of management appears in the arbitrary selection of inmates (OT, 450). The aim of an arbitrary system is to “destroy the civil rights” (OT, 451). This way then becomes the prerequisite for total domination of a person.

The second essential step of total domination is the murder of the moral person (OT, 451-452). This murder can be achieved through making martyrdom an impossibility. A warder may inhale skepticism through asking: “How many people here still believe that a protest has even historic importance?” This rhetoric question produces the consciousness in the inmates’ mind that a heroic death has no meaning at all. Generally, the killing of the moral person goes farther even to absolutely impugn all decisions of a victim’s conscience. After that, totalitarian regimes extend this killing of a moral person to the families and friends of the victims. The extension of this killing is done by the strict prohibition of grief and remembrance. The totalitarian regimes try to arouse deep hatred of the family to a victim. No wonder, a wife will immediately file for divorce when her husband is arrested. And if he returns to his house, his family will evict him.

The third step is the killing of the individuality, that is the unique identity of persons (OT, 453). Totalitarian regimes try to create uniformity of all inmates: packing all victims into a cattle-car stark naked, shaving off their hairs, wearing the ugly camp uniform, and so forth. The aim of these methods is “to manipulate human body - with its infinite possibilities of suffering - in such a way as to make it destroy the human person inexorably as do certain mental diseases of organic

origin". "For to destroy individuality", Arendt says, "is to destroy spontaneity, man's power to begin something new out of his own resources, something that cannot be explained on the basis of reactions to environment and events" (OT, 455). While the destruction of spontaneity is the destruction of the space of appearance, world alienation in one sense can be categorized as the destruction of the common world. The destruction of such features apparently cracks the public sphere.

4.9.3 World Alienation

For Arendt, the human condition of work is wordliness (HC, 7-8). Work produces the human artifacts in order to provide permanence and durability in order to overcome the transitory character of human life in time. The artifacts fabricated by human hands construct the world as differentiated from human's natural and earthly habitat. Housing is a simple example. The artifacts of the world are directed to stabilize human life in contradiction to the Heraclitean ever-changing of human life (HC, 137). The world also supplies objectivity overagainst the subjectivity of human beings. In the context of political action and speech, the world provides the physical context. The world also provides permanence and durability through the recording of the stories in order to maintain the "doing of great deeds and the speaking of great words" countering the futility of human mortal life (HC, 173). By the help of *homo faber* and the things of the world, action and speech may involve in creating "the condition for remembrance, that is for history" (HC, 8-9).

In her critique, Arendt accuses the modern age of causing world alienation. For her, world alienation "has been the hallmark of the modern age" (HC, 254). World alienation happens in two conditions. First, when there is an alienation of "certain strata of the population from the world" (HC, 253). Through "the expropriation of the peasantry" (HC, 251), "the new laboring class" (HC, 255), that is the "laboring poor" is now increasing (HC, 256). Second, through the loss of "the privately-owned share of a common world" which is "the most elementary political condition for man's worldliness" (HC, 253).

The price that must be paid by world alienation is expensive. It brings "the simultaneous decline of the public as well as the private realm" (HC, 257). In terms of the political public of freedom, by world alienation comes "the eclipse of a common public world" through "the formation of the lonely mass man" and finally through "the formation of the worldless mentality of modern ideological mass movements". World alienation results in "exclusive concern with the self" (HC, 254) as has been apparent since the rationalist Descartes. Therefore, there must be "the elevation of introspection" (HC, 307). The laboring poor class which literally "lived from hand to

mouth” now lives directly under “the compelling urgency of life’s necessity” (HC, 255). So, I see the effect of the increase of the laboring class is that, action and speech are replaced by labor.

Arendt found that the twofold source of world alienation is expropriation and wealth accumulation (HC, 264). Expropriation of the peasantry is “the unforeseen consequence of the expropriation of church property” and is “the greatest single factor in the breakdown of the feudal system” (HC, 251-252). There was the destruction of many properties and the devastation of cities as the impact of the ecclesiastical Reformation in the 16th century. It started with “expropriating ecclesiastical and monastic possessions” and was followed by “the twofold process of individual expropriation and the accumulation of social wealth” (HC, 248).

Expropriation becomes the “radical stimulant” for a “quicker and more efficient accumulation of wealth” (HC, 252). The winner class would easily take over the possessions of the loser class. The accumulation of wealth would easily open the possibility for the transformation of it into capital through labor (HC, 255). We then may infer from Arendt’s explanation that expropriation and wealth accumulation synergically increase the new laboring poor. For Arendt, expropriation and wealth accumulation have never simply resulted in the construction of new property or new redistribution of wealth but have generated continual expropriations and an increase of other laboring poor which certainly have been exploited for the greater productivity.

4.10 Conclusion

I have explored Arendt’s notion of the public sphere. Arendt has two dialectical notions of the public sphere, namely, the dramatic and the discursive settings. By the first, which she explores in depth, the public sphere becomes a space for delivering memorable words and performing great deeds, for exhibiting courage as part of freedom to act and to initiate something new. In this model of the public sphere, what is even more important is the self-disclosure in the front of an audience. In this related sense, the public sphere is also becoming the locus for politics and power. Both of them can only be released or can only happen in the public sphere. While exploring Arendt’s dramatic model of the public sphere, I found her warning over several crises such as the rise of the social, totalitarianism and the loss of spontaneity, and world alienation. These crises were mainly happened under the modern condition. By the second, Arendt has also an underdeveloped notion of the discursive public sphere. Arendt believes that citizens in *polis* deciding public matters through persuasion. Moreover, under the influence of 1956 Hungarian revolution, the principle of council magnifies her trust of the public’s capacity to act so she developing the discursive model of the public sphere. This underdeveloped notion of the

discursive model would be well constructed by Habermas. I am exploring Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere in the coming chapter.

Chapter 5

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE ACCORDING TO JÜRGEN HABERMAS

5.1 Introduction

While Arendt's idea of the public sphere is important, Jürgen Habermas can be considered as the most prominent philosopher of the public sphere, as recently affirmed by Ari Adut, "Reflections on the public sphere have been mostly oriented by the writings of Jürgen Habermas" (Adut 2018, 1). He is not only influenced by Arendt but also improves on some of Arendt's notions. Habermas' various works have continually sparked the modern or postmodern debates and writings on the idea of the public sphere in philosophy, ethics, jurisprudence, communication, politics, and sociology (Calhoun 1992a, vii). This debate started with the publication of Habermas' early influential work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, first published in German (1962) then translated into English (1989). Five years after its English publication, A. Strum found almost 36 pages of bibliography on the public sphere "directly or indirectly related" to Habermas' book (Strum 1994, 155-161; quoted in Turner 2009, 225).

In this chapter, I elaborate Habermas' thinking on the public sphere and continue with a discussion on its discursive setting which was not fully developed by Arendt. I then use Arendt and Habermas' thought on the public sphere to reconstruct a detailed conception of it in order to generate a theology of the public sphere. I mean by the discursive setting of the public sphere that it can be used as space for discourses, to discuss public issues rationally in order to form opinions and will finally make a contribution to society and the law-making process. I start from the exploration of Habermas' understanding of the public sphere, which I take from his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and *Between Facts and Norms*.

5.2 The bourgeois public sphere: a historical sketch

In its basic meaning, the term "public" is connected to everything "open to all, in contrast to closed or exclusive affairs" (STPS, 1).⁶⁴ Publicness in Habermas' explanation means "general accessibility". "[P]ublic organs" means something which "provide communication among members of the public" (STPS, 2). The media or the press is one example. The definition of the public as such appears in his definition of the bourgeois public sphere. It can be considered "above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere

⁶⁴ I am taking Habermas' explanation in relation to the notion of the public sphere. I avoid referring to Habermas' speaking about public buildings, public authority and public reputation, which for me has another connotation.

regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor” (STPS, 27-29). They are the private people, not the state personnel. As private individuals, they come to cultural maturity through the process of self-development in the private sphere of the household through the cultural products that are publicly accessible. As part of civil society, the public sphere is a space for citizens to charge the government. It involves a “rational-critical public debate”, that in the Kantian dictionary is “people’s public use of their reason” (*öffentliches rasonnement*). Habermas also says, “Public debate was supposed to transform *voluntas* into a *ratio* that in the public competition of private arguments came into being as the consensus about what was practically necessary in the interest of all” (STPS, 83; Habermas’ emphasis). In the bourgeois context, they discussed the government rules promulgated through the press.

Historically, the bourgeois public sphere was initiated from the British context of *Magna Charta* in 1215 when the bourgeoisie used discussion to bring about the settlement of agreements in order to achieve balance with sovereignty (STPS, 27). Through publicity, the bourgeoisie brought “the principle of control” opposing public authority in order to change domination (STPS, 28). Coming outside of the government, the public sphere is a part of civil society either in the older term or the newer term as explained above.⁶⁵ For Habermas, “the sphere of civil society” in the bourgeois context is “the genuine domain of private autonomy stood opposed to the state” (STPS, 12). In the context of bourgeois society, Habermas says, “the public sphere in the political realm evolved from the public sphere in the world of letters, *through the vehicle of public opinion it put the state in touch with the society*” (STPS, 30-31; my emphasis). Habermas also says, “[t]he constitutional state as a bourgeois state established the public sphere in the political realm as an organ of the state so as to ensure institutionally the connection between law and public opinion” (STPS, 81).

The bourgeois public sphere was mainly connected to public authority, civil society and capitalism. I will start with the last aspect. There was a great need of information about commodities sold in long-distance trading. In addition to the traffic of commodities, early capitalists also created the traffic of news (STPS, 15). They needed more exact information in order to know about the schedule of trade fairs and commodities, the new technique of financing such as letters of credit, and so forth. Habermas finds that the great trade cities usually also played an important role as the centers for the traffic of news (STPS, 16). The traffic of commodities and news in the early capitalist era was developed in the era of mercantilism with revolutionary power

⁶⁵ See the scheme drawn by Habermas in STPS, p. 30.

(STPS, 17). At the same time, the modern state and national and territorial economies also assumed their form. “The modern state”, Habermas writes, “was basically a state based on taxation, the bureaucracy of the treasury is the true core of its administration” (STPS, 17). There was a separation between the royal treasury and the state’s belongings. By the presence of the state, there was “the sphere of public authority” (STPS, 18). This sphere “assumed objective existence of a *permanent* administration and a *standing* army” (Habermas’ emphasis). The public authority had a duty to have a contact with commodities and news, with the stock market and the press. Mainly, the public authority engaged with unfair or unbalanced trading.

Outside the sphere of public authority, there was a civil society. “Civil society came into existence as the corollary of a depersonalized state authority” (STPS, 19). With private power, civil society came as a new sphere counterbalancing the sphere of public authority. During the era of mercantilism with its political and social development, the press appeared, developing “a unique explosive power” (STPS, 20). Habermas finds that at this period of time, even the news itself became a new commodity (STPS, 21). The press was not only used by the merchants but also by public authority to announce instructions and ordinances for “the public”. At this point “the new domain of a public sphere whose decisive mark was the published word” (STPS, 16) was generated. Actually, the public authorities used the press to promulgate only to the public of “educated classes” (STPS, 22). “[A] new stratum of ‘bourgeois’ people”, Habermas says, “arose which occupied a central position within the ‘public’” (STPS, 22-23). The bourgeoisie were the educated people including official administrators, capitalists, doctors, pastors, scholars, and so forth. The bourgeois society was a reading public. The reading public functioned to confront the state. It became critical in the sense that there was “the critical judgment of a public making use of its reason” (STPS, 24). The information promulgated in the press was followed up by the rational-critical discourse, mainly on political matters, which are the subject of public interest. Habermas says that the “medium of this political confrontation was peculiar and without historical precedent: people’s public use of their reason” (STPS, 27). They came to salons, coffee shops, and other places to discuss those matters.

Habermas explains some common institutional criteria of the bourgeois public sphere (STPS, 36-37). First, social relationships “far from presupposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether”. It means that they did not require a high level of social stratification. There was the replacement of “the celebration of rank” with “the authority of the better argument”. Prestigious public office and economic power made no impression at all. In the public sphere, “Laws of the market were suspended as were laws of the state”. Second, the public sphere was the “domain of common concern”. They cross-examined everything that had been unquestioned until then, mostly

matters whose interpretations were monopolized by the state and the church in theology, philosophy, art, literature, and so forth. Furthermore, books, artworks, and other cultural products had become commodities accessible to all. Third, the transfer of cultural products into commodities emphasized the principle of inclusivity. The private people who had the capacity to access the market of cultural products and the educated could participate in the public sphere of discussion. This openness is expressed in a concluding statement, “However exclusive the public might be in any given instance, it could never close itself off entirely and become consolidated as a clique” (STPS, 37). Habermas later stresses, “The public sphere of civil society stood or fell with the principle of universal access” (STPS, 85).

One important aspect of the primacy of the bourgeois public sphere over the ancient *polis* is its recognition of the role of the private realm. Each person who appeared in the bourgeois public sphere was a private individual. The notion of the private individual, in Craig Calhoun’s reading, is the reverse of a key element of the ancient Greek polarization of *polis-oikos* (Calhoun 1992b, 7). While in the ancient context nothing private could appear in public, in the bourgeois context those who appeared in public should firstly be *private* individuals. Moreover, the private realm should also be protected from state domination or invasion. The important role of the private realm was as an intimate sphere. Habermas brings the private realm out from the reductive understanding of the necessity of life in the ancient world’s *oikos*, and a home became the intimate sphere of the conjugal family (STPS, 28). In the conjugal family as “a sphere of humanity-generating closeness, the ideas of freedom, love, and cultivation of the person” grew (STPS, 48). In the intimate family, “the experience of humanity originated: in the humanity of the intimate relationships between human beings who, under the aegis of the family, were nothing more than human” (STPS, 48). Here Habermas differentiates between economic activity such as labor and overcoming the necessities of life and familial activities of intimate love. I may infer that in the intimate sphere of family, a private individual is prepared to get involved and participate in the public sphere.

In addition to the family, the world of letters also has another significant role in smoothing out the steps toward the political public sphere. Initially, the relationships between author, work, and public readers were “intimate mutual relationships between privatized individuals” (STPS, 50-51). As the home became the place to cultivate humanity, the world of letters also did the same thing. The driving factor of the relationship between author, work and reader was their common interest toward what was “human” dominantly “in self-knowledge and in empathy”. While the living room of a home became the place to discuss literary works, outside of the home there were also salons, coffee houses, and so forth. The relation between family and literature is clear. The

latter was “an expansion and at the same time the completion” of the former. Habermas puts it this way, “[The bourgeoisie] formed the public sphere of a rational-critical debate in the world of letters within which the subjectivity originating in the interiority of the conjugal family, by communicating with itself, attained clarity about itself”. In short, the world of letters provided the cultivation of humanity, and constituted the locus of discussions.

Although the bourgeois public sphere was a part of “the unique developmental history” as claimed by Habermas in the introduction of his *Habilitationsschrift*, in a reflection of the book 27 years after the German publication, Habermas gives some important indications regarding the perpetuating the idea of the public sphere from the bourgeois society (FRPS, 452; cf. Dahlberg 2000, 37). Moreover, in the concluding remarks of the celebration of the English translation of his first major book, Habermas asserts that the concept of the bourgeois public sphere has also “inevitable normative implications, of course, and is related...to certain positions in normative political theory” (CRHPS, 462-463). No wonder some scholars positively see the bourgeois public sphere as having a normative nature, either as “an historical instance” (Dahlberg 2000, 38) or as “a frame of reference” (Goode 2005, 4).

Here, I highlight some important lessons from the bourgeois public sphere. First, the public sphere is part of a civil society separate from the government. Second, although Habermas envisioned a constitutional state in which public opinion generated in the public sphere could contribute to the law-making process, as he discussed in *Between Facts and Norms*, at the level of initiation Habermas's idea of the public sphere is primarily to counteract governmental power, as a counterbalance to sovereignty. Third, in contrast to the ancient Greek notion that Arendt heavily uses, Habermas actually views the private space as a place to nurture private persons who would speak in public. Here, the private and public spheres are not placed in a paradigm of rivalry as in Arendt's thought, but in the paradigm of complementarity. This is in line as well with insights from the women's movement where concerns are raised regarding Arendt's treatment of the private space. For me, Habermas overcomes Arendt's troubles. Fourth, though not perfect, the idea of inclusivity in the public sphere was discovered by Habermas in bourgeois society. Fifth, from the beginning Habermas imagined the authority of reason in the public sphere. The idea of the public use of reason, which began in 1962 in this initiation work, was maintained and developed by Habermas until the 2000s when he talked about the rational role of religion in the public sphere. Before arriving at the discussion on the rational role of religion, we firstly explore Habermas' notion of the political public sphere in his more mature systematic conception, which was mainly written in *Between Facts and Norms*.

5.3 The political public sphere

Habermas develops the seed of thought about the public sphere in the bourgeois society into a more normative level in his work on law and democracy, *Between Facts and Norms*. For Habermas, the public sphere “can best be described as a network for communicating information and point of view (i.e opinions expressing affirmative or negative attitudes); the streams of communication are, in the process, filtered, and synthesized in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified *public* opinions” (BFN, 360; Habermas’ emphasis). As a “social phenomenon”, the public sphere is a network, not an institution or organization with norms or membership systems. Communication in the public sphere starts from the problems in society. In Habermas’ view, it can be used as “the sounding board” where problems in society can be heard and processed by the political system, mainly the parliamentary bodies (BFN, 359). As a sounding board, the political public sphere may “amplify the pressure of problems” through “convincingly and influentially” systematize them and provide the possible way out and also exaggerate them in such a way that the political system must inevitably understand, process and provide solutions. The connection between society and the political system is through public opinions generated in the public sphere. In Habermas's dictionary, public opinion is distinguished from the results of the survey in which the latter has a more statistical sense (BFN, 361). Representative public opinion is not collected through the aggregation of choices from isolated individuals but from public discourse in a mobilized public sphere.

In the aforementioned definition, communication posits a vital place in the public sphere. Habermas certainly requires communicative action. In an intersubjectively inhabited public sphere, participants do not perceive others as one perceives things in strategic actions with a success orientation but they undergo communication in situations where interpretations are cooperatively negotiated (BFN, 360-361). Moreover, for Habermas, such an intersubjective public sphere begins to open up when participants enter interpersonal relationships by taking up the position of "mutual speech-act" and assuming “illocutionary obligations”. The public sphere is a linguistically constituted space in which every participant takes a second person attitude and actively expresses communicative freedom between each other. For Habermas, the communications structures in the public sphere freed the public space from “the burden of decision-making” in which the burden was transferred to the official political institutions. The communication structures with their "orientation to laypersons" are released from thick communication with its practical obligations and are set loose from differentiation. In the public sphere, utterances are structured on issues and contributions in which contributions are charged with an affirmative or negative response.

In Habermas' view, the dissemination of information through the mass media is not the only thing or the most important thing in the process of public communication (BFN, 362). It is true that through the dissemination of information that is interesting and understandable, it opens up the opportunities for inclusive participation. However, the most important aspect in the formation of public opinion are "the rules of a shared practice of communication". This shared practice is shown through some indicators. First, the development of issues and contributions depends on how exhaustive the controversy is in the public sphere as it provides the possibility for rational engagement in proposals, information, and reasons. Second, this exhaustive controversy determines "the discursive level of opinion-formation" and the quality of the outcome of public opinions produced by those discourses. Unavoidably, the quality of public opinions determines the influence on the political system.

Habermas refers to Parsons' study on influence as "a symbolically generalized form of communication that facilitates interaction in virtue of conviction or persuasion" (BFN, 363). Influence is based on reputation that can be used to impress and to affect others without giving more explanation or verification. Reputation provides such kind of trust. In these terms, public opinion represents political potentials which have two effects. First, they can be used to orient citizens' voting behaviour. Second, they can be used to influence the formation of the will in the formal political system. Habermas gives a logical conclusion, "Naturally, political *influence* supported by public opinion is converted into political power...only when it affects the beliefs and decisions of *authorized* members of the political system" (Habermas' emphasis). The role of the public sphere is significant in this case because it is where influence is developed, and even becomes the object of a tussle. In speaking on the struggle for influence in the public sphere, we can classify three kinds (BFN, 363-364). First, those who have already acquired reputation and trust, such as the experienced political elites and institutions with a very good reputation such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace. Second, those who have already acquired a reputation and trust from a specific public sphere, such as religious leaders and scientists, also come to play a part in the public sphere. Third, those who are seeking for reputation and trust through the public sphere depend on legitimization granted by the public. They try to make important contributions comprehensible to the public.

Habermas asserts that we must distinguish between the actors raised in the public sphere and engage in reproducing the public sphere with those who try to utilize the well-built and well-organized public sphere. Habermas mentions an example of large and well-organized interest groups rooted in the social subsystem who seek to influence the political system through the public sphere. In the public sphere, these interest groups cannot operate with the reward and punishment

model but they can translate their social power into political power by advertising their interests through language that can build a way of thinking and orient the value system of citizens. Public opinion built through the hidden operation of money and power will instantly lose its credibility once these sources of money and power are open and visible to the public. Habermas asserts, "Public opinion can be manipulated but neither publicly bought nor publicly blackmailed" (BFN, 364). This is related to the fact that the public sphere cannot be designed according to one's desire. Before it can be mastered by a person, a public sphere and the public in it must have developed as an independent structure that reproduces itself from within itself. In other words, the public sphere is actually self-development and self-reproduction. For Habermas, such a model of formation remains latent in the constituted public sphere and becomes evident in the mobilized public sphere.

Habermas says that the political public sphere would only serve as a recipient and compilation of social problems in so far as it develops communication between citizens who would potentially be affected by those problems. Actually, the public sphere is open to all citizens. However, the public sphere becomes functional when it echoes the personal experience of citizens, especially in relation to internal and external disturbances of a number of functional systems as well as from the state apparatus in complex and uncoordinated subsystems. Habermas states, "Systemic deficiencies are experienced in the context of individual life histories; such burdens accumulate in the lifeworld " (BFN, 365). The lifeworld has a kind of accurate "antennae" because in the horizon of the lifeworld there is interlacing among the history of personal experience of clients of functional systems that do not receive good service for those systems. For Habermas, the issues questioned in the public sphere are first seen in the personal experience of the citizens. These experiences then acquire correct expression in the languages of religion, art and literature. Here, the literary public sphere in the broadest sense is well tied in with the political public sphere. The literary public sphere becomes a special place for the articulation of the disclosure of values and the worldview.

It is inevitable that Habermas subsequently classifies the two main roles of citizens as participants in the public political space and at the same time as members of society (BFN, 365). As members of society, citizens can become employees and buyers, insured persons as well as hospital patients, taxpayers and bureaucratic clients and a number of other complementary roles. As members of society with complementary roles, citizens often experience an ironic situation between demands on the one hand and service failures on the other. Uncomfortable experiences with poor system services are then interpreted in the life history horizon that is interwoven with the life history of others in the context of the shared lifeworld. The lines of communication in the

public sphere are immediately connected to private spaces and to the thick web of interactions found in families and in the circle of friends. Soon this public sphere can flourish. Inevitably, communication can be established between strangers who do not know each other but who have the same experience (BFN, 366). The aim of this communication is achieving mutual understanding between them. This growing public sphere can be very complex with very many branches. The public sphere certainly is more than its spatial connotation in which participants physically gather in places such as plazas, auditoriums and so forth for assemblies and forums (BFN, 361). It can be expanded into virtual gatherings among readers, listeners or viewers connected through mass media. The connection to the private sphere apparently reenacts the memory of the bourgeois public sphere of the 17th and 18th centuries as described by Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (BFN, 366). The public sphere is a sphere where private individuals come together and form a public. During the public bourgeois period, they gathered at clubs, salons and cafes to discuss their experiences in a community of readers who access newspaper and journals. It seems clear to me that the idea of the public sphere Habermas built from the beginning has been retained in his more contemporary works. This is different from the idea of civil society which is undergoing change.

5.4 The public sphere and civil society

It is clearly indicated through the previous explanation that in Habermas' mind the public sphere is a part of civil society. In bourgeois society, the public sphere was a part of civil society. "Civil society", Habermas writes, "came into existence as the corollary of a depersonalized state authority" (STPS, 19). Quoting Arendt's notion of "the rise of the social" with a positive connotation, Habermas sees that the private sphere may have public relevance in society. With private power, civil society came as the new sphere counterbalancing the sphere of public authority. In his earlier understanding, Habermas posits civil society as a part of the private realm. There is a strong emphasis of the role of private space for the public sphere.

Habermas then revises his notion of civil society in his comments on the translation of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* into English 27 years later. While formerly he thought of civil society as a part of private realm that includes "a sphere of an economy regulated", he had now come to the understanding of it as associations or unions outside of the realm of the state and economy including religions, cultural activities, academia, media, sport, and so forth (FRPS, 453; cf. STPS, 30). Those associations may have a political impact through speaking in the public media (FRPS, 454). By the change of the social situation indicated by the revision of the understanding of "civil society", the question has to be asked as to whether and to what extent

the media-dominated public sphere provides a chance for the members of civil society to make changes to the dimensions of values, topics, and reasons (FRPS, 455) especially given the fact that media has entered the political and economic competition. The revision of the understanding of civil society from the private realm into the network of associations outside of the state and outside of the market expands the diversity and the complexity of the public sphere. The public sphere in modern civil society becomes the “polycentric” public sphere (cf. BFN, 47, 303, 317).

Habermas maintains this understanding of civil society in his later work, *Between Facts and Norms*. Here, he defines civil society as “non-governmental and non-economic connections and voluntary associations that anchor the communication structures of the public sphere in the society component of the lifeworld” (BFN, 366-367). Civil society’s way of working is different from the state by its administrative power and from the market by its power of money. Its voluntary nature marks its uniqueness. Civil society consists of groups that work spontaneously to capture the problems of society that actually come from the private sphere and then get filtered and channeled into the public sphere in a stronger form. “The core of civil society”, Habermas writes, “comprises a network of associations that institutionalizes problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres” (BFN, 367).

Civil society as a non-state network emphasizes the “principle of separation of state and society” as a principle of the constitutional state (BFN, 174). This principle refers to “*the legal guarantee of a social autonomy* that also grants each person, as enfranchised citizens, equal opportunities to make use of his rights to political participation and communication” (my emphasis). A state can only be identified as a constitutional state if it legally protects civil society by providing equal opportunities for the non-state and non-market voluntary groups to speak and by trying to resolve public problems in society. The equal opportunities for citizens are expressed in the activities of such associations in the public sphere.

Civil society is needed for absorbing and neutralizing the inequality in the distribution of social positions and to make sure that “social power” can only come to play in order to secure – instead of to restrict – civic autonomy (BFN, 174). Habermas means by “social power” the level of possibilities a social actor has in their social relationship that can be used to assert and to achieve their will even against obstacles or oppositions. Social power has the capacity for supporting or blocking the formation of communicative power. In supporting communicative power, social power can be used to fulfil equal liberties and communicative freedom. In blocking communicative power, social power can be used to give privileges to some parties and to press the political process to achieve their interests. Habermas utilizes the “principle of the democratic accountability” to avoid the usage of social power from seizing administrative power.

Habermas explains the characteristics of civil society by referring to the study of Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato (1992; quoted in BFN, 367-368). They mention four characteristics: plurality, publicity, privacy, and legality. The first refers to the plurality of groups such as families and voluntary associations. The second refers to publicity through communication and institutions of culture. The third refers to the private domain such as moral choice and self-development. The fourth refers to the legality for demarcating plurality, publicity and privacy from the state and the market through general laws and basic rights.

Basic rights that can constitutionalize the plurality of civil society are the freedom of assembly, the freedom of association and freedom of speech (BFN, 368). These basic rights are needed to open involvement to various organizations in the formation of public opinion, becoming the advocates for despised issues. These basic rights secure the entanglement of even cultural, religious, and ethical organizations. Thus, the application of those rights guarantees the plurality of civil society. For me, the principle of political pluralism in civil society emphasized by Habermas indicates that he dreams of a crowded voice in the public sphere. No wonder, Habermas opens the public sphere to religious language and reason. I discuss this in the other section in this chapter.

The guarantee of the publicity of civil society comes through the constitutionalization of the freedom of the press, radio, television and the right to engage in these media (BFN, 368). The most important requirement with this publicity is that openness is available for opposing views and diverse voices. The bridge between civil society and the public sphere and the political system is political parties and general elections. Here, political parties can collaborate in political opinion and will formation by citizens and involve them in political participation. Privacy in civil society can be secured through freedom of belief and conscience, rights of personality, freedom of movement, protection of privacy, of personal communication and residence, and so forth. There must be a promotion of “the integrity of private life spheres”. In my view, by securing the private sphere, Habermas wants to enrich the public sphere since the private sphere is a space for nurturing individuals to become a public. For these categories, Habermas emphasizes, “the network of associations can assert its autonomy and preserve its spontaneity only insofar as it can draw support from a mature pluralism of forms of life, subcultures, and worldviews”. In addition to the constitutional guarantee as the legal aspect, this “mature pluralism” can facilitate the plurality, the publicity, and the privacy of civil society.

Habermas reminds us that the constitutional guarantees cannot alone preserve autonomous civil society and the integral public sphere from any deformations. Habermas asserts that the political public sphere must be self-reproducing and self-stabilizing through “the odd self-

referential character of the practice of communication in civil society” (BFN, 369). The self-referential character can be shown through the self-interpretation, self-defence, and self-radicalization of public utterances in public political communication. Actors who are involved in the maintenance and expansion of the structure of civil society and the public sphere must be differentiated from those who merely utilize the existed arena. The former have “dual orientation” in their political engagement: they are influencing the political system through their program but they are also trying to maintain and expand civil society and the public sphere that cannot be separated from stating their identities and capacities to action and forming opinions (BFN, 369-370). In Cohen and Arato’s words quoted by Habermas, this dual politics consists of “offensive” and “defensive” goals.

Though civil society and the public sphere are self-referential, digging again an inspiration from Cohen and Arato, Habermas accepts “a structurally necessary ‘self-limitation’ of radical democratic practice” (BFN, 371-373). First, civil society can only develop in “an already rationalized lifeworld”.⁶⁶ Three conditions are needed: “the context of a liberal political culture”, “the corresponding patterns of socialization”, and “the basis of an integral private sphere”. Second, actors within the scope of the public sphere can only acquire influence, not political power. This public influence will only be converted into communicative power if it has passed the democratic legal procedures of will and opinion formation and entered into legislative debates involved in lawmaking. Third, civil society cannot directly transform the political system. It has only an indirect effect on the self-transformation of the political system. This happens due to the limitations of the effectiveness of the relationship between administrative power and civil society in which the legal instruments of the former are not necessarily effective in the latter and the aspirations of the latter may not be effectively accepted by the former, more so in the form of intervention by the latter. Civil society can only influence the personnel and the programming of the political system. Regardless of these self-limitations, Habermas reminds us that “the self-limitation of civil society should not be understood as incapacitation” (BFN, 372). Though civil society has limited access to expertise and limited capacity to solve problems, it has the “opportunity of mobilizing counterknowledge and drawing on the pertinent expertise to make its own translations”. Though civil society consists of laypersons and its mode of communication is ordinary language, it still has the capacity to “differentiate the essential questions and reasons for decisions”. The capacity to mobilize counterknowledge and to differentiate the essential questions and reasons can be better exhibited through communicative action.

⁶⁶ See the section of the lifeworld below.

5.5 The public sphere, communicative action and the lifeworld

In this sub-chapter, I will focus on Habermas's description of the theory of communicative action, including the conceptions of action, validity claims, the speech-act theory, and the distinction between communicative action and strategic action. I will also discuss the lifeworld. The theory of communicative action needs to be discussed because, as Habermas later states, it can reproduce the public sphere. The lifeworld is the transcendental meeting point in which participants in the public sphere can meet and agreement may be generated.

5.5.1 Communicative action and validity claims

5.5.1.1 Four Basic Concepts of Action

Habermas proposes four basic analytical concepts of action. I will focus on communicative action. First, the concept of “teleological action”. The actor tries to achieve an end by choosing the possible means that may succeed in conducive conditions and a suitable manner (TCA1, 85). Ontologically, this notion of action presupposes only one world, the objective world. This concept does not disown the presence of others, at least in that their cooperation fits the “egocentric calculus of utility” of certain actors (TCA1, 88).

Second, the concept of “normatively regulated action”. This model of action is indicated by the orientation of the members of a social group to direct their action to common values (TCA1, 85). The common values or norms are constituted by the agreement obtained in a social group. The norms that have been agreed as valid must be carried out in certain situations. Each member of a group is under the expectation to have certain behavior generally expected by all members. This model of action is the basis of role theory widely accepted in sociology. While the teleological model of action presupposes a single world, the normative model presupposes a double world. In addition to the objective world of the existing state of affairs, there is the social world where “normatively regulated interactions” exist among themselves (TCA1, 88).

Third, the concept of “dramaturgical action”. While the teleological model of action is mainly done by an actor and the normative model by members of a social group, the dramaturgical model is neither a solitary nor a communal action. This model is applied to a public constituted by participants who present themselves in interaction with one another (TCA1, 86). The public is used by an actor purposefully for disclosing their unique identity, presenting an impression or an image of an actor. For Habermas, this model is not fully developed though it is used primarily in “phenomenologically oriented descriptions of interaction”.

In Habermas' view, the key concepts of the dramaturgical model of action are “encounter” and “performance” (TCA1, 80). They exist in encountering each other in order to constitute a

visible public. There is also the existence of performing before an audience in a certain way. Habermas mentions some professions with virtuosos such as violinists, surgeons and policemen. Thus, there is a domain of subjective world. In this subjective world, an actor expresses their desires and feelings in public in such a way that this public may acknowledge those desires and feelings in the actors. There is only one direction of objective evaluation (TCA1, 93). There is the question of the proper moment of expression, or whether speech is intended or only a pretense of expression. While in testing beliefs and intentions, there is the question of truthfulness or sincerity, in testing desires and feelings there is the question of authenticity, though this cannot be separated from sincerity. The dramaturgical model of action can reserve strategic qualities when the actor treats their audience as an opponent rather than as a public. The range of dramaturgical actions varies from a sincere expression of feelings and desires to the cynical management of impressions. This management which results in the “manipulative production of false impressions” - Habermas borrows from Goffman’s research - can be equated with strategic action (TCA1, 94).

Fourth, the concept of “communicative action”. This conception refers to “the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations (whether by verbal or by extraverbal means)” (TCA1, 86). In this model, language is put in the prominent place. From the first, the actors negotiate their understanding of a situation conducive for reaching an agreement. While Habermas calls the central concept of the first action “decision”, the second “complying the norms”, the third “presentation of self”, he calls the last “interpretation”. Different from the second model that only the norms are reached by agreement, in the last model, everything must be reached by agreement: action situation, plan of action, and so forth.

The important differentiation made by Habermas between communicative action and the other three concepts of action is about language (TCA1, 95). The teleological, normative, and dramaturgical models of action also use language. The teleological model uses language to influence the opponents for adjusting to the beliefs and intentions in the speaker’s own interest. The normative model utilizes language in order to transmit cultural values and to carry a consensus. The dramaturgical model employs language as a medium for self-performance. Though these three concepts use language, they use it “one-sidedly” (TCA1, 94). In Habermas’ reconstruction, “only the communicative model of action presupposes language as a medium of uncurtailed communication whereby speakers and hearers, out of the context of their preinterpreted lifeworld, refer simultaneously to things in the objective, social, and subjective worlds in order to negotiate common definitions of situation” (TCA1, 95).

The one-sidedness of the three concepts of action is shown through the fact that they are proven to have limits from the point of view of communicative action (TCA1, 95). In the concept

of teleological action, there is only indirect communication used by those who want to achieve their ends. In the concept of normative action, there is a consensual communication based upon the present normative agreement. In the concept of dramaturgical action, language is used to present oneself in front of an audience. “In each case only one function of language is thematized”, Habermas analyzes, “the release of perlocutionary effects, the establishment of interpersonal relations, and the expression of subjective experiences”. The concept of communicative action is different from those concepts of action in that it takes into consideration all functions of language equally.

I will now try to apply these four concepts of action to the notion of the public sphere. I will focus my analysis on Habermas’ explanation of the usage of language by these four concepts (TCA1, 95). The public sphere cannot be separated from the usage of language. The teleological model of action will use the public sphere as a space to reach success by influencing others, even leading opponents to become their proponents. Language is utilized by the speakers in the public sphere in order to reach their ends. For instance, the public sphere is used by the government and business companies to reach their target through outdoor advertising. The public sphere hence becomes a space for blandishment. Habermas says that in teleological action, there is only one function of language, that is “the release of perlocutionary effects”. I should say that in the teleological-dominated public sphere, there is a war between perlocutionary forces. Habermas highlights the problem in the notion of “the colonization of the lifeworld”. Habermas also anticipates the manipulation of public opinion in the public sphere by social actors who have strategic intentions (BFN, 364). Thus, Habermas suggests the self-strengthening of the public sphere through communicative action before it can be captured by those actors.

The normatively regulated model of action uses language for transmitting cultural values which become the consensual norms. By this model of action, actors will use the public sphere to reach the consensual reproduction of values in norms that must be obeyed by all members of a social group. The public sphere can also be used to present “norm-comformative behaviour”. The dramaturgical model of action deeply and explicitly presupposes the public sphere. This model of action needs a public sphere that is constituted by its participants so they can present themselves there. In the public sphere, an actor discloses her subjectivity, a more or less impressive image. Habermas sees that this concept of presentation “does not signify *spontaneous expressive* behaviour but stylizing the expression of one’s own experience with a view to the audience” (TCA1, 86; my emphasis). Here, the drawing of this conception as understood by Habermas is different from Arendt’s conception. Arendt prioritizes spontaneous action and speech in the public sphere as expressions of freedom. In the public sphere dramaturgical action becomes a space for

“encounter and performance”. The former is on the audience’s side while the latter is on the actor’s side. Aside from spontaneity, the outline of this action and its implication for the notion of the public sphere is in accordance with Arendt’s conception.

The problems of teleological action with its utilitarian non-communicative effect and the normative orientation of action as highlighted by Habermas cause certain problems for their application in the public sphere. Since they are clear, I now focus on dramaturgical action. Habermas sees that the dramaturgical model of action can be considered, in a certain way, as “parasitic”, that is, as resting on “a structure of goal-directed” action (TCA1, 90). This means the dramaturgical model has a similar problem to teleological action. For me, the application of the dramaturgical model in the public sphere makes it become such a representative publicness. There is no intersubjective relationship between the participants, but only encounter and performance. The difference between representative publicness and this kind of public sphere is that with the former, the public sphere was monopolized by royalty, but by the latter, the public sphere is opened to all individuals, among who there might be some members of the elite too. I had a lengthy discussion on this aspect in Chapter 4. In spite of those problems, Habermas also notes the “manipulative production of false impression” in which the sincerity of an actor is brought into question.

Certainly, Habermas wants to apply communicative action as the dominant model in the public sphere. In the public sphere, where communicative action takes a central role, there are the establishment of interpersonal relationships and the action motivated for reaching of understanding. In communicative action, language is not used one-sidedly but all of its functions are taken into account. As Habermas has elaborated, in teleological action there is an action’s coordination directed by an egocentric calculation of utility. In the norm-regulated and dramaturgical action, there are such kinds of consensus of the participants. True social coordination and true rational consensus only happen in the public sphere where communicative action plays a pivotal role. Communicative action indeed uses reciprocally raised validity claims.

5.5.1.2 Validity claims and the ideal speech situation

According to Habermas, the communicative model of action uses language from the pragmatic point of view,⁶⁷ that is, “speakers, in employing sentences with an orientation to

⁶⁷ Albert R. Spencer says, “Ultimately Habermas is the best demonstration of pragmatism’s potential when compared with critical theory during the Cold War. Although a student of Horkheimer, Habermas dramatically breaks ties with his mentor, using pragmatism to reconstruct the reductive dialectical materialism of the Frankfurt School” (Spencer 2020, 208). Spencer also says, “Also, through Habermas’s studies at the Frankfurt School, pragmatism entered the orbit of European critical theory; and an examination of historical parallels highlights the strength and weaknesses of pragmatic social inquiry in the twentieth century” (Spencer 2020, 202).

reaching understanding, take up relations to the world, not only directly as in teleological, normatively regulated, or dramaturgical action, but in a reflective way” (TCA1, 98). Speakers employ integratively three formal world concepts that are used singly or in pairs in other concepts of action. Speakers use those concepts in the framework of interpretation that can lead to reaching an understanding. These conceptions are put by Habermas in categories called “the validity claims”. Habermas says, “The concept of communicative action presupposes language as the medium for a kind of reaching understanding, in the course of which participants, through relating to a world, reciprocally raise validity claims that can be accepted or contested” (TCA1, 99). The validity claims consist in three propositions: “that the statement made is true”, “that the speech act is right with respect to the existing normative context”, and “that the manifest intention of the speaker is meant as it is expressed”. The first is called “truth”, that is, the search for factual satisfaction. The second is called “rightness”, that is, the search for a legitimate normative context. The third is called “sincerity” for the search of a congruity between speech and intention. The first corresponds to the “objective world”, that is, “the totality of all entities about which true statements are possible” (TCA1, 100). The second corresponds to the “social world”, that is, “the totality of all legitimately regulated interpersonal relations”. The third corresponds to the “subjective world”, that is, “the totality of the experiences of the speaker to which he has privileged access”.

For Habermas, “reaching understanding” [*Verständigung*] means “a process of reaching agreement [*Einigung*] among speaking and acting subjects” (TCA1, 286-287). The agreement reached in a social group has to be accepted as valid by those who are in that group. “Processes of reaching understanding”, Habermas writes, “aim at an agreement that meets the conditions of rationally motivated assent to the content of an utterance” (TCA1, 287). This agreement must have a rational basis. It is not something imposed from outside or achieved through a coercive power. It means that both the speakers who give a speech act and the hearers who give validation to claims base their action on rational grounds. The hearers may say “yes” or “no” with freedom, without being pushed by a coercive power. This way of reaching agreement is expected by Habermas to happen in the public sphere. In the context of daily life, the mutual understanding between subjects conducting communicative action is measured by validity claims that are based on the background of the lifeworld, the participants taking a yes or no position in communicative freedom (BFN, 322). Validity claims are open to criticism, even the risk of rejection. “In this sense”, Habermas writes, “communicative action *refers to* a process of argumentation in which those taking part justify their validity claims before an ideally expanded audience”.

In the context of reaching agreement, it is important to mention Habermas' part in discourse ethics, "the ideal speech situation" (MCCA, pp. 89-90). Habermas means by this situation "the general symmetry conditions that every competent speaker must presuppose are sufficiently satisfied insofar as he intends to enter into argumentation at all" (TCA1, p. 25). First, "Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse". This condition non-exceptionally opens to the wide public participation of every capable participant. Second, "Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever. Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse. Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires, and needs". These conditions require equal opportunity to participate in and contribute to public discourse. Third, "No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights as laid down in [the first] and [the second]" conditions. This condition secures the equal rights of access and participation in order that illocutionary acts as part of speech acts might be delivered.

5.5.1.3 Speech act theory

In reaching understanding, Habermas emphasizes the importance of the linguistic approach. This usage is beyond doubt since for him, reaching understanding is "the inherent telos of human speech" and "the original mode of language use" (TCA1, 287-288). Thus, Habermas employs Austin's classification of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts (TCA1, 288-289). "Through locutionary acts", Habermas says, "the speaker expresses states of affairs: he says something". Through illocutionary acts, "the speaker performs an action in saying something". The illocutionary acts are shown through some modes of sentences such as command, warning, promise, avowal, and so forth. In practice, illocutionary acts use a performative verb for a first-person subject, added with the adverb "hereby". Through perlocutionary acts, "the speaker produces effects upon the hearer". In short, Habermas beautifully puts these three acts as "to say *something*, to act *in* saying something, to bring about something *through* acting in saying something".

In Austin's view as referred to by Habermas, the speech act is a self-sufficient act in that it fully depends on the meaning of the sentence said by the speaker (TCA1, 288-289). The speech act is differentiated from teleological action in that the latter depends on the intention of the speaker, not the meaning of the sentence. By depending on the meaning of the sentence, the speech act may show the communicative intention and the illocutionary aim pursued by the speaker. Since illocutionary acts are usually implanted in contexts of interaction, they are sometimes used

for strategic interaction. Speech acts can be utilized with orientation to gain the individual success of the speaker and is unavoidably instrumentalized by the speaker.

Here Habermas presents a demarcation line between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts (TCA1, 290). In the former, the communicative intent of the speaker is only generally limited to the hearer's understanding. This understanding is possible because the hearer can comprehend it through the meaning of the sentence said by the speaker. The latter also expects the intention of the speaker, not only the understanding of the hearer, for the comprehension of the meaning of the sentence. Alas, the hearer cannot comprehend the intention of the speaker easily and automatically. Habermas says that the hearer can at least infer the speaker's intention from the context. Habermas gives instances of this differentiation. These two sentences indicate the success of the illocutionary acts of the speaker but not the perlocutionary one, mainly when the second partner understands the meaning of sentence and accepts it as true: "The speaker asserted to the hearer that he gave notice to his firm" and "The hearer warned the speaker not to give notice to his firm" (TCA1, 290-291). As said before, the illocutionary success does nothing with the effects. The perlocutionary effects are shown through the following sentences: "Through informing the hearer that he had given notice to his firm, the speaker gave the hearer a fright (as he intended to do)" and "The hearer upset the speaker with the warning against giving notice to his firm" (TCA1, 291). Fright and unhappiness are the perlocutionary effects inflicted by the first partner. The illocutionary sentences as shown above are not sufficient for gaining a perlocutionary effect. Thus, the "description of perlocutionary effects must therefore refer to a context of teleological action that *goes beyond* the speech act" (Habermas' emphasis).

It is clear for Austin as comprehended by Habermas that the illocutionary results have an "internal connection with speech acts" while perlocutionary effects are outside the meaning of what is said (TCA1, 291). It means that the fright and unhappiness only happen when the second partner seriously takes into account the speech act of the first partner. When the hearer considers the speech of the speaker as correct or truthful or right, then he is implicitly speaking of his readiness to follow certain conventional obligations. Following this explanation, Habermas finds that while the illocutionary aim is open to the hearer, perlocutionary is not. The predicates that are used in the speech acts which describing perlocutionary acts cannot appear. Perlocutionary acts "constitute subclass of teleological actions which must be carried out by means of speech acts" (TCA1, 292). Perlocutionary acts are considered to be part of strategic interactions. Thus, only illocutionary acts can generate processes of reaching understanding (TCA1, 293).

Here, Habermas concludes, "Thus I count as communicative action those linguistically mediated interactions in which all participants pursue illocutionary aims, and *only* illocutionary

aims, with their mediating acts of communication” (TCA1, 295). When at least one of the participants has the intention of generating perlocutionary effects using his/her speech acts then Habermas regards it as “linguistically mediated strategic action”. While Habermas makes this distinction, in his view Austin misses it. Austin focuses on identifying acts of communication to reach understanding using speech acts. According to Habermas, Austin does not see the possibility of speech acts functioning as “a coordinating mechanism for other actions”.

After discussing illocutionary acts for reaching understanding, I now come to elaborate Habermas’ explanation of the conditions that have to be fulfilled in order to achieve communicative agreement. An agreement consists at least, of “the speech act of a speaker and the affirmative response of a hearer” (TCA1, 296). When the speaker says, “I hereby promise you that I will marry you” and the hearer delivers the affirmative response, “Yes, I shall depend upon it” then an agreement can be made. This agreement concerns “the content of the utterance”, “certain guarantees immanent to speech acts”, and “certain obligations relevant to the sequel interaction”. Habermas explains that this illocutionary success establishes an interpersonal relation between the speaker and the hearer. This interpersonal relation “is effective for coordination... orders scopes of action and sequences of interaction, and... opens up to the hearer possible points of connection by way of general alternatives for action”.

There are three level of the hearer’s reaction to a speech act, the understanding of utterance, the taking of position, and the direction of action (TCA1, 297). First, the hearer understands the speech act uttered by the speaker, by comprehending its meaning. Second, the hearer takes a position through a consenting or dissenting response to that speech act. It means that they accept or reject the speaker’s speech act. Third, the hearer directs their action according to “conventionally fixed obligations”. Habermas says, “The *pragmatic* level of agreement that is effective for coordination connects the *semantic* level of understanding meaning with the *empirical* level of developing further - in a manner dependent on the context - the accord relevant to the sequel of interaction” (TCA1, 297; Habermas’ emphasis). The meaning theory related to understanding an utterance is a kind of the “formal-pragmatic approach”. The “formal-semantics” is related to the conceptual difference between the meaning of an utterance and the meaning of the speaker is that it is possible for the speaker to have an inward different meaning from the outward literal meaning. Nevertheless, according to Habermas, this distinction cannot be further developed into “a methodological separation” between the formal or linguistic analysis of the meaning of a sentence and the empirical analysis of the meaning of the speaker in delivering an utterance because the literal meaning of a sentence is dependent on the context of its communicative usage. In standard conditions, formal pragmatics must take into account that the

meaning of the speaker does not diverge from the literal meaning of an utterance spoken by the speaker. Habermas emphasizes that his analysis is “limited to speech acts carried out *under standard conditions*” (TCA1, 297; Habermas’ emphasis). Habermas’ expectation is that the speaker’s meaning corresponds with the literal one.

On the hearer’s affirmative response, Habermas closely connects understanding with acceptability. He says, “We understand a speech act when we know what makes it acceptable” (TCA1, 297). In the speaker’s view, an acceptable utterance means an illocutionary success. A speech act is called “acceptable” when it fulfills the conditions that can make the hearer to take the “yes” position on the utterance claimed by the speaker. These conditions cannot be assessed one-sidedly according to the perspective of the speaker alone or the hearer alone but rather for “the intersubjective recognition of a linguistic claim, which, in a way typical of a given class of speech acts, grounds a specified agreement concerning obligations relevant to the sequel of interaction” (TCA1, 298). The hearer understands the meaning of a sentence said by a speaker when “he knows essential conditions under which he could be motivated by a speaker to take an affirmative position”. These “acceptability conditions” consist in the “condition of satisfaction” and the “condition of sanction”. The first is concerned with the conditions that are familiar to the hearer regarding a claim uttered by the speaker (TCA1, 299). The hearer must also know the conditions whether a consenting or a dissenting response is given to the claim of the speaker. By knowing these conditions, the hearer can relate their action to the claim of the speaker. The second is important since the first by itself is not sufficient to drive the hearer to give an affirmative response. The second is “the conditions of the agreement that first ground adherence to the obligations relevant to the interaction sequel” (TCA1, 300). The hearer has to know the reasons why the speaker might urge the hearer to do something. The speaker has to know that the hearer has reason(s) to support her claim. It is unavoidable, that in the sample given by Habermas, an imperative clause, there is a potential sanction that is externally related to the speech act. Hence, the conditions of sanction complement the conditions of satisfaction in order to make the claim of the speaker acceptable. In the context of “normative authorized imperatives”, the speaker is dealing with the “normative validity” (TCA1, 300-301). Flight attendants are appealing to normative validity when they order the passengers to turn off their cell phones to comply with regulations constituted by the state or the aerospace authorities. Validity claims then are based not only on reasons but also on legal grounds. For Habermas, in the case of normative direction, the acceptability of the claim is mainly based on the illocutionary meaning of the speech act itself, without having added to it the condition of sanction (TCA1, 301-302).

Moving on from speaking about illocutionary acts, I now am speaking about how those speech acts are put under the test of validity according to Habermas' scheme. In order to reach understanding, at least two speaking and acting agents "understand a linguistic expression in the same way" (TCA1, 307-308). This understanding of an utterance cannot be separated from its acceptability. This acceptability cannot be separated from the test of validity. Habermas uses the three levels of the test that are normative rightness, the truth statement or the "correct existential presuppositions", and the truthful expression of beliefs, intentions, feelings, and so forth. The first corresponds to the social world of intersubjectivity. The second corresponds to the objective world of the existing state of affairs. The third corresponds to the subjective world of experiences. Habermas says that "the intersubjective commonality of a communicatively achieved agreement exists at the levels of normative accord, shared propositional knowledge, and mutual trust in subjective sincerity".

Though the orientation of reaching agreement puts speech acts under the complex test of validity, the speaker usually has one dominant validity claim, namely that, the speaker firstly wants to be understood by the hearer (TCA1, 308). Habermas gives examples. Statement, assertion, narration, explanation, prediction, and so forth that are delivered by the speaker are put under the test of a truth claim. Thus, the speaker expects an agreement based on the recognition of correct existential propositions. Experiential sentences, disclosure, confession and so forth are put under the test of sincerity. Thus, the speaker expects an agreement based on the recognition of truthfulness. Order, promise, appointment, warning and so forth are put under the test of rightness. Thus, the speaker expects an agreement based on the recognition of normative regulated claims. The first is called by Habermas the "constative speech acts in which elementary propositional (assertoric) sentences are used" (TCA1, 309). The second is called the "expressive speech acts in which elementary experiential sentences (in the first person present) appear". The third is called the "regulative speech acts in which either elementary imperative sentences (as in commands) or elementary intentional sentences (as in promises) appear".

In *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas explicitly applies the speech-act theory to the notion of the political public sphere. "The *intersubjectively shared space* of a speech situation is disclosed", he writes, "when the participants enter into interpersonal relationships by taking positions on *mutual speech-act* offers and assuming *illocutionary obligations*" (BFN, 361; my emphasis). "Mutual speech-act offers" means that every participant actively engages in "reciprocally attributing communicative freedom to each other" through proffering validity claims in especially constative and regulative speech-acts. The hearer will respond with arguments which contain reasons for those validity claims (BFN, 225-226). As said before, an agreement can be

generated if at least a speaker delivers the speech-act and the hearer gives the affirmative response. “Assuming illocutionary obligations” means every hearer is under an obligation to justify the validity claims raised by speech-acts (BFN, 119). The public sphere can only exist, in short, if every participant actively delivers speech-acts and justifies the validity claims raised by those speech-acts. Speech acts can be used to differentiate action’s situations and orientations.

5.5.1.4 Action’s situations and orientations

In addition to communicative action and its validity claims, Habermas differentiates action’s situations and orientations. There are two situations for actions, nonsocial and social (TCA1, 285). He also distinguishes orientations for two actions, for success or for reaching understanding. In the nonsocial situation, action oriented to success is an instrumental one. In the social situation, action oriented to success is strategic while action oriented to reaching understanding is a communicative one. The model of purposive-rational action starts from the presupposition that an actor actually wants to achieve an end or ends and thus chooses the adequate means for the possibility of providing success. Success refers to the presence of a desired state in the world. Habermas also differentiates between the original effects and the side effects. The former refers to the effects intended, foreseen, allowed by an actor. The side effects refer to the unanticipated effects. Instrumental action happens “when we consider it under the aspect of following technical rules of action and assess the efficiency of an intervention into a complex of circumstances and events”. Strategic action happens “when we consider it under the aspect of following rules of rational choice and assess the efficacy of influencing the decisions of a rational opponent”. Communicative action happens “whenever the actions of the agents involved are coordinated not through egocentric calculation of success but through acts of reaching understanding” (TCA1, 285-286). Communicative action does not disown the achievement of individual success but puts it within the framework of the harmonization of common plans based on the common definition of the situation. Hence, the negotiation of the common definitions of the situation is “an essential element of the interpretive accomplishments required for communicative action”.

Habermas draws a figure of social actions (TCA1, 333). Social actions consist in communicative and strategic action. Strategic actions consist in “concealed strategic” and “open strategic” action. Concealed strategy consists of “unconscious deception” that is “systematically distorted communication” and “conscious deception” that is a kind of manipulation. Communicative action has already been explained. Concealed strategic action happens when at least one participant acts with the orientation for success but to others it appears, and they believe, that she is satisfying the presuppositions of communicative action (TCA1, 332). This is a kind of

conscious deception, a manipulation that is used by perlocutionary acts. Unconscious deception or systematically distorted communication, in Habermas' view, is explained by psychoanalysts "in terms of defense mechanisms leads to disturbances of communication on both the intrapsychic and interpersonal levels". In this case, at least one participant "is deceiving himself about the fact that he is acting with an attitude oriented to success and is only keeping up with the appearance of communicative action". The agent is unconsciously deceiving himself.

Aside from Habermas' preference for communicative action in the public sphere, as has been discussed at length, here I want to discuss systematically distorted communication in relation to the public sphere as elaborated in *Between Facts and Norms*. In order to achieve hermeneutic self-understanding, ethical-political discourses in parliamentary sessions must be held in the satisfied "conditions of systematically undistorted communication", by avoiding the repression of participants so they can deliver genuine value orientations (BFN, 182).⁶⁸ If the parliamentary public sphere must satisfy the conditions of systematically undistorted communication, the general public sphere is "more vulnerable to the repressive and exclusionary effects of unequally distributed social power, structural violence, and systematically distorted communication" (BFN, 307-308). That is why Habermas uses Fraser's term, "the weak public" to describe the "wild" nature of the general public sphere (BFN, 307). Nevertheless, normatively speaking, Habermas requires the same thing in the general public sphere. Habermas then suggests the basic constitutional guarantees for civil society and the public sphere and their self-referential character (BFN, 369). The first is the guarantee of the constitutional state. The second means that the actors who participate in the public sphere have also an orientation to defend and maintain the actualization of "the function of undistorted political public sphere" by avoiding deception. The texts that are uttered in the public sphere have the same subtexts. Self-referential means self-interpretation, self-defense, and the self-radicalization of civil society and the public sphere. The distorted public sphere usually exists under authoritarian or totalitarian political systems (BFN, 382). The undistorted or undeformed public sphere provides the possibility to generate communicative power that can only issue "from structures of undamaged intersubjectivity found in nondistorted communication" (BFN, 148). This nondistorted communication depends very much on the lifeworld.

5.5.2 The lifeworld

In the first book, Habermas states that the communicative action "provides the medium for the reproduction of lifeworlds" (TCA1, 337). Retrospectively, the lifeworld is "a culturally

⁶⁸ I will discuss this part in the section on popular sovereignty.

transmitted and linguistically organized stock of interpretive patterns” (TCA2, 124). Prospectively, the lifeworld is “the transcendental site where speaker and hearer meet, where they can reciprocally raise claims that their utterance fit the world (objective, social, or subjective), and where they can criticize and confirm those validity claims, settle their disagreements, and arrive at agreements”. It has a relation to the internal world but not the internal world of a subject. It has an intersubjective, not a solitary mode. Habermas also explains, “the lifeworld is constitutive for mutual understanding *as such*, whereas the formal world-concepts constitute a reference system for that *about which* mutual understanding is possible: speakers and hearers come to an understanding from out of their common lifeworld about something in the objective, social, or subjective worlds” (TCA2, 126; Habermas’ emphasis).

Although an utterance is primarily a single mode of communication, in practice it deals with all modes of communication and all validity claims (TCA2, 120-121). Thus, the consent given by the hearer to the speaker is closely related to the three validity claims. For instance, it is impossible for the hearer to agree with the normative claim but doubt the sincerity of the speaker. In addition to that presupposition, the speaker and the hearer are speaking and acting in the common situation that they unconsciously define with an orientation to reach a mutual understanding.

This common situation is a “reference system” and the “background” for an actual sentence intersubjectively uttered (TCA2, 122-123). A common situation is the horizon that shifts according to the theme. “A situation”, Habermas writes, “is a segment of lifeworld contexts of relevance [*Verweisungszusammenhänge*] that is thrown into relief by themes and articulated through goals and plans of actions”. Habermas continues, “these contexts of relevance are concentrically ordered and become increasingly anonymous and diffused as the spatiotemporal and social distance grows”. Spatially, there are two worlds, “a world within my actual reach” and “a world within my potential reach”. Socially, the reference groups, the family, the classmate, the nation and the like, are within a “world society”.

Habermas says that for the participants involved in intersubjective communication, “the action situation is the center of their lifeworld” (TCA2, 123). This lifeworld has a shiftable horizon pointing to the complexity of the lifeworld. Of course, the lifeworld is always present as the background for our daily communication. The lifeworld is taken for granted and it is unnecessary to explain it, in intersubjective communication and interpretation (TCA2, 124). The lifeworld is “formed from more or less diffuse, always unproblematic, background convictions” (TCA1, 70). Thus, for me, intersubjective communication in the public sphere cannot occur without the lifeworld.

As acknowledged by Habermas himself, he has a great debt to the phenomenological analysis of Alfred Schütz and Thomas Luckmann, who emphasize the lifeworld's "fundamentally implicit character", its "holistic structure", and its position as "a pre-interpreted horizon" (Baynes 2016, 65). As a pre-interpreted horizon, the lifeworld is actually "intuitively present, in this sense familiar and transparent, and at the same time a vast and incalculable web of presuppositions" (TCA2, 131). Without satisfying the lifeworld, an utterance can be considered as meaningful, as a valid sentence. As a holistic structure, the lifeworld is "a totality of what is taken for granted" whose limit cannot be transcended even if situations change (TCA2, 132).

The structural components of the lifeworld are culture, society, and personality (TCA2, 138; PDM, 343). By culture, Habermas means "the stock of knowledge" that provides the possibility for participants to understand something in their communication in the world through interpretation. By society, he means "the legitimate orders" that provide the possibility for participants to set their memberships in social groups and to fix solidarity. By personality, he means "the competences" that provide the possibility for participants to be capable of acting and speaking which are needed to put them in the proper position for the processes of reaching understanding. By this position, they may assert their identities.

With the notion of the lifeworld, an agent is in a position of paradox, both "the initiator of his accountable actions" and at the same time also "the product of the traditions in which he stands" (TCA2, 135). Though an agent is the product of the past, Habermas does not want to see the reproduction of the lifeworld as made by an agent as "merely routed through the medium of communicative action", but it must be "saddled upon the interpretative accomplishments" of that agent (TCA2, 145). It means that for Habermas, the connection to the past does not signify that an agent loses their capacity to be a rational and responsible agent (Baynes 2016, 67). Instead, an agent actively reproduces her lifeworld through communicative action.

Since the lifeworld consists of three aspects, culture, society, and personality, the symbolic reproduction of it also includes three processes (TCA2, 137-138). The first is the "continuation of valid knowledge" which is done in "the semantic dimension of meanings or contents (of the cultural tradition)". The second is the "stabilization of group solidarity" which is done in "the dimensions of social space (of socially integrated groups)". The third is the "socialization of responsible actors" which is done in "historical time (of successive generations)". Participation in communication provides the participants of the public sphere with the semantic interpretations of meaning in order to understand something in the world. The stabilization of group solidarity is secured by the regulation of participants' memberships in social groups for legitimate orders. The succession of responsible actors comes by the speaking and acting competences of a subject that

can posit a position in the processes of reaching understanding. Communicative action provides an understanding for others about their situations so they may stand in “a cultural tradition” that they can use and renew. Communicative action provides the coordination of the action of participants by way of “intersubjectively recognizing criticisable validity claims”; in this way they can rely on membership of social groups and strengthen their integration in the same group. Communicative action provides the internalization of the value orientations of a group and receives the competences for action and speech while a child actively participates in interaction with competently-referenced persons.

In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Habermas outlines the assurances given by the symbolic reproductive processes of the three aspects of the lifeworld (PDM, 343-344). Cultural reproduction ensures that new situations that arise have a connection with the existing world situation. Cultural reproduction also ensures that there is a continuity of tradition and a coherence of knowledge needed for consensus in everyday conversation. Social integration ensures that new situations that arise (in the dimension of social space) are connected to the existing world condition. Social integration also nurtures the coordination of actions through legally regulated interpersonal relationships and the constancy of group identity. Meanwhile, the socialization of new members ensures that the new conditions arising in the dimension of historical time must correlate to the existing world condition. It also ensures the development of the capacity for action of the next generations and maintains the “harmonizing of individual life histories and collective life forms”.

The public sphere has a resemblance to the lifeworld in that both are reproduced by communicative action (BFN, 360). The public sphere is different from the lifeworld in two things. First, the public sphere specializes only in relevant political issues and problems which can be followed up by the political system. Second, the public sphere focuses not on the form or the content but on the “social space generated in communicative action”. It means that the public sphere can be reproduced by its own public audience, which is constitutive for it (BFN, 364) through a self-referential character, as explained before. Agreement generated by the communicative freedom of participants maintains the continuity of the public sphere.

The public sphere and civil society need the “already rationalized lifeworld” in order to be developed. Here I elaborate Habermas’ notion of the “rationalization of the lifeworld” (TCA2, 145), which is not understood as the expansion of instrumental rationality as in Weber (Baynes 2016, 67-68). There are three perspectives on the rationalization of the lifeworld (TCA2, 146-147). The first is a “structural differentiation of the lifeworld”. In the relation between society and culture, it is to be found in “the gradual uncoupling of the institutional system from worldviews”.

In the relation between society and personality, it is “evinced in the extension of the scope of contingency for establishing interpersonal relationships”. In the relation between personality and culture, it is “manifested in the fact that the renewal of traditions depends more and more on individuals’ readiness to criticize and their ability to innovate”. The second is a “separation of form and content”. On the cultural level, there is a separation between the content of mythical worldviews in traditions with the procedures of argumentation, the presuppositions of communication, and so forth. On the societal level, there is a separation between the procedures of the legal order and the principles of morality with the specific contexts of life forms. Here, modern societies are distinguished from primitive societies. On the personality level, there is a separation between “the content of cultural knowledge” and “the cognitive structures”. The third perspective on the rationalization of the lifeworld is a “growing reflexivity of symbolic reproduction”. The processes of reproduction such as “cultural transmission, social integration, and child-rearing” are professionally treated. Some instances can be mentioned here. Politically, there is the establishment of the “forms of discursive-will formation”. Educationally, there is the formalization of the child-rearing processes.

5.6 The public sphere, deliberative democracy, and the principle of popular sovereignty

In this sub-chapter, I want to elaborate Habermas’ thinking on the public sphere from his *Between Facts and Norms*. A legitimate law used to rule citizens receives its validity from the facts of deliberative processes. The public sphere is an important part of those processes. In the first section, I explain Habermas’ notion of “deliberative democracy” including his “two-track” conception which considers not only the representative bodies but also the informal public sphere. In the second section, I elaborate Habermas’ notion of the constitutional protection of the public sphere as part of the principle of popular sovereignty. This principle is a principle of the constitutional state.

5.6.1 Deliberative democracy

By etymology, the term “deliberation” is derived from the Latin word *deliberare* which means “to consider very carefully” (Partridge 1966, 1765). Basically, deliberative democracy means a kind of democracy that consults its citizens’ considerations in the law-making process. Joshua Cohen defines it as a democratic conception that idealizes “a free and reasoned agreement among equals” in order to have democratically legitimate outcomes (Cohen 1989, 22; quoted in Baynes 2016, 158; cf. BFN, 304-305). Overall, Habermas accepts as plausible Cohen’s characteristics of deliberative democracy (BFN, 305). First, deliberative democracy is held in an

argumentative exchange of information, opinions and reasons among those who submit and evaluate proposals. Second, deliberative democracy is based on the principle of inclusivity. Those who are affected by the political outcomes of that process can equally take part in those deliberative processes. Third, deliberative processes are free from external and internal coercion. Participants have an equal opportunity to take part so far as they are bound to rational argumentation and the principles of communication. Fourth, deliberative processes are directed toward the achievement of rational consensus.

Although he is in line with Cohen's outline of deliberative politics, Habermas' conception differs from Cohen in various respects. First, while Cohen dreams of an ideal procedure that can be reflected by all social institutions as much as possible, Habermas takes into account the contexts embedded in those democratic procedures. Second, what Cohen postulates omits the relation between "decision-oriented deliberations" and "the informal processes of opinion-formation in the public sphere" (BFN, 307-308). Here Habermas differentiates between political bodies and "the general public of citizens". The former is "the publics of parliamentary bodies" who have the ability to make legally political decisions. They are "structured predominantly as a context of justification". The latter is structured predominantly as "the context of discovery". Public opinions are discovered in the unregulated public sphere and then politically and legally justified in parliamentary bodies. To use Nancy Fraser's terms, the former is called "the strong public" and the latter "the weak public" (Fraser 1992, 134). The informal public sphere must be sustained by a citizenship conducive to an effective and equal constitutionally-guaranteed citizenship. By this kind of citizenship, the informal public sphere can provide the unrestricted communication in which spontaneity becomes its characteristic, though it is susceptible to violence and repression. Habermas states, "Democratically constituted opinion and will-formation depends on the supply of informal public opinions that, ideally, develop in structures of an unsubverted political public sphere" (BFN, 308).

Based on the discourse principle, as elaborated before, Habermas gives three keys to the success of deliberative politics (BFN, 298), namely, "the institutionalization of the corresponding procedures", the "conditions of communication", and "the interplay of institutionalized deliberative processes with informally constituted public opinions". I will elaborate the first key in depth below when discussing the principle of popular sovereignty. The second key, the conditions of communication consist of several necessary guarantees (BFN, 230). The first guarantee is that argumentation should not be stopped based on irrational motivations. The second guarantee is that there is a freedom of choice for discussion topics, a freedom of access to information, and a freedom of participation in argumentation. The third guarantee is the avoidance

of any form of coercion both from within and outside the process of achieving understanding so that the authority in the discourse is merely a rationally better argument.

The third key to the success of deliberative democracy is its extension beyond the formal political bodies to “the peripheral networks of the political public sphere” (BFN, 298, 352). Habermas says, “A deliberative practice of self-legislation can develop only in the interplay between, on the one hand, the parliamentary will-formation institutionalized in legal procedures and programmed to reach decisions and, on the other, political opinion-formation along informal channels of political communication” (BFN, 275). Habermas is proposing “a two-track deliberative politics” (BFN, 304) in the different level of opinion and will formation: the constitutional parliament and the informal public sphere (BFN, 314).

5.6.2 The principle of popular sovereignty

One principle of the constitutional state is the “principle of popular sovereignty” (BFN, 169). In the framework of the discourse principle, the principle of popular sovereignty states that “all political power derives from the communicative power of citizens” (BFN, 170). Public authorities receive their power from the laws generated by citizens through their opinion and will formation structured in the public discourse. In the framework of power, the principle of popular sovereignty means that “legislative powers be transferred to the totality of citizens, who alone can generate communicative power from their midst”. Habermas suggests the “parliamentary principle” as a wise way out of the dilemma between on the one hand the principle of popular sovereignty, which means the deliberation and the decision about laws and policies are granted to all citizens, and on the other hand the fact that not all citizens want to join the exercise of direct interaction as such. The parliamentary principle is applied through the representative bodies whose main tasks are to deliberate and to take decisions on behalf of citizens. Many procedural questions can be asked: on the mode of election, the characteristics of the representative, the mode of decision-making, the organization of work and so forth. Nevertheless, Habermas warns that these procedural questions must be “regulated in the light of the discourse principle” (BFN, 171). It means that these regulations must fulfil “the necessary communicative presuppositions” and “the conditions of fair bargaining”. Not less important, the principle of political pluralism must be ensured inside or outside representative bodies.

Habermas reminds us that representative bodies with their parliamentary opinion and will formation must deeply connect to “the informal streams of communication emerging from the public spheres” (BFN, 171). Thus, according to Habermas, the content of the principle of popular sovereignty consists in three main principles, the parliamentary principle, the principles of the

secured autonomy of the public spheres, and open competition among the diverse political parties. Habermas underlines the importance of constitutional protection for the public sphere in which opinions, validity claims and critical judgments can be freely uttered. As these lines of interpretation of the principle of popular sovereignty are delivered by Habermas, we know that the first principle of the constitutional state is the correlation between the public sphere and the representative bodies.

The principle of popular sovereignty that protects the public sphere constitutionally must be followed up by the institutionalization of the public use of communicative freedom (BFN, 176-177). This legal institutionalization is important in order to prove the legal opportunity for citizens to exercise their basic rights of political participation. As mentioned before, this institutionalization is the first key to the success of deliberative democracy. What is intended by Habermas is the institutionalization of the legal procedures of communication. For instance, bargaining is a type of communication (BFN, 177). In institutionalization of this type, there must be some legal procedures on fair compromise, the right of participation, the choice and composition of delegations, also on moderation and the duration of negotiations and so forth. These legal procedures can be used in wage negotiations between the government, companies and labor organizations. Legal compromise procedures are needed to secure the equality of considerations, power-sharing, the exchange of arguments and so forth. Habermas points out that legal procedures are utilized for securing space and fairness for argumentation but not the logic of argumentation, which has its own internal structure (BFN, 178). Habermas also points out that although the types of communication that are embedded in legal procedures leave the inner logic of argumentation untouchable, these legal institutionalizations direct them to specific temporal, social, and substantive constraints. For instance, legal procedures direct the participation of citizens and the distribution of roles in the discursive processes of opinion and will formation. These procedures restrict the permissible spectrum of topics, questions, and arguments, link these arguments to decision-making and direct the specific space and time in which law-making discourses are expected to occur.

The circulation of opinions and political will from the public sphere into parliament shapes the democratic law-making process. Indirectly, communicative power is transformed into administrative power through the law. Habermas says, "Laws can regulate the transformation of communicative power into administrative power inasmuch as they come about according to a democratic procedure, ground a comprehensive legal protection guaranteed by impartial courts, and shield from the implementing administration the sorts of reasons that support legislative resolutions and court decisions" (BFN, 192). Habermas' unique model of two-track deliberative

democracy which differentiates communicative and administrative power meets a serious challenge to the usage of religious language and reasons in the public sphere.

5.7 Religion in the public sphere

Habermas wrote two articles on the role of religion in the public sphere. The first is related to the public use of reason (RPS), and the second on the post-secular society (RPSPSS). The two stimuli for these articles were Rawls' notion on the public use of reason and the resurgence of religion in the post-secular society. I will start with the first. Rawls actually is not hostile to the presence and contributions of religions.⁶⁹ With his notion of overlapping consensus, he opens the possibility for religions to endorse the principle of justice using their fundamental religious lines of argument. "A reasonable overlapping consensus" happens when comprehensive doctrines endorse "a political conception of justice" (Rawls 2005, 482-483). This conception includes equal basic rights and liberties, such as liberty of conscience and freedom of religion, for all citizens. This conception is "freestanding" and becomes such a "module" that it can fit any comprehensive doctrine (Wenar 2017). For instance, Christianity endorses the idea of human rights by putting it within the doctrine of *imago Dei*. Here, we see that the concept is neutral while the reason can be religious or derived from any comprehensive doctrine.

By his notion of the public use of reason, Rawls closes down the possibility of using religious reasons. Rawls mentions "the duty of civility", that is, a moral instead of a legal duty for citizens in order to fulfil or to satisfy the "ideal of public reason" (Rawls 2005, 444-445). Here, Rawls tries to be consistent with freedom of speech so he "only" defines the duty of civility as moral and not a legal duty. In the first place, the duty of civility is put on government officials such as judges and legislators and the candidates for those offices to act and speak according to the idea of public reason and explain their political decisions in the most reasonable way. Rawls expands this duty of civility to citizens who are not government officials, in that "ideally citizens are to think of themselves *as if they were legislators* and ask themselves what statutes, supported by what reasons satisfying the criterion of reciprocity, they would think it most reasonable to enact" (Rawls' emphasis). "The criterion of reciprocity" means shared reasonable values, accessible, comprehensible, and justifiable by all citizens. No wonder Rawls states that public reason must be presented separately from the values or standards of any comprehensive doctrine (Rawls 2005, 453).

⁶⁹ Bjørn Thomassen reminds us that actually Rawls is not hostile to religion. In contrast to many European scholars who were raised up in the secular academic environment, Rawls was not. Rawls was an undergraduate student of theology at Princeton in 1941-1942, and attended the seminary in order to become an Episcopal priest. He wrote a senior thesis on faith and sin. See Bjørn Thomassen, "Reason and Religion in Rawls: Voegelin's Challenge", *Philosophia*, No. 40 (2012):239-241.

The restriction on the usage of religious values in public reason appears in “the exclusive view” of the limits of public reason. Rawls distinguishes between “the exclusive view” and “the inclusive view” (Rawls 2005, 247-250). By “the exclusive view” Rawls means that “on fundamental political matters, reasons given explicitly in terms of comprehensive doctrines are never to be introduced into public reason”. By “the inclusive view” Rawls means that it is possible, “in certain situations, to present what they regard as the basis of political values rooted in their comprehensive doctrine, provided they do this in ways that strengthen the ideal of public reason itself”. The exclusive view according to Rawls is applied in a “more or less well-ordered” society where citizens appreciate the ideal of public reason, society is constituted without dispute, basic rights are well guaranteed, and without basic social injustice being felt by some citizens. The inclusive view is applied in a “nearly well-ordered society” where there is “serious dispute” concerning “the principle of fair equality” so some citizens feel there is basic social injustice and that basic rights are not fully guaranteed. The inclusive view must be applied when there are some horizontal religious conflicts. In order to strengthen the society and make citizens honor the ideal of public reason, the best way in this society, according to Rawls, is “to explain in the public forum how one’s comprehensive doctrine affirms the political values”. For instance, religious leaders can use their comprehensive religious doctrines to promote peace and co-acceptance in order to put an end to religious conflicts. Here, Rawls uses the historical example of what the abolitionists and Martin Luther King, Jr did to promote liberal democratic values.

Rawls’ restriction on the public presentation of religious values is emphasized by his follower, Robert Audi. Audi delivers two clear premises on this matter (Audi 1997, 25; quoted in Baxter 2011, 196). First, he says, “One has a prima facie obligation not to advocate or support any law or public policy that restricts human conduct, unless one has, and is willing to offer, adequate secular reason for this advocacy or support (say for one’s vote)”. Second, he says, “One has a (prima facie) obligation to abstain from advocacy or support of a law or public policy that restricts human conduct, unless one is sufficiently motivated by (normatively) adequate secular reason”. By these premises, Audi makes clear what is envisioned by Rawls, that there is not even a little bit of place in the public sphere for religious values and claims.

The main objection made by Habermas to Rawls and Audi is on the contradiction between freedom of religion and freedom of speech guaranteed by the state and their application by religious citizens in the public sphere. In Habermas’ words, “A state cannot encumber its citizens, to whom it guarantees freedom of religion, with duties that are incompatible with pursuing a devout life – it cannot expect something impossible of them” (RPS, 126). Habermas properly understands the nature of “genuine faith” that must be expanded beyond belief in a dogmatic

structure and is also “a source of energy” as an existential driving force for the whole life of a devout person (RPS, 127). A citizen is certainly a person with a whole background. Rawls is trying to split the person and the citizen while Habermas is trying to integrate them (Neal 2014, 320). Thus, being free to give public arguments for a religious citizen means bringing their religious language and reason to the public because they are certainly not able to make secular justifications over political issues. For Habermas, the requirement for religious citizens to translate their religious language and reason into language accessible to all creates “an unreasonable mental and psychological burden” for them (RPS, 130). Imposing “unequal cognitive burdens” on religious citizens means “the liberal state contradicts itself” (RPS, p. 136). Habermas also cries, “censoring the voices of religious citizens already at the source of the democratic process is inconsistent with the spirit of a liberal constitution” (RMCHR, p. 647). By allowing only a single mode of language, the liberals, according to Wolterstorff (who is referred to by Habermas as well), are seeking “the politics of a community with a shared perspective” and are not “willing to live with a politics of multiple communities” (Wolterstorff 1997, 109; quoted in Baxter 2011, 199-200). We may infer that for Habermas, religious values are not only utilized for endorsing overlapping consensus but can also be used in public reason. For Habermas, the example of Martin Luther King, Jr’s contribution was not properly used for the “nearly well-ordered society” but also for “the more or less well-ordered society”.

The second stimulus for Habermas’ articles is the resurgence of religion in post-secular society. Habermas believes that “religious traditions have the power to convincingly articulate moral sensitiveness and solidaristic intuitions” (RPSPSS, 223). He also believes that religions “have a special power to articulate moral intuitions, especially with regard to vulnerable forms of communal life” (RPS, 131). Historically, Habermas finds that even philosophy frequently learned and received “innovative impulses” from the “cognitive contents” of religious traditions (RPS, 142). Habermas also mentions an example from Iran, how religion forces protests against a corrupt regime (RPS, 115). Another important contribution of religion is that it provides “the normative truth contents” (RPS, 131) for democracy since a “post-truth democracy”, for Habermas, “would no longer be a democracy” (RPS, p. 144). Hence, he is convinced that secular citizens can at least learn something from their religious fellow citizens (RPS, 131, 143). Habermas certainly agrees with Paul Weithman when the latter emphasizes that “adequately informed, rational adults” can see “the reason-giving force of religious reasons” and would take them as the “sufficient reasons for action” (Weithman 2004, 167). For instance, though one rejects any comprehensive doctrine, as an adequately informed, rational adult, one can still understand its lines of arguments.

With the presence of religions in the democratic public sphere, Habermas wants to emphasize that secular citizens are now living in post-secular societies. The term “post-secular society”, in Habermas’ thinking, can be applied to “public consciousness in [secular countries] to the extent that, for the present, it has to adjust itself to the fact that religious communities continue to exist in a context of ongoing secularization” (RPSPSS, 213). Here Habermas emphasizes not only the sociological facts of the presence of religions but also an existential encounter by secular citizens with those religions resulting in a change of mindset and of consciousness. Habermas found at least three vital phenomena that impact this change of consciousness: the presence of global conflicts, the presence of national impacts, the presence of plural immigrants (RPSPSS, 214-215). Religion-driven global conflicts and terrorism change public consciousness that though appearing in a negative mode, religions are still present in the public life of secular countries. Habermas sees that religions affect the formation of political will and public opinion by contributing ideas on key issues. Moreover, the presence of Muslim immigrants in Europe, the USA and Australia challenges their fellow Christian citizens in those countries to practice and to show their faith. These matters contribute impacts on the change of consciousness in secular citizens that religions are present and contributing to the public sphere. And at last, the presence of working immigrants and refugees from different cultural and religious backgrounds proposes a challenge to “a pluralism of ways of life”. In turn, there must be a change of consciousness within secular citizens that their way of life is not the only present way of life. By these lines of arguments, Habermas suggests an ethic of citizenship with a “complementary learning process” among citizens (RPS, 140). This learning process, Habermas asserts, is not only needed by those in religious traditions but also by those on the secular side (RPSPSS, 223).

Habermas is in line with Rawls and Audi when he recognizes the commitment of neutrality in political bodies such as parliaments, courts, ministries and so forth. Politicians or official administrators must be neutral concerning the competing comprehensive doctrines (RPS, 128). Even so, Habermas is in disagreement with Rawls and Audi on forcing religious citizens to translate their language and reason. Religious citizens should be “allowed to express and justify their convictions in a religious language even when they cannot find secular translations for them” (RPS, 130). The aforementioned differentiation appears here: the informal and the formal public sphere. While the official political bodies are the formal public sphere, citizens’ gatherings, either physical or virtual, can be counted as the informal public sphere. The informal public sphere has a “wild” character while the formal public sphere can function as a “filter” for those opinions (RPS, 131). Since the political bodies have a commitment to neutrality, they can function as a “filter” to allow only secular contributions to pass through from the informal public sphere into

the formal. Habermas asserts that in formal political bodies, official transcripts can use only neutral language. Religious contributions in the informal public sphere can still be useful when those argumentations are firstly translated in – for example – the pre-parliament realms. Avoiding the asymmetrical burden of religious citizens, Habermas endorses the idea that secular citizens help their religious fellow citizens in translating the latter's contributions (RPS, 131-132).

While Habermas is in line with Rawls on the commitment to neutrality within the formal political bodies, he is in disagreement with Wolterstorff. This Yale scholar opens up the possibility for the political legislator to use religious arguments – especially the ruling majority's religious arguments - in formal or official decisions and decrees since there are actually no appropriate institutional filters between the state and the public sphere (RPS, 133). For Habermas, this attitude runs the risk of turning the state or governmental authority into the agent of the religious majority. It is unfair if official political decisions are not articulated in language comprehensible to all citizens and in a way that is justifiable to them (RPS, 134). Actually, Habermas is making a middle way between Rawls and Wolterstorff.⁷⁰ While Rawls encumbers religious citizens in using religious language and reasons in public arguments, Wolterstorff even endorses the use of religious language and reasons in official decisions by politicians. Habermas opens the possibility for religious citizens to show the impact of their devout life in the informal public sphere while at the same time maintaining the commitment to neutrality within the formal political bodies.

Along with the opening of the way for religious citizens to bring their religious language and reasons into the informal public sphere, Habermas requires them to develop an epistemic adjustment. Since the Reformation and the Enlightenment era, there has been a “modernization of religious consciousness as a response of religious traditions to the challenges posed by the fact of religious pluralism, the emergence of modern science, and the spread of positive law and secular morality” (RPS, 136). Regarding this new epistemic attitude, Habermas suggests three important inputs (RPS, 137). First, realizing that religious citizens are living in “the universe of discourse” with other comprehensive doctrines and worldviews, religious citizens must develop “an epistemic stance” toward other views they encounter, in “a self-reflexive manner”. Second, religious citizens must develop “an epistemic stance toward the internal logic of secular knowledge and toward the institutionalized monopoly on knowledge of modern scientific experts” through articulating the non-conflictual relationship between their comprehensive doctrines and secular knowledge. Third, religious citizens must develop “an epistemic stance toward the priority that secular reasons also enjoy in the political arena” by embedding egalitarian and universalistic

⁷⁰ In the introduction of this article, Habermas says, “I will develop a conception that mediates between two sides”. See RPS, 119.

virtues in the context of their dogmatic beliefs. In relation to these inputs, Habermas points out the importance of the explanation of the “reasonableness of faith” (RPS, 137). This explanation is an effect of what Habermas finds, that “religious citizens had to learn to adopt epistemic attitudes toward their secular environment” (RPS, 138). Therefore, the discussion held in the public sphere can reach agreement or disagreement based purely on rational argumentation.

Habermas positively sees that religions have something that secular citizens can learn. Thus, he opens up the possibility for religious citizens to share their rich tradition in the public sphere. Habermas gives some suggestions for religions to develop their epistemic attitudes. Habermas also gives some suggestions for secular thinking to prepare them to learn from religious citizens. Habermas suggests a kind of postmetaphysical thinking that can encounter religious contributions. In *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas defines postmetaphysical thinking as a way of thinking that “avoids taking sides in the contest of competing norms of life and worldviews” (BFN, 60). Habermas writes, “The secular counterpart to reflexive religious consciousness is *an agnostic, but nonreductionist* form of postmetaphysical thinking” (RPS, 140; my emphasis). Though this form of thinking makes a clear demarcation between faith and knowledge, it avoids judging religious truths arbitrarily. This form of thinking neither excludes comprehensive religious thinking from the genealogy of reason nor stunts the conception of reason scientifically. Holding an agnostic position, as commonly known, means that one does not want to assent to or to dissent from religious truths and claims (Baxter 2011, 201). Habermas’ model of postmetaphysical as an agnostic position can be related to his differentiation between secular and secularist (RPSPSS, 221). While a secular person takes a “neutral stance”, a secularist takes a “polemical stance” on religious truths and claims. While a secular person takes an agnostic position, a secularist takes a hard-naturalistic position on religious truths and claims. No wonder a secularist must devalue religion. Habermas takes a postmetaphysical, agnostic and secular position toward religion, the kind of conviction he proposes that secular citizens hold in this post-secular society.

Based on these two articles, we may infer a conclusion of Habermas’ thinking on the public sphere. First, Habermas distinguishes between the informal and the formal public sphere. The informal is a space where citizens from various backgrounds may participate through rational argumentation in order to achieve a rationally motivated agreement. It is allowed in the informal public sphere to use language and reason from various comprehensive doctrines in so far as those utterances have the cognitive contents for the common good. Therefore, the informal public sphere is both wild and crowded. These natures are deeply connected with the fact that each citizen is actually a person with their own background. In the formal public sphere, such as parliaments and courts, state officials and politicians must make a commitment to neutrality. They can only

use neutral and secular language especially in articulating official decrees and documents. Second, in the informal public sphere, the authority of a better argument is emphasized. Hence, an agreement or a disagreement can be made solely on the basis of rational and reasonable decisions. Third, there must be some filters and translators. The filters can be used to filter all agreement and voices in the informal public sphere before entering the formal public sphere. The filters can be provided by the formal public sphere. There must be translators to translate the voices and agreements into neutral language that can be used in the formal public sphere. Fourth, there must be an epistemic attuning or adjustment made by citizens of their comprehensive doctrines and also by secular citizens that they can communicate in the informal public sphere. Fifth, Habermas believes that the informal public sphere in secular countries has now become the post-secular public sphere where secularization is still going on side by side with the presence and the contributions of religions. There must be a change of consciousness in all citizens to be aware of the multicultural nature of their societies. Another “change of consciousness” is needed by citizens as they face several crises in the public sphere such as representative publicness, the refeudalization of the public sphere and the colonization of the lifeworld.

5.8 The crises in the public sphere

I now come to Habermas’ explanation of the crises in the public sphere. The first two crises are explained in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. The third is taken from *The Theory of Communicative Action*. I mean by a crisis of the public sphere that it cannot exist and function for democratic deliberative discourses as intended by Habermas. The first two crises are taken from Habermas’ critique. By this critique, we know that Habermas has a normative imagination of the public sphere though he explains the historical example of the bourgeois public sphere. The colonization of the lifeworld, central in Habermas’ argumentation of communicative action, can be counted as a crisis since as has been explained, the lifeworld is constitutive for intersubjective communication in the public sphere.

5.8.1 Representative publicness: the pre-bourgeois public sphere

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas gives some remarks on the type of the representative publicness derived from the context of the European Middle Ages. The context of the representative publicness is “the feudal system of domination” (STPS, 5). In the feudal society, there is no distinction between public and private as in the ancient Greek distinction of *polis* and *oikos*. In the feudal society, lordship or royal highness (or majesty, dignity, honor, fame) which is a part of the private sphere is “something publicly represented” (STPS, 7). By this

definition, Habermas differentiates the utilization of the term “representative” with the political representation in a parliament or the legal representation in a court. Representative publicness refers to a royal “‘aura’ surrounded and endowed” a royal authority”. Comparing to the political or the legal representation, the feudal individuals represents their majesty not on behalf, or for but “before” the people (STPS, 8). In the political representation, the people are the sender and the members of parliament are the representative. In the legal representation, the client is the sender and the lawyer is the representative. Thus, the political and legal representation presume the representations on behalf or for the interests of the people. Though Habermas is speaking about the history of representative publicness in the context of the European Middle Ages, as indicated by himself, it also is the case that some kinds of this publicness are still present until our recent time such as shown by the monarchical model and the capitalist’s form of representative publicness. This crisis of the public sphere, namely, the representative publicness is totally different from the crisis which happened in the organized capitalist era.

5.8.2 Refeudalization of society: the post-bourgeois public sphere

Habermas indicates that in the bourgeois public sphere there indeed was a rather strict separation between the public and the private, though the latter, as the intimate sphere, prepared a private individual to be involved in gathering “together as a public” in order to articulate “the needs of society with the state” (STPS, 175-176). Unfortunately, in the organized capitalist era, there was a structural transformation of the relationship between the public and the private causing a deformation of the public sphere (STPS, 142-143).⁷¹ In Calhoun’s words, “State and society, once distinct, became interlocked” (Calhoun 1992b, 21). By the growth of the economic market, there was “the rise of the social” (STPS, 141), an Arendtian term indicating the invasion of the private sphere into the public. The private sector has emerged in the public realm. At the same time, privatized society was now directed by the interventions of state authority. While the power of the capitalists invaded the public sphere, state authority invaded the private sphere. This new interventionist policy, in which the distinction between the public and the private became blurred, can be considered as the “refeudalization of society” (STPS, 142). Refeudalization clearly means that the later capitalist’s public sphere took on once again the characteristics of the feudal, pre-modern world (Thomassen 2010, 45).

⁷¹ In a later writing, Habermas writes, “The *de facto* negation of the tendency toward a separation of state and society I conceptualized, by reference to its juridical reflections, as a neocorporatist ‘societalization of the state, on the one hand, and as a ‘state-ification of society’ on the other, both occurring as a result of the interventionist policies of a now actively interfering state” (see FRPS, 432).

In a sporadic “circuit of power”, a “process of the politically relevant exercise and equilibration of power” took place between private bureaucracies and public administration, special-interest associations and parties (STPS, 176). One of the causes of this war of power in the public sphere is the transfer of the private conflict of interests onto a political level in the public sphere because it was unresolved in the private sphere (STPS, 142). One of the potential conflicts is explained by Goode. “Complex new class configurations emerged with the rise of managerialism, dispersed shareholdings, and heavily unionised occupational sectors, *eclipsing the binary opposition between property owner and wage labourer*” (Goode 2005, 17; my emphasis). The civil conflict between workers and employers, for instance, over payroll systems and working hours, was inevitable. At this point, interest groups used the public sphere to request “social rights”, that is, care, services and protection provided by the state as in a welfare state (Calhoun 1992b, 22). Different from bourgeois society in which basic needs were under personal risk, in a modern welfare state they are guaranteed by the state (STPS, 155).⁷² Hence, “the need for a strong state” obviously appeared when society tended to become “a mere nexus of coercive constraints” (STPS, 144). As groups of workers and interest organizations became increasingly active in the use of the public sphere to demand their interests, the presence of the state was increasingly necessary. Thus, the consequence was unavoidable. Habermas sees that in fact, “the occupation of the political public sphere by the unpropertied masses led to an interlocking of state and society” (STPS, 177).

When “the world of work and organization” became “more public”, the family became “more private” (STPS, 152). In other words, “the private sphere itself became deprivatized”. It means that previously the private sphere consisted of two parts, the intimate family in which humanity was cultivated and the commodity exchange and social labor as the economic activities. The development was that commodity exchange and social labor went to the public realm and the family remained in the private realm of the household. Economic activities, previously part of the private realm, came into the public realm by being transferred onto a political level to solve conflicts inside those activities. When the private realm became purely personal, private individuals concentrated to “their noncommittal use of leisure time” (STPS, 159). There was “an increasingly inward-looking privacy focused on leisure, consumption, and life style” (Goode 2005, 18).

No wonder the culture of consumption with its main target of achieving personal pleasure became the new tendency in the structurally-transformed public sphere. “Rational-critical debate

⁷² Goode writes, “A culture of welfarism, underscored by both state and non-state institutions, reached into domains of social reproduction that were once the preserve of the family: social services, relationship counseling, therapeutic services and proliferating channels of guidance on child rearing, diet, lifestyle and the like” (see Goode, 18).

had a tendency to be replaced by consumption”, Habermas writes, “and the web of public communication unraveled into acts of individuated reception, however uniform in mode” (STPS, 161). Personal satisfaction became the target that can be achieved in the public sphere of fashion. Nonetheless, “the consumption of mass culture leaves no lasting trace”, only “a kind of experience which is not cumulative but regressive” (STPS, 166).

In conjunction with the rise of the culture of consumption, the press or media was altogether degraded to the profit industry and the advertising medium. The conglomeration of the media became a part of the “culture industry”, to borrow a term from Adorno and Horkheimer (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 94; Dahlberg 2000, 36). In the industrialization of the public sphere, the rational-critical debate was replaced by “the site of negotiation of interests” though it was increasingly concealed behind the walls of political, social, and economic institutions (Thomassen 2010, 45). This is a clear indication of the structural transformation of the public sphere. Formerly, the bourgeois public sphere had become a space for various interested parties such as officials, capitalists, cultural groups, and so forth. At its culmination, the bourgeois society utilized the press as the channel of information to the public and the channel of public opinion to the state. Alas, the public sphere itself has the possibility to be employed as an advertising medium (STPS, 175). The structural transformation and decline of the public sphere happen when it can be used for other political and economic privatized interests. Habermas says, “The more it can be deployed as a vehicle for political and economic propaganda, the more it becomes unpolitical as a whole and pseudo-privatized”. The public sphere was dominated by the non-public opinion. What was happening was not “critical publicity” but “manipulative publicity” (STPS, 178). The domination of non-public opinion “serves the manipulation *of* the public as much as legitimation *before* it” (Habermas’ emphasis). Thus, “the world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only” (STPS, 171).

Through the electronic media such as radio and television, which could make the public more passive, the legislative body tended to use its arena as a stage for persuading people rather than a forum for critical discourse among its members (Calhoun 1992b, 24-25). The media were utilized for private interests, demanding political legitimization and political imaging. Habermas indicated well “the practice of public relations” in the political realm, “opinion management”, and such kinds of political marketing (STPS, 193). The consequences of this transformation of the media can be imagined. The intellectuals then built a stratum seceding from the educated bourgeois strata (STPS, 174). Habermas draws this phenomenon well. “The sounding board of an educated stratum tutored in the public use of reason has been shattered; the public is split apart into minorities of

specialists who put their reason to use nonpublicly and the great mass of consumers whose receptiveness is public but uncritical” (STPS, 175).

Habermas tries to give solutions by starting from the inner reorganization of all related institutions. There must be “the long march through the institutions” (cited in Calhoun 1992b, 28; Thomassen 2010, 47). Each societal organization involved in the public sphere must be “radically subjected to the requirements of publicity” (STPS, 208). Publicity must also be extended to political parties, mass media with political impacts, and all special-interest organizations (STPS, 209). Their “inner structure must first be organized in accord with the principle of publicity and must institutionally permit an intraparty or intra-association democracy - to allow for unhampered communication and public rational-critical debate”. Habermas wants to bring back the meaning of publicity as a principle of democracy. Publicity does not mean the possibility to publish any personal opinions whatever. It means that those personal ideas and inclinations must be put under the rational-critical debate to finally form the public opinion (STPS, 219). Habermas then develops this solution as a more secure basis for a normative conception of the public sphere in *Between Facts and Norms*. The solution is needed also to face another crisis in the public sphere, which is similar to the refeudalization of it, namely, the colonization of the lifeworld.

5.8.3 The colonization of lifeworld

Another crisis in the public sphere is the colonization of the lifeworld. We have to connect the colonization of the lifeworld with critical theory. Baynes says that the critical theory of society is used for the identification of the “possible roots” of the distortions of the “communicative infrastructure of the lifeworld” (2016, 72). The hidden or invisible distortions must be uncovered through the “observer-perspective of system theory” (TCA2, 153; cf. Baynes 2016, 73). In this context, Habermas proposes a “two-level” concept of society, society as a lifeworld or society as a system (TCA2, 152). The latter refers to the “causal (or functional) interconnections among action-consequences” in which the “system integration” happens through “a coordination of the consequences of [participants] choices” (Baynes 2016, 73). Here, Habermas distinguishes system integration from social integration. The latter refers to the consensual integration through agreement-oriented communication.

An unfortunate side effect of the structural differentiation as the first perspective of the rationalization of the lifeworld must be mentioned here. This differentiation also provides possible conditions for an autonomous subsystem of economic and political administration (Baynes 2016, 74). These subsystems integrate society through money and power as the exchange media. Habermas says that money and power “encode a purposive-rational attitude toward calculable

amounts of value and make it possible to exert generalized, strategic influence on the decisions of other participants while *bypassing* processes of consensus-oriented communication” (TCA2, 183; Habermas’ emphasis). Money and power “do not merely simplify linguistic communication, but *replace* it with a symbolic generalization of rewards and punishments, the lifeworld contexts in which processes of reaching understanding are always embedded are devalued in favor of media steered interactions; the lifeworld is no longer needed for the coordination of action” (Habermas’ emphasis). Economics (money) and state administration (power) provide the “system imperatives” that can make the “*mediatization* of the lifeworld” therefore there is “the sociopathological form of an *internal colonization*” (TCA2, 305; Habermas’ emphasis). The “colonization of the lifeworld” happens when “media-steered subsystems” of “administrative and monetary steering mechanism” devalues the lifeworld and replaces the agreement-oriented communicative action (TCA2, 322, 332). Habermas infers in one sentence, “The thesis of internal colonization states that the subsystems of the economy and state become more and more complex as a consequence of capitalist growth, and penetrate ever deeper into the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld” (TCA2, 367).⁷³ Thus, communication and agreement in the public sphere more and more become dependent on money and power.

5.9 Conclusion

I have so far explored Habermas’ philosophy of the public sphere. Habermas consistently developed the idea of communication and the public sphere since his first major book. Certain minor revisions are made but overall the idea is retained. Habermas’ famous encyclopedic definition can show in brief his persistent understanding of the public sphere as “first of all a realm of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. Access to the public sphere is open in principle to all citizens. Citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion” (PS, 105; quoted in Adut 2018, 1).

Habermas developed his notion of the discursive model in his first major book, a historical sketch of the bourgeois public sphere. Though this is a part of a unique development in history, Habermas’s sketch contains several normative insights which can not only be taken directly but which also are maintained, deepened, and amended by Habermas himself in his later works. The principle of inclusivity, equality and freedom equips this kind of public sphere in becoming a counterbalance to the state. Moreover, the public use of reason through rational discourses on subjects of common concern will be Habermas’ theme throughout his intellectual career. Going

⁷³ Habermas also says that the colonization of the lifeworld can be characterized as “a reification of the communicative practice of everyday life” happening only in capitalist societies where “the private household is the point of incursion for the displacement of crises into the lifeworld” (TCA2, 386.).

on to a more mature and more systematic notion of the public sphere, Habermas develops his notion in his work on law and democracy. Here, the political public sphere becomes a space for forming public opinion in noncoercive communication. Civil society partially plays an important role in this public sphere, which is actually polycentric. Civil society, as the prominent player, speaks in the public sphere using communicative action with validity claims raised reciprocally, contained by speech acts and connected through the lifeworld as its context in order to reach agreement or consensus. Habermas then develops a unique two-track deliberative democracy. In the informal public sphere, Habermas invites religious citizens to speak with their own particular language and reasons in postsecular societies. While exploring Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere, I also mention his warning of several crises such as representative publicness, the refeudalization of the public sphere, and the colonization of the lifeworld.

In Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere setting there seem to be several differences with Arendt's philosophy. Those differences can be seen in the discursive and the dramatic setting of the public sphere, in the private sphere and civil society, in the lifeworld and the common world, in the concept of power, and so forth. Thus, before constructing a theology of the public sphere, it is imperative to engage with those differences and to articulate ways out. I will engage with those differences in the coming chapter.

Chapter 6

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN HANNAH ARENDT AND JÜRGEN HABERMAS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I have explained the philosophy of the public sphere, as articulated both by Arendt and Habermas. There are many similarities in their thought of the public sphere. I may mention some of them. Both of them empower the public sphere as an independent and autonomous space outside at least the private sphere, and outside the state and which is vital for a democratic society. In articulating their thoughts on the public sphere, they criticize certain menaces which could jeopardize a democratic public sphere. Nevertheless, in several points, Arendt and Habermas look different, could even be considered as conflicting each other. In this chapter, I intend to open up those difficulties and attempt to articulate ways out. I start from the discussion on the private sphere.

6.2 The private sphere

Arendt follows the ancient Greek polarization between *polis* and *oikos*, thus she locates the private sphere in *oikos* as the sphere of necessity and of labor. We cannot find freedom in the private sphere since each member of a family is under the constraint of the necessity to survive. Hence, political action cannot be conducted in the private sphere. Only labor and to some extent work can take place in the realm of *oikos*. Reviving ancient Greek notions, Arendt strictly distinguishes between the private and the public realm. Those who are deeply connected with the private sphere such as women, children, and slaves, cannot enter and participate in the public sphere. Those themes who are deeply related to the private sphere such as love, sexuality, necessity, *oikos nomos*, are not allowed to be addressed in the public sphere. No wonder, Arendt criticizes the science of economy for making the scarcity of resources an issue in the society and political realm. For Arendt, everything economic is not political and everything political cannot be economic. In short, Arendt completely separates the private and the public sphere.

Immediately, many criticisms begin to emerge. Benhabib considers Arendt's model as "at odds with the sociological reality of modernity, as well as with modern political struggle for justice" (Benhabib 1992, 95). By her strict separation between two spheres, Arendt subconsciously permits many violence left unhandled in the realm of household. Does not Arendt fiercely imprecate violence in any form? Does not Arendt strongly hold the sacredness of human life, as found by Canovan (Canovan 1992, 181)? Thus, to be consistent with her rejection of violence and her defence of the sacredness of human life, every violence occurring in the

household must and can become themes addressed in the public sphere. Human slavery, women trafficking and prostitution, child trafficking and working then must be considered also as political public issues which can be discussed in the public sphere. Another yet alike criticism also come from Habermas. He considers Arendt's model as "unimaginable for any modern society" (HACCP, 220). Habermas cannot accept Arendt's scheme of a state without social problems' administration, a politics without engaging with socio-economic issues, and institutionalization of public liberty without dealing with public wealth, and so forth. In my view, modern democracy cannot accept the screening out of economy, love, and brotherhood, along with all household violence from the public sphere. Being fair to Arendt, nevertheless, we have to look upon her historical situation. The destruction of the public political realm, the private sphere, and their distinction by totalitarianism, in my view, perhaps have stimulated Arendt to revive the classical conception and its sharp distinction between the private and the public sphere (cf. Young-Bruehl 2006, 52). This analysis is affirmed by Richard J. Bernstein. Bernstein found that the starting point of Arendt's political theory was not the Greek *polis* or the Roman republic, rather, her personal experience (Bernstein 2018, 85). Bernstein emphasizes, "[M]ost significantly, it was dwelling on the horrors of totalitarianism, and discerning the final aim of total domination – the destruction of human individuality, spontaneity, and plurality – that oriented her search for the meaning of politics" (Bernstein 2018, 86). Arendt thus, in my opinion, constructed her political philosophy and theory from her personal existential struggle.

Habermas posits a more consistent and more applicable conception of the private sphere. From his early major work with a historical sketch of the bourgeois public sphere, he has defined it as "the sphere of *private* people come together as a public" (STPS, 27; my emphasis). Historically speaking, it was indeed the bourgeois public sphere that was a significant progress or a radical reverse from the ancient Greek culture. While in the latter everything private could not appear in the public, in the former, every participant in the public must firstly be a private individual. In the bourgeois public sphere, Habermas sees a deep connection between the private sphere and the public sphere. The private sphere, i.e, the family, was an instrument for generating "closeness, the ideas of freedom, love, and cultivation of the person" (STPS, 48). Precisely, love that is taken out from the public sphere by Arendt and considered as antipolitical, by Habermas as also by Hardt and Negri is used to cultivate the private individuals and to prepare them for participating in the public sphere. In his more systematic, more mature, and more recent work, *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas still maintains the same understanding of the private sphere (BFN, 365). For him, issues raised in the public sphere must firstly be experienced in the private sphere. Issues circulated in the public sphere emerges from and ripen on the thick web of

interactions found in families and in the circle of friends. For instance, uncomfortable public service experienced in the private realm will be raised up as public political issues in the public sphere especially if civil society is capturing them, filtering and channelling in a stronger form in the public sphere.

6.3 Civil society

I myself doubt that Arendt has ever used the term “civil society”. This does not mean that she does not have the very idea of the term. Our first impression of Arendt’s understanding of civil society is rather ambiguous. This is related to the fact that Arendt uses the term “social” or “society” in many meanings. Nonetheless, we have a glimmer of hope through Arendt’s later notion of council. To have a more comprehensive view, let us firstly consider Benhabib’s sketch of Arendt’s understanding of the term “social” (Benhabib 2000, 23). This sketch will help us to think through Arendt’s understanding of civil society. Firstly, the term “social” refers to “the growth of the capitalist commodity exchange economy”. Second, it refers to the “aspects of mass society”. Third, it refers to “sociability, to the quality of life in civil society and civic associations”. In the first conception, Arendt herself views “society” as “the form in which the fact of mutual dependence for the sake of life and nothing else assumes public significance and where the activities connected with sheer survival are permitted to appear in public” (HC, 46). In short, the first meaning of the term “social” refers to Arendt’s conception of “the rise of the social” which means “the emergence of society – the rise of housekeeping, its activities, and organizational devices – from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere” (HC, 38). In this first meaning of the term “social”, it is difficult for us to conclude that Arendt is thinking of civil society. In this kind of society, private interest, money, and labor overcome the public sphere. The rise of the social is even indicated by the transformation of all modern societies becoming “societies of laborers and job holders” (HC, 46). Thus, in this kind of society, we do not find civil society in its basic meaning of the presence of voluntary associations which freedom, equality, and plurality are reigned.

Arendt’s second meaning of the term “social” is referring to the mass society. In the mass society, Arendt finds the loss of the common world which relating and separating individuals at the same time, the loss of plurality, and the loss of spontaneity. By the first, there is a loss of the public sphere. By the second, there is a loss of the *conditio sine qua non* and *conditio per quam* for political action. By the third, there is the loss of freedom. In Arendt’s dictionary, by these three losses, there is no politics at all in the mass society. In the basic and general understanding, we

cannot find the very idea of civil society since the mass society is without the public sphere, plurality, and freedom.

On Arendt's third meaning of the term "social", Benhabib explains, "Rather, the *social* in this context means 'sociability': patterns of human interaction; modalities of taste in dress, eating, leisure, and lifestyles generally; differences in aesthetic, religious, and civic manners and outlooks; patterns of socializing and forming marriages, friendships, acquaintanceships, and commercial exchanges. In short, the social signifies *civil and associational society*, that sphere of human relations that is not economic, or political, or military, or bureaucratic-administrative" (Benhabib 2000, 28). In this kind of meaning, we can trace the very idea of civil society. Nevertheless, we should not rush to consider this idea as a civil society in the sense we are talking about. Arendt complains this condition. She says, "But society equalizes under all circumstances, and the victory of equality in the modern world is only the political and legal recognition of the fact that society has conquered the public realm, and that distinction and difference have become private matters of the individual" (HC, 41). This equalization in this kind of sociability is actually executed by the mass society, i.e., the equalization of tastes, behaviour, life-styles, and so forth (Benhabib 2000, 27). Thus, in this kind of society, Benhabib writes, there is "the homogenization" beginning to spread, which makes use of the craving for "social recognition through social equality and acceptance" (Benhabib 2000, 28). In this meaning of the term "social" or "society", we still do not find the very idea of civil society we are talking about.

I see a glimmer of hope in Arendt's thinking of civil society. Though under the mass society, she distrusts the political capability of the common people, under the impact of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, Arendt started to have more trust in the common people, seeing them as the "people capable of political action" (Canovan 1978, 107). Arendt finds in the 1956 Hungarian revolution the principle of council systems (OR, 258). Those councils become the "spaces of freedom" (OR, 256), because there are in them the actualization of the "capacity to act and to form opinion" and the actualization of "the federal principle, the principle of league and alliance among separate units, arises out of the elementary condition of action itself" (OR, 259). In *Crises in the Republic*, Arendt draws the council's plea to have participation through public debate, to determine their political courses, and so forth (CR, 232-233). Next to the principle of council system, Arendt also endorses the labor movement (HC, 219). Arendt's explanation of the labor movement is used by Grant J. Rozeboom to defend her from Cohen and Arato's accusation of Arendt's theory as "outmoded, irrelevant, and exclusive of civil society" (Rozeboom 2008, 81).⁷⁴ Even in her record of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, Arendt finds that there are two main

⁷⁴ Rozeboom engages in length with Cohen and Arato's criticism toward Arendt and defend her. See Rozeboom 2008.

councils, namely, the Revolutionary Councils which fulfill the political functions and the Workers' Councils which handle the economic matters (TWB, 135). Both the principle of council system and her endorsement of the labor movement make us find a spark of a notion of civil society in Arendt's thinking. Here, we find that there are volunteerism, plurality, and freedom which are basic characteristic of civil society. Arendt indeed carefully criticizes associations which consist of individuals with private interests and ends. But she does not close the door for the voluntary associations gathered for guaranteeing civil rights or opposing social injustice (McCarthy 2014, 283). Seen from this angle, we may conclude that the notion of civil society is not exclusive from Arendt's political theory.

Though Arendt has in her mind some idea of civil society, she does not develop it systematically to become a part of her mature political theory. Of course, Arendt's context of facing totalitarianism and the mass society must make us understanding her predicament. Here, Habermas comes with a mature systematic theory of civil society. I have engaged with Habermas' thinking on civil society in the previous chapter. Now I want to draw a comparison and connection between Arendt and Habermas' notion of civil society and to make an evaluation showing that Habermas' conception is much more mature compared to Arendt's. While Arendt's notion of the rise of the social might lead us to conclude that the idea of civil society is excluded from her thinking, Habermas precisely uses the same notion to build his earlier conception of civil society. For Arendt, the invasion of the private into the public sphere contaminates the latter, while for Habermas, the emergence of the private in the public sphere empowers civil society. For Habermas, Arendt's notion of the rise of the social indicates that the private sphere can also have an impact in the public sphere, that the private now comes up to counterbalance the public authority.

While Arendt began to develop the notion of civil society – contentwise, not terminologically – only in the later part of her life with the revolutionary councils and labor movement, her conception remained underdeveloped. Habermas on the contrary, in his more mature conception goes farther than Arendt to understand civil society as related to voluntary associations outside of the realm of the state and outside of the realm of the market, including religious, cultural, academic, journalistic associations, and so forth. Though Habermas develops his understanding of civil society in a much more mature and more systematic way compared to Arendt, Dieter Rucht finds that the concept civil society is less prominent in Habermas writings, if we see how he speaks very much on the public sphere and communicative action (Rucht 2010, 413). Habermas only speaks much on civil society in his book *Between Facts and Norms*.

Now, we move from the discussion on the superficial difference to a deeper analysis. While Habermas discovers the great opportunity of the lifeworld (or rather “an already rationalized lifeworld” (BFN, 371)) to be utilized as a context for the operation of civil society, why does Arendt not use her notion of the common world, which actually has the same root as the Habermasian lifeworld, namely the *Lebenswelt* (a phrase coined by the father of phenomenology, a philosophical school, see below, 6.4), to create a communication space for civil society? Arendt does use the common world for the public sphere but after shifting from the mass society, Arendt could only imagine some kind of *polis*-inspired heroic or aesthetic politics and was unable to arrive at some participatory idea of politics as she eventually did in the later part of her life, as she learns a lot from the 1956 Hungarian revolution. So, we understand that the slow development of the idea of civil society in Arendt's thinking is not only because of the idea mass society but also because of her conception of a heroic or aesthetic politics. Heroic or aesthetic politics requires the presence of others much more as an audience or spectators but not as co-participants in a participatory setting.

Some comments can be made as well on Habermas' notion of civil society. Habermas views civil society as an instrument to capture the problems of society that actually come out from the private sphere. It provides an institutional setting for the problem-solving discourses in order to mediate between the private sectors and the systems, namely, the state and the market. Habermas puts the public sphere as a sounding board for civil society, to filter and to channel the problems and the solution for those problems in a stronger form. In Rucht's view, however, Habermas does not correctly distinguish or draw the relation between the public sphere and civil society (Rucht 2010, 414). Some clues that are provided by Habermas in *Between Facts and Norms* on the relation between the public sphere and civil society are considered by Rucht as not developed enough to give guidance in this respect.

Another comment can be made on Habermas' conception of civil society. It is clear for us that civil society cannot hold the power or cannot replace the political system. Civil society can influence the political power but cannot replace it. Thus, civil society stands outside the political and the economic system. In other words, civil society stands in the periphery of the political and economic systems. But unfortunate for me is that Habermas in his later works, still does not locate civil society in a more central position (see diagram on PCMS, 160; cf. Rucht 2010, 415). Civil society remains located in the periphery of the political public sphere, or in other words, outside of it. Rucht doubts that this position is normatively desired by Habermas. It more seems to be based on an empirical assessment. Habermas says, “The players who feature on the virtual stage of the public sphere form a hierarchy, depending on which category of power or ‘capital’ they

have at their disposal” (PCMS, 170). In short, though Habermas can be categorized as “influential” in theorizing civil society because he deeply connects it to his conception of the political public sphere, Habermas also speaks against the “idealization of the role and the potential of civil society” (Rucht 2010, 415). To Habermas, Rucht concludes, “civil society is not the heart of society at large”. Habermas conception of civil society, thus, is not enough, to account its vital importance for the public sphere. However, instead of the notion of civil society, Habermas’ notion of the lifeworld remains very important as the context of communication for civil society and the participants in the public sphere.

6.4 The common world and the lifeworld as the context for communication in the public sphere

Arendt designates the common world as a world of things in-between that is fabricated by human hands, different from the private or the natural world, and providing the context for those who live in. The common world can be constructed through the space of appearance. Action and speech delivered in it are followed up by the construction of the common world. The common world as a permanent and durable context of people exists beyond the life-span of mortal time. It is something that has been existed when we born and still there when we die. The relation between the space of appearance and the common world is like an egg with a chicken. Action and speech in space of appearance constructs the common world that will be the permanent context for action and speech. Arendt bases her notion of judgment on “common sense” (*sensus communis*) that implies the common world (BPF, 221). Through common sense connected with the common world, “we can interact coherently” (Buckler 2011, 154). Thus, action and speech in the space of appearance at the same time absolutely presuppose but also potentially produce the common world.

Habermas designates the lifeworld as an immaterial point of contact between participants in the public sphere. Bodily or textually, participants can meet in a public square or public media but communicatively, they meet in the lifeworld. Without it, a speaker has no possibility at all to speak with a hearer, like speaking to an alien. Communication requires at least one common situation relevant to both speaker and hearer. It is a segment of the lifeworld. The lifeworld consists of the cultural knowledge, the societal legitimate order, and the personal competence. The lifeworld can be symbolically reproduced only by communicative action. The lifeworld that is workable in the public sphere is not the lifeworld as such as in the traditional or conventional form of society but must be rationalized. Habermas in this way moves beyond traditional thinking (see Thomassen 2010, 80).

Both the common world and the lifeworld have their phenomenological root in Husserl's thinking. Arendt is influenced by Husserl himself and mainly by Heidegger. Habermas is in touch with the notion of lifeworld as thought by Husserl through the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schütz, yet he himself engages directly with Husserl's writings. The basic notions of Husserl's phenomenology are important to be mentioned here. Husserl's philosophy is different from what is thought by Descartes. Consciousness in Descartes' philosophy is totally separated from the object. Cartesian objectivity means the object is independent from the subject's intention. The subject's consciousness and the object's objectivity are totally separated. In Husserl's philosophy, the subject's consciousness is always intentional, always directed to a certain object. For instance, perceiving through seeing and hearing is always intentional. Hearing Strauss' *Blue Danube* directs one's consciousness to a beautiful girl he met a couple of days ago when he was attending a concert at the *Aula Simfonia Jakarta*. Phenomenological perception involves a sensory experience thus distinguishing it from imagination or remembrance (Føllesdal 2010, 31). Certainly, the object that appears in the subject's consciousness must be understood in a broad sense, not only physical things but also events, actions, and so forth (Føllesdal 2010, 30). The object that appears in the subject's consciousness is correlated to her experience, past experience. Thus, instead of the object, the subject's experience is central in Husserl's thinking (Føllesdal 2010, 31). The subject's experience is structured by her consciousness (Føllesdal 2010, 29). This structure is called "noema". It is "the comprehensive system of determination that gives unity to this manifold of features and makes them aspects of one and the same object" (Føllesdal 2010, 30). Since the noema structure is intentionally corresponding to an object in the subject's consciousness, there must be a "bracketing" (*epoché*), that is a suspension of the philosophical judgment or belief attached to an object. The Cartesian consciousness is bracketed for opening to the Husserlian intentionality.

The subject's consciousness toward an object is at the same time constituting the world, space and time where and when the subject and object are present (Føllesdal 2010, 33). Not only the present, the past and the future are also constituted by the subject's consciousness. Husserl uses the term "horizon" for the totality of the object and the world that together form the background (Føllesdal 2010, 34). Husserl distinguishes between the "inner horizon" and the "outer horizon". The former refers to the other features of an object that are at the same time also intended but not the focus of the subject. The latter refers to the world and other objects. Føllesdal avoids the narrow reading of Husserl's conception of noema as only meant by the anticipation of a given time (Føllesdal 2010, 36). He believes that Husserl extends noema even to the outer

horizon. Føllesdal says, “when we intend an object, we co-intend at the same time the whole world to which that object belongs” (Føllesdal 2010, 37).

Husserl’s notion of *Lebenswelt* (the lifeworld) is connected to the world of objects which is natural in term of pre-giveness. Husserl says, “All opinions, justified or unjustified, popular, superstitious, scientific, all relate to the already *pregiven* world...All theory relates to this immediate givenness...” (quoted in Føllesdal 2010, 38; Husserl’s emphasis). The notion of the world is actually intersubjective, for the world of objects also appears to others. Husserl says, “The world is continually there for us, but in the first place it is there for *me*” (Husserl 1969, 242; his emphasis). Husserl also says, “Thus in general the world exists not only for isolated men but for the community of men; and this is due to the fact that even what is straightforwardly perceptual is communal” (quoted in Føllesdal 2010, 40). Hence, the lifeworld, in Husserl’s own words is “the natural world- in the attitude of the natural pursuit of life are we living functioning subjects involved in the circle of other functioning subjects” (quoted in Føllesdal 2010, 39). The lifeworld is for Husserl “our natural world, the world we live in and are absorbed by in our everyday activities” (quoted in Føllesdal 2010, 39).

The world that is constituted in the intersubjective consciousness is taken by Arendt for the concrete constitution through action, fabrication, and judgment (Parekh 2008, 71). It is not “common simply because it is perceived in common” (Parekh 2008, 71). However, in my view, Arendt wants to move from the merely perceptual abstract lifeworld into the concrete constitution of a concrete common world. Action and speech in space of appearance are followed up by fabrication. Judgment constitutes the common world in the sense of common sense used for judgment. In Arendt’s own words, common sense “discloses to us the nature of the world insofar as it is a common world” (BPF, 221). In my opinion, while Arendt takes an immanent way to engage with the Husserlian world, Habermas maintains its transcendental character (or quasi-transcendental). Habermas himself names Arendt’s conception of the common world as “the spatial dimension of the lifeworld” (HACCP, 215). By her concrete constitution of the shared-world in the common world, the dynamic conception of the world is frozen and becomes somewhat static. Habermas on the contrary preserves the dynamic of the lifeworld as thought by Husserl.

Husserl utilizes intersubjectivity to gain the understanding of the objectivity of the world (Parekh 2008, 71). Husserl conserves the objectivity of the world in the sense that the spatio-temporal world exists separately from the subject’s perspective and experience, as a part of the objective reality (Beyer 2016). Here, Husserl cannot be fully detached from the Cartesian shadow. Arendt keeps distance from Husserl when she fosters the intersubjectivity of the common world

(Parekh 2008, 71). It is neither objective nor subjective. The intersubjectivity of the common world is also Arendt's way to transform Heidegger's "being-in-the-world". The latter is focused on the self (Kattago 2014, 57) as expressed by herself, "The basic mode of being-in-the-world is alienation, which is felt both as homelessness and anxiety" (EU, 179). I found that Habermas takes a distance from Arendt in combining intersubjectivity, objectivity, and subjectivity in his notion of the lifeworld.

Habermas distinguishes himself from both Husserl and Schütz (Russell 2011). First, Habermas follows Schütz instead of Husserl in discerning two dimensions of the lifeworld. The first dimension is "the situation", the context which is relevant for an agent in a given time (Russell 2011, 44). It is an ever-changing segment of the lifeworld consisting in themes, goals, and plans of action supporting an agent for participation. Habermas is distinguished both from Husserl and Schütz in that they both tend to "conceptualize the horizon of experience on the model of a perceptual or practical relation to things" while Habermas prioritizes "the model of a communicative relation to other agents" (Russell 2011, 44; Russell's emphasis). The second dimension is the "background of implicit knowledge" about the "understood know-hows and know-that's that provide order to our everyday lives" (Russell 2011, 44). Second, in order to make it fruitful, Habermas translates the "resource-product" model of the lifeworld from "the framework of intentional consciousness into the framework of a pragmatic of language use" (Russell 2011, 46). The lifeworld has a paradoxical position, both as a "resource" but also a "product" of human's coordination. In Russell's analysis, Husserl has already acknowledged the cultural and linguistic inheritance but he does not move forward toward "absolutizing the historical sway of language" (Russell 2011, 46).

I now give some reflections in relation to the conception of the public sphere. First, both ideas of the common world (Arendt) and the lifeworld (Habermas) strongly denote the need for a context for communication in the public sphere. The public sphere itself is a space for communication but not its context. Context is a necessary precondition for communication. It provides a point of contact, a subject of discussion, the possibility of understanding, the possibility of taking yes or no positions, and the possibility of reaching agreement or causing disagreement. Second, politically relevant issues that are discussed in the public sphere connect to the lifeworld and a certain common world. They are related to a certain country, or a certain history. Third, Husserl's influence designates the public sphere as thought by Arendt and Habermas as the phenomenological public sphere. Action and speech in the public sphere correspond to the plurality of others in the common world. Communicative action in the public sphere corresponds to the lifeworld. Fourth, both Arendt and Habermas conserve the self-reproductive character of

the common world and the lifeworld. The former is reproduced by action and speech in a space of appearance connected to the common world. The second is reproduced by communicative action in the public sphere. Though Arendt requires the merit of *homo faber* and Habermas asks for the rationalization, both the common world and the lifeworld depend on the intersubjective communication of participants in the public sphere. Fifth, Arendt and Habermas regret of the crises of the common world and the lifeworld. The former runs into crises whenever the loss of the common world occurs by the construction of mass society; and the expropriation of it. The latter runs into crises whenever it is colonized by the mechanism of money and power. Arendt complains about the disappearance of the common world while Habermas complains about the disfunction of the lifeworld. They then try to recover the common world and the lifeworld which are significant as the context for political action and communicative action.

6.5 Political action and communicative action

According to Arendt, the public sphere is a space for performing action. Action is the only human activity that directly corresponds to the human condition of plurality. Action needs speech to disclose the distinctness and identity of an actor. Yet action has a paradoxical relation to speech. On the one hand, it needs speech for its disclosure. On the other hand, “most acts are performed in the manner of speech” (HC, 178). I will later discuss the second. Speech is necessary since without it, action no longer exists. While speech corresponds to the fact of distinctness, action corresponds to the fact of natality. To act means to initiate, to begin something new. Hence, action is equated to freedom. Freedom is not choosing among the existing choices but initiating something new, even unexpected. Freedom is the meaning of politics. Thus, politics means to freely act, to initiate something new among the plurality of human beings. Politics arises when a human being acts in the public sphere. At the same time, power is generated and released.

According to Habermas, communicative action is privileged for interaction in the public sphere. Communicative action is an intersubjective interaction requiring at least two subjects capable for action and speech in an interpersonal relationship directed to rationally motivated reaching understanding and agreement. It involves the pragmatic use of language in the context of the lifeworld. Habermas asks for the active attitude of participants in the public sphere for delivering speech-acts containing validity claims that can be justified or rejected. When the communication held in the ideal speech situation comes to the justification of validity claims, a consensual agreement can be generated.

While Arendt glues the intersubjective character to action, Habermas does not have such a narrow understanding of action. For Habermas, action corresponds to at least one world and this

must be the objective one (TCA1, 96). It means that action can be teleological or strategic since it corresponds only to the objective world. Teleological or strategic action is usually carried on by single actor. It can consider the presence of others, however, at least for the egocentric calculation of benefit. For Arendt, action must be intersubjective. For Habermas, action can also be solitary. Action in the mind of Arendt is communicative action in the thought of Habermas. Instead of Arendt, Habermas follows Weber in his conception of action. Habermas seems avoiding to get caught in Arendt's reductive definition of action. Instead of Weber, Arendt follows Aristotle's clear differentiation between *praxis* and *poiesis*. The concept of irreducibility of action provides a clearer and more simplistic scheme.

Habermas departs from Weber's concept of action and then developing it into more consistent typology. Weber defines action as something "subjectively meaningful" for an agents or certain agents (Weber 1978, 7). Habermas sees that by this definition, Weber is not constructing "a theory of meaning" yet "a theory of consciousness" (TCA1, 279). "Meaning" in Weber's mind is referred to conviction and motivation of an actor which is started by an isolation. Hence, Habermas regrets Weber's assertion since what is important is not the interpersonal relationship of at least two subjects capable for action and speech in an intersubjective communication for reaching understanding but "the purposive activity of a solitary acting subject" (TCA1, 279). Weber makes purposive-rational action as his reference point of his typology which is unfortunate (TCA1, 281). In his official version, Weber's typology of action consists of "purposive-rational", "value-rational", "affectual", and "traditional action" (TCA1, 281-282). By the first, an actor sets up her goals from the horizon of values and choosing an appropriate means under the consideration of possible consequences. Going to the fourth, each action becomes narrower. Value-rational does not takes consequences into account. Affectual action focuses on goals and means. Traditional action through the habituation of behaviour only considers means. For Habermas, Weber's official typology is "so narrowly conceived" to value all social actions under purposive-rationality (TCA1, 284). No wonder, Habermas reverses Weber's official structure by positing purposive-rationality as the least important yet privileging communicative action. In Habermas' view, Weber is unable and unsuccessful in making his unofficial typology of action becoming fruitful (TCA1, 284). Thus, he transforms Weber's unofficial version. Let we briefly see this unofficial version. In the conceptual level, Weber found additional aspects of rationality of actions namely "the mechanism for coordinating individual actions" whether based on "interest-positions" or "normative-agreement" (TCA1, 282-283). Here, Weber differentiates between economic facticity and social validity. Social relations can be stabilized on the one hand by "the factual intermeshing of interest positions" or on the other hand by "an additional

recognition of normative validity claims” (TCA1, 282-283). The first exists not only in “the form of custom...of insensibly accepted habituation” but also “at the level of rational competitive behaviour”. The second exists not only in “the form of tradition bound, conventional action” but also on “an enlightened belief in legitimation, which rational natural law – in the idea of a basic contract among free and equals – traces back to procedures of rational will-formation”. Habermas accuses Weber on his inadequate explanation of this “rational agreement” by using “the model of arrangements among subjects of private law” (TCA1, 284). In Habermas’ view, Weber does not go back until “the moral-practical foundations of discursive will-formation”. In other words, Weber only goes as far as conventional-based agreement which is not fully detached from the shadow of purposive-rationality. Instead, he has to to to “postconventional state of moral-practical rationality”. Based on Weber’s failure, Habermas reconstructs a new typology using the neglected aspect in Weber’s (TCA1, 285). He distinguishes action orientation to oriented to success and to reaching understanding. He differentiates action situation to non-social and social. Non-social action situation oriented to success is named “instrumental action”. Habermas names social action situation oriented to success as “strategic action”. Social action situation which oriented to reaching understanding is communicative action.

Arendt departs from Aristotle’s philosophy, distinguishing *praxis* and *poiesis*. The first is translated by Arendt as action, the second fabrication, thus referred to work (HC, 196). Action (*praxis*) and speech (*lexis*) are parts of Aristotle’s *bios politikos*. Habermas praises *The Human Condition* as serving “to systematically renew the Aristotelian concept of *praxis*” (HACCP, 214). Labor notably comes from Arendt’s critique toward Marx (HC, 79). Arendt’s main critique toward Marx is not especially in labor itself but the latter’s failure to differentiate between labor and work while mostly of major European languages discerning them (Canovan 1992, 71-72). In *The German Ideology* and *the Capital*, Marx emphasizes that human being “distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence” which done in an architectural way, building first “in his mind before he constructs it in wax” (quoted in Walsh 2008, 348; his emphasis). In her phenomenological approach, Arendt distinguishes labor and work as the former corresponds to nature while the latter to the unnaturalness of human existence. By privileging action as a distinctive character of human being, Arendt poses another critique to Marx. The latter praises “the capacity for consciously directed work- the realm of *production*” as *differentia specifica* of human species (Walsh 2008, 348; Walsh’s emphasis). Labor and work in their conflation in Marx’s philosophy correspond to solitariness and the conservation of human existence while action correspond to natality and distinctness. Action has a capacity to initiate something new which Arendt relates it to freedom and to the human condition of plurality.

In Benhabib's study, the "linguistic structure of human action" as found by Arendt gives an influential impulse to Habermas' theory of communicative action (Benhabib 2000, 199). Benhabib refers to Arendt's claim "most deeds are in the form of words" (Benhabib 2000, 199; HC, 178). Benhabib says, "Arendt is not arguing that speech itself is a form of action, as J.L. Austin and John Searle have done with their "speech act theories"; she is claiming the human action is linguistically structured, in that it can be identified, described, and recognized for what it is only through a narrative account" (Benhabib 2000, 199). In *The Human Condition*, Arendt says that action needs speech to disclose who somebody is. Though action can implicitly show who an actor is, without speech it loses its revelatory character. Thus, Arendt states that revelation is closer to speech than to action while beginning is closer to action than to speech. She is comparing action and speech here. In this context, Arendt states, "just as the affinity between action and beginning is closer than that between speech and beginning, although many, and even most acts, are performed in the manner of speech" (HC, 178). Hence, by this statement, Arendt is asserting that speech is a form of action just as the speech-act as referred by Benhabib to Austin and Searle's theory. Benhabib is correct in reading Arendt's "linguistic structure of human action" in its connection to speech, however, in this sense, she is unclear of quoting Arendt's claim. I agree with Benhabib that the "linguistic structure of human action" which through storytelling discloses action's distinctness has influenced Habermas' communicative action. Habermas praises *The Human Condition* as "an anthropology of communicative action" (HACCP, 214). In this book, Arendt analyses "the form of intersubjectivity generated in the praxis of speech as the basic feature of cultural life" (HACCP, 214). More important, Habermas connects "speech" to "the linguistic medium of possible understanding" (TCA1, 279), an explanation resembling Arendt's, which we know is vital to his theory of communicative action.

I now come to my reflection on the conception of the public sphere. First, political participation of citizens in the public sphere is not a consumptive or egocentric-based interest but directed for reaching understanding by considering the plurality. By this last principle, the public sphere is not a space for solitary or isolated behaviour since both Arendt and Habermas similarly require the presence of others even in a reciprocal paradigm in privileging action or communicative action. Second, political freedom is not an exemption from the one-dimensionality of an instrumental public sphere as thought by the first generation of the Frankfurt School (Walsh 2008, 351), but is exhibited by entering it to show a courage to initiate something new through action and to freely take a yes or no position. The latter is an expression of communicative freedom. Courage to initiate something new can be applied in a discursive mode by courage to initiate a new topic of deliberative discussion, a topic of common concern formerly monopolized

by the state or the authoritative powers. Third, the public sphere accentuates the linguistic medium, both in storytelling for disclosing distinctness of an action or an identity of an actor and speech-acts containing validity claims. The linguistic medium is used to generate communicative power which is the Arendtian notion of power modified by Habermas.

6.6 The concept of power

We immediately come to the concept of power as denoted by the concept of action and communicative action. For Arendt, power is not an individual but a communal property. It exists in between acting subjects. Thus, power is deeply connected to action and speech in space of appearance. When action and speech are delivered for noble purposes, power is released. Power cannot be stored up or materialized, only actualized among human beings. Arendt differentiates her conception of power from those who hold the paradigm of command-obedience. She even defines the latter as violence, instead of power. Arendt and Habermas are in an alignment. The teleological model of action or purposive-rationality which is perceived critically by Habermas is even categorized by Arendt as violence.

In his article written in 1977 on Arendt's concept of power, Habermas compares it to Weber's. The latter's concept is based on his purposive-rationality, imposing one's will on others behaviour in order to achieve her goal. In this concept, the success of an agent is dependent upon whether her will can be obeyed even by those who formerly are opposing (HACCP, 212). Arendt posits this kind of social relationship as "force" or even "violence". While Arendt differentiates between power and force, Parsons combining them under a unified conception. Parson says, "I have defined power as the capacity of a social system to mobilize resources to attain collective goals" (quoted in HACCP, 213). Nevertheless, in Habermas' view, in both cases of Weber and Parsons, "power of unifying speech" which differentiating it from force is lost. Thus, those kinds are not communicative model of power (HACCP, 213). In the communicative model, agreement is an end not an instrument for achieving other ends.

Arendt's conception is "the ability to agree upon common course of action in unconstrained communication" (HACCP, 211). In Habermas view, Arendt features the conception of power which existing in an agreement among participants (HACCP, 212). Habermas puts Arendt's conception in his scheme: "The fundamental phenomenon of power is not the instrumentalization of another's will, but the formation of a common will in a communication directed to reaching agreement" (HACCP, 212). In term of speech-act theory, Habermas says that Arendt wants a model of power when illocutionary use of language – instead

of perlocutionary - for intersubjective relation used by participants (HACCP, 213). In short, Habermas asserts, for Arendt, “power is built up in communicative action” (HACCP, 213).

Habermas departs from Arendt’s differentiation of “power” and “force” to construct his more systematic work of law and democracy a decade later. Power refers to “the consent of the governed”. Force refers to “a political leadership makes and carries through binding decisions in order to realize collective goals” (HACCP, 212). Here, we see the shadow of two-track deliberative democracy that will be written in *Between Facts and Norms* in 1990s. In this work, Habermas calls the first “communicative power” while the second “administrative power”. These two kinds of power constitute the political power (BFN, 136).

Communicative power according to Arendt, can only arise when the structure of non-distorted communication is expressed (HACCP, 215-216). This structure is disappeared under the totalitarian rule. Under this kind of rule, there are the isolation of citizens through mistrust, cutting of public exchange of views and opinions, taking from citizens the power of initiation, and so forth (HACCP, 216). In short, there is no communicative action in the public sphere. In Arendt’s own words, the totalitarian rule robs citizens’ “capacity to act” and making them really solitary or isolated as only single person ever existed (HACCP, 217). Communicative power can only arise if citizens can get “more public space than the ballot box and with more opportunity to make their voices heard in public than election day” (OR, 253; quoted in HACCP, 217). By providing more space and more opportunity for generating communicative power, Arendt believes that citizens have more opportunities for “being republicans” and for “acting as citizens” (OR, 253; Arendt’s emphasis).

In addition to these descriptions, Habermas also criticizes Arendt’s concept of power. The nature of Habermas’ criticism is more on her being bound to the ancient Greek philosophy in its historical and conceptual arrangement (HACCP, 214). Habermas thinks that Arendt’s critique toward modern condition is “inapplicable” (HACCP, 219). Based on polis-oikos differentiation, Arendt criticizes the rise of the social and economic matters coming into the public sphere, the bureaucratic nature, and the administrative government. For Habermas, some elements that are rejected by Arendt, especially related to the public sphere, are inescapable for any modern society. Thus, Habermas considers Arendt’s scheme of a modern state as “unimaginable” (HACCP, 219-220): a state without social problems administration, a politics without engaging with socio-economic issues, an institutionalization of public liberty without dealing with public wealth, and so forth. Habermas means by this critique is that there is a dilemma: between on the one hand Arendt’s concept of communicative power and her whole conception of politics discloses the “extreme phenomena” of the modern world but on the other hand it leads to a peculiar conception

of politics. Habermas' suggestion is that Arendt's concept will be more fruitful if it can be detached from the Aristotelian concept of *praxis*. For Habermas, the reduction of politics to *praxis* eliminates labor and work (*poiesis*) on the one hand, and theoretical knowledge (*theoria*) on the other hand which are inescapable in political realm (HACCP, 220). For me, it is impossible since this detachment will pull down the whole construction of Arendt's political theory. Nevertheless, by reducing politics to *praxis*, Arendt has to pay much price: the removal of all strategic elements from politics; the dismissal of socio-economic embedded through administrative system from politics; and the inability to grasp structural violence (HACCP, 220). I will continue with some points of Habermas criticism in dealing with David Luban's analysis.

First, Habermas attests that strategic action is necessary for the political realm (HACCP, 220-222). In Habermas' eyes, Arendt is unable to discern between strategic and instrumental action. Labor and work as criticized by Arendt are actually parts of instrumental action since they engaging with non-social realm of instruments (such as labouring in a factory), conducted by solitary subject, and have violence potential. Habermas bring strategic action coming back into the polis for struggling and competition of power and position and for exercising it. Habermas says, "The acquisition and maintenance of political power must be distinguished from both the employment of political power – that is, rule – and the generation of political power" (HACCP, 221; his emphasis). In his view, Arendt is unable to distinguish these elements of power. Not only bringing back strategic action into the political sphere, Habermas even finds the institutionalization of it in the modern society through the presence of opposition, competing political parties, and so forth. By this critique, in my view, Habermas considers Arendt's conception of political power as too reductive. Second, Habermas believes that while the generation of communicative power and the competition of strategic political power can be comprehended in the framework of action theory. However, grasping the implementation of legitimate power needs the framework of system theory, since for instance, legitimate power involves also in making binding decisions (HACCP, 222). Certainly, Arendt rejects to release her action theory in order to be changed with system theory. Third, Arendt is unable to grasp the "structural violence" – which is not manifesting itself in a kind of force but - in the form of "inconspicuously working communication blocks" which preventing the formation and the communication of convictions effective for legitimation and which generating the illusory ideologies (HACCP, 224-225).

Luban does a sharp critique toward Habermas' reading and criticism of Arendt's concept of communicative power (Luban 1979). Habermas' reconstruction, in Luban's analysis, is more Habermasian, in term that the latter puts Arendt in his conception and scheme (Luban 1979, 81-

82). Habermas describes Arendt's concept of power as the "formation of a common will in a communication directed to reaching agreement" (HACCP, 212). In his reconstruction, power is communicative, deliberative discourse for reaching consensus. This conception, regrettably, Luban says, "is clearly right up Habermas' alley", due to Habermas' substitution of "communication for action" (Luban 1979, 83). This is not Arendt's conception since she "speaks of people acting in concert, not deliberating in concert" (Luban 1979, 83; my emphasis). Luban explicitly shows Arendt's text (Luban 1979, 82; cf. CR, 143, 151; HC, 200). Habermas' replacement of action by communication is possibly driven by Arendt's point that in the sphere of polis, there is a possibility for speech to replace action (Luban 1979, 83). Due to Habermas' intellectual capability, he certainly found some deliberative aspects in Arendt's thought, thus he dares to read as such. Arendt herself explicitly cites some mode of communication such as "argumentation", "debate", and "persuasion".

Luban considers Habermas' criticism to Arendt as "completely miss the mark" because he does not notice Arendt's view of the relation between action and speech which is diametrically opposed to his concept of communication (Luban 1979, 83, 86-87). For Habermas, persuasion is a type of strategic action, or in Austin's speech-act scheme, a type of perlocutionary act. Arendt, however, puts persuasion in the camp of illocutionary act, similar to Habermas' communication for reaching agreement. Persuasion is a kind of speech which is different from "the specifically human way of answering" (HC, 26; Luban 1979, 87). The latter is equated by Luban with the Socratic dialogue. Thus, for Luban, "for Habermas, political communication is dialogue, for Arendt, it takes the form of debate" (Luban 1979, 87). Arendt's perlocutionary model, according to Luban, is self-disclosure of an actor. For her, the political spirit is no other than an "agonal spirit" which means "the passionate drive to show one's self in measuring up against others" (Luban 1979, 86; HC, 194). Hence, instead of naming Arendt's model as "the communicative model of power", I tend to name it "the dramatic model of power".

By this differentiation, Habermas' criticism that Arendt's removal of strategic action from the political realm is not valid because she does not think of communication in a Socratic dialogue's model, as in Habermas' thinking (Luban 1979, 88). "Since Arendt makes no such narrowing", Luban says, "there is no problem for her to include manipulation and manoeuvring as a basis factum of the political life" (Luban 1979, 88). Luban refers to her analysis of lying in politics. Luban affirms, "Without the capacity for lying, there could be no action and thus no freedom" (Luban 1979, 88). In Arendt's next sentence unquoted by Luban, she separates persuasion from strategic action. She says, "To be political, to live in a polis, meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence" (HC, 26; my

emphasis). Referring back to the ancient Greek culture and philosophy, to make people obey through commanding instead of persuading is a pre-political way, that usually done outside the wall of polis. I think, Luban's interpretation which classifying strategic action in Arendt's scheme of politics must be limited inside the boundary of non-force and non-violence action. Furthermore, Arendt excludes the command-obedience (the effectiveness of command) or the purposive-rational model from her conception of power. If manipulation is used for making others act according to one's will, certainly Arendt does not agree this Weberian model of power. Luban refuses Habermas' reductive reading of Arendt's concept which constricting her conception to the Socratic dialogue, the Habermasian communication. In my opinion, however, Luban's enlargement of Arendt's conception must not knock down the fences built by Arendt herself.

In *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas reintroduces the concept of communicative power certainly in connection to Arendt. It is an application of the principle of popular sovereignty and generated directly from citizens (BFN, 170). It means that a communicative power can only developed in "undeformed public spheres" where "structure of undamaged intersubjectivity found in non-distorted communication" (BFN, 148). It arises when will and opinion formation instantiates "the productive force of the 'enlarged mentality'" – a Kantian-influenced Arendt's notion – accomplished by the self-direction of comparison between one's and others possible judgment and by positing oneself in the place of other (BFN, 148). In this work, Habermas again differentiates Arendt's notion of power from Weber's and Parsons'. Arendt's concept of communicative power is not an application of force for achieving self or collective goals. According to Habermas, Arendt glues the concept of communicative power with a "jurisgenesis" nature, the generation of a legitimate law and with the founding of institution. Communicative power manifests itself in protecting political liberty against repression and "the freedom-founding acts" that can bring new founding institution and law into existence (BFN, 148). These manifestations, as also expressed by Arendt, indicate that the purest form of communicative power is in the moment of revolution.

Communicative power, in Habermas' view, can be translated into administrative power inside the political system through the medium of law (BFN, 150). Connection through law means representative bodies have to absorbed opinions from the informal public sphere where not only citizens but also political activists and civil society voluntary associations involve, thus communicative power is transferred for the law-making processes (BFN, 171). While in the concept of communicative power, Habermas owes from Arendt's theory of action, in the administrative power which more correlated to Arendt's notion of force, derived from the system theory. Power in administrative power is a "steering medium" (BFN, 353) in the "self-steering

mechanism of the administrative system” (BFN, 150). This self-mechanism means, however, its “power code” must not be interfered (BFN, 150). These two prescriptions “moves into two directions” which “are not incompatible” (Baxter 2011, 87). By describing administrative power as a “self-steering”, Habermas is presenting “a tension as if it were a contradiction” (Baxter 2011, 88). Nonetheless, in whatever the case, “the administrative system cannot be entirely ‘self-steering’” because its “power code” is the product of a legitimate law (Baxter 2011, 88). As Baxter found, the latter itself is the mechanism for the effectiveness and the regulation of what Habermas underlines as the translation of communicative power into administrative one. Hence, the contradiction can be averted.

The coming section is my reflection on the public sphere. First, both Arendt and Habermas strongly designate the public sphere as a locus for political power. Radical democracy can only be applied in the public sphere. The *kratia* of *demos* finds its true expression in the public sphere. General election is not enough to accommodate the people’s power. Citizens’ participations through action and speech, debate and dialogue in the public sphere are the fuller expression of people’s power. Furthermore, communicative power generated in the public sphere can be channelled to contribute the law-making processes in the parliaments. Hence, the rule of law is not the rule of political elites who make laws but the rule of the people who contribute to the law-making processes. Second, following this principle, the public sphere is not a space for demonstrating the government’s power as in the despotic or totalitarian regimes who use it for public punishment in order to give terror to the people. One important note that we have to always keep in our mind is that Arendt’s conception of power cannot be separated at all from her context of facing Hitler and Stalin’s totalitarianism. In these extreme conditions, the totalitarian regimes defoliate all public expressions of power through for instance, isolation, mutual distrust, and public terror. It is not a space for achieving individual goals through presenting individual strength which is rejected by Arendt or personal strategic force which is refused by Habermas. The public sphere is space in between participants, accessible to all and open for the participations of all, in which power is released. This is the discursive setting of the public sphere which is distinguished from the dramatic one. There is a need to articulate ways out for the “conflict” between the dramatic and discursive models of the public sphere.

6.7 The dramatic and discursive setting of the public sphere

The previous analysis on communicative power brings us to the discussion on the dramatic and discursive setting of the public sphere. Arendt utilizes action and speech for self-disclosure, for delivering great deeds and memorable words in a Homeric agonal spirit. Thus, her conception

is firstly the dramatic setting of the public sphere. Her conception of freedom endorses this setting. Actors exhibit the capacity to initiate something new with courage and spontaneity in the public sphere. Actors perform freedom in the front of an audience. Her concept of power is the dramatic model. Scholars then accuse her of the aestheticization of politics. Nevertheless, Arendt various works obviously indicate that she also holds a discursive model of the public sphere. For Arendt, the public decision in a polis is decided through words and persuasion, or in Luban's reading, through "debate". In Luban's analysis, there is an illocutionary act in Arendt's thinking, in the form of "persuasion" (cf. HC, 26; Luban 1979, 87). As indicated by Canovan, influenced by the 1956 Hungarian Revolution with its council system, Arendt more trusted to the citizen's political capacity of action and speech than when she was thinking on mass society in the totalitarian regimes. Thus, Arendt stands up for the council-system and dreaming the conciliar debate (Luban 1979, 92-93). In *Crises in the Republic*, Arendt draws the council's plea: "The councils say: We want to participate, we want to debate, we want to make our voices heard in public, and we want to have a possibility to determine the political course of our country. Since the country is too big for all of us to come together and determine our fate, we need a number of public spaces within it. The booth in which we deposit our ballots is unquestionably too small, for this booth has room for only one. The parties are completely unsuitable; there we are, most of us, nothing but the manipulated electorate. But if only ten of us are sitting around a table, each expressing his opinion, each hearing the opinions of others, then a rational formation of opinion can take place through the exchange of opinions. There, too, it will become clear which one of us is best suited to present our view before the next higher council, where in turn our view will be clarified through the influence of other views, revised, or proved wrong" (CR, 232-233). In short, there is a communicative or discursive potential in Arendt's thinking.

Habermas clearly proposes the discursive model of the public sphere. From the first time he wrote *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* until recent times he engages with the role of religion in the public sphere, he has never changed his position. He wants a public sphere where citizens do communicative action in the context of the rationalized lifeworld, in which speech-acts containing validity claims are raised, and rational-critical discussion are done to reach agreements and to form consensual opinions and wills. He endorses the force of the better arguments in the public sphere. Finally, communicative power can be generated through contributing public opinions in the law-making processes in the parliaments.

The problem here is Arendt has never successful in solving the tension of the two concepts in her thinking. Habermas, in his typology of action criticizes the dramaturgical model of action which he directs it to Goffman but for me also to Arendt. Benhabib (1992) prefers the discursive

in lieu of the dramatic model. She sees the incompatibility of Arendt's dramatic or agonistic model with the context of modern societies. What I want to do now is to reconstruct the relation of two settings of the public sphere. I will do two tasks, not wholly independent, in the following section. First, since Arendt later also has the discursive potential in her thinking of the public sphere, I want to draw the relation and the comparison with Habermas' model. Second, I will reconstruct the relation between the dramatic and the discursive which I believe they are complementary, mainly the former can support the latter.

There are some similarities in Arendt and Habermas' conceptions of the discursive public sphere. First, the public sphere is a space for citizens to hold discussions in a verbal or linguistic mode by exchanging arguments or opinions. Second, discussions are connected through the world that is common to all participants as a transcendental or immanent site for them. Third, the public sphere presupposes the reign of freedom, equality, and inclusivity. Fourth, there is a strong commitment to the political plurality. It means, the public sphere is opened for competing views. Fifth, the authority in the public sphere is the better arguments. Seventh, each participant is motivated to take an active or initiative attitude in engaging with discussion. Eighth, discussions are held in a non-coercive condition. Ninth, the aim of the discussions is to form public opinions that finally can be channelled to the higher bodies, the representative bodies in order to take part in the decisions of political courses and the law-making processes.

There is a vital difference that I want to deeply engage here, namely, on consensus and competitive opinions. In his article, Habermas indicates that the fundamental phenomenon in Arendt's concept of power is "the formation of a common will in a communication directed to reaching agreement" (HACCP, 212; my emphasis). It is certainly valid for him that communication is directed for "reaching agreement". If we see to her concept of agonial spirit, then we can imagine that though there are debates of opinions in the council system, a Homeric agonial spirit motivates the participants to "strive always to be the best", to present the best opinions in a contestation. While Habermas favours consensus of opinions, Arendt prefers competition of them. Thanks to her development, anachronistically speaking, Arendt has a more "Habermasian" thinking in the later period of her thought. Here, Arendt opens for a more participatory view involving cooperation (Parekh 1981, 177). Parekh says that instead of "glory and historical immortality", Arendt now fights for "public freedom and happiness" through preferring words, argumentation, and persuasion and insisting on the significance of "compromise and consensus" (Parekh 1981, 177).

The problem here is not firstly between Arendt and Habermas but inside her own thought, between the agonistic or dramatic and discursive setting of the public sphere. Entering this

analysis bring us to my second task, reconciling these two settings, either inside Arendt thinking or between her and Habermas. There are five possible ways out. First, Fuss differentiates between the substance and the procedure of politics. The former is expressed in the realm in which individuality is enacted and plurality is respected. This realm can be understood as the dramatic public sphere. The latter requires the decision-making processes including persuasion and argumentation in which the best personal arguments take place (quoted in D'Entrèves 1994, 98). These processes happen in the discursive public sphere. Second, Parekh differentiates between "ordinary" and "extraordinary", between "heroic" and "participatory politics" (Parekh 1981, 177-178). The latter can provide the conducive condition for the former while the former can supply the encouragement and initiative for actively engaging with the latter. Third, Habermas himself from the first time, though preferring consensus, he does not deny the fact of contesting opinions which finally coming to agreement. Public debate consists of the "competition of private arguments" that will then reach consensus (STPS, 83). Habermas also endorses "the authority of better arguments" in public discussion (STPS, 37; BFN, 182). The term "better" presupposes a competition. Therefore, it is possible that in exchanging opinions in the public sphere, a consensus that is agreed consisting of better arguments. Fourth, the reconciliation of both settings can be done by utilizing storytelling potential in Arendt thinking. Arendt uses storytelling to disclose the distinctness of action and the identity of an actor. It is "constitutive" to action's meaning because it "enables the retrospective articulation of their significance and import, both for the actors themselves and for the participants" (D'Entrèves 1994, 74). I now connect Arendt's concept of storytelling to the suggestion given by Iris Marion Young. In her constructive comment toward Habermas' thought, Young suggests the necessary of storytelling for mutual understanding in deliberative democracy (Young 1996, 133). For Young, storytelling at least can generate empathy especially for social injustice's victims and can exhibit the source and the significance of values or opinions. There is an alignment among those thinkers. Storytelling can be used for supporting the discursive setting of the public sphere by fostering mutual understanding and empathy most needed for reaching agreement. Finally, we can connect persuasion and debate in Arendt thought to Young's proposal of rhetoric. If we use aforementioned Luban's scheme, Arendt's illocutionary act is persuasion or debate classified by Habermas as perlocutionary act. The connection to Habermas' deliberative democracy can be done through Young's suggestion of rhetoric. She connects rhetoric to emotion, assertion, and passion (Young 1996, 130). Thus, Arendt's meaning of debate is a communication with rhetoric aspect. Young refers to Bohman's finding that Habermas tries to avoid rhetoric by differentiating illocutionary and perlocutionary act. "But the opposition between rational discourse and rhetoric, in my view", Young writes, "denigrates both

the situatedness of communication and its necessary link to desire” (Young 1996, 130; my emphasis). The first refers to the “specific meanings, connotations, and symbols” created to construct “speaker, audience, and occasion”. For instance, assertion shows the seriousness of a statement or even a situation. The second refers to the function of rhetoric for getting and keeping attention. It is important since it can play as an “erotic dimension” in communication. Though half, persuasion can also play it. Young also mentions others such as humor, images, wordplay, and so forth that are successful in avoiding weariness.

6.8 Going beyond Arendt and Habermas

So far, in this chapter, I have attempted to present a reconciliatory dialogue in explaining the philosophy of the public sphere as articulated by Arendt and Habermas. Not only that, in the previous chapters, I have also shown Arendt and Habermas’ contributions on the philosophy of the public sphere. Though their contributions are so valuable, they still have a number of shortcomings. These shortcomings in their thoughts will be more clearly seen from the lens of the principle of sphere sovereignty. I give a few examples.

First, on the private sphere. Arendt’s lack of appreciation of the private sphere is inapplicable in our society. While Arendt views the relation between the private sphere and the public sphere as in diametrical opposition, Habermas views their relation as complementary. The private sphere can be utilized for giving impacts in the public sphere. Habermas’ view on the private sphere, however, is an instrumental one. Therefore, there is an ontological inequality between the private and the public sphere. If the private sphere may truly contribute to the public sphere, it must really exist and function in accordance with its own essence and purpose in itself. In other words, it must flourish. Hence, the principle of sphere sovereignty which cherishes the ontological identity of social spheres will empower the private sphere.

Second, on civil society. Civil society is vital for the public sphere. Civil society comprises the public of the public sphere. Civil society also supplies the “notion of public good as distinct from private interest” (Calhoun 2013, 74) which certainly is echoing Arendt’s view. The public sphere, in short, cannot be separated from civil society. Michael Edwards even equates civil society with the public sphere in term of the former becoming “the arena for argument and deliberation as well as for association and institutional collaboration” (Edwards 2004, 55). The vital importance of civil society for the public sphere is not recognized by Arendt’s mature and systematic conception of it. While Arendt’s theory of civil society is underdeveloped, Habermas also does not give a proper place for civil society. Here, we need a theoretical scheme that empowering civil society as mediating structures for playing its pivotal role in the public sphere.

Civil society must have its own ontological identity, not only as an instrument, in order to exist and to function properly and channel significant voices into the public sphere. The principle of sphere sovereignty could precisely fill this need.

Third, on political action and communicative power. Both Arendt and Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere imply its distinctive ways of work. For instance, the public sphere accentuates the communicative model of power which is differentiated from the military realm which has only one model of power, namely, the command-obedience model. The public sphere requires the presence of plural others in a reciprocal model of relation, which is distinguished from the realm of labor and work which does not necessarily need the presence of others. An artist commonly has to work alone. Thus, we need a theoretical framework that promotes an ontological pluralism of social structures in which the public sphere has its ontological equality and distinction compared to other social spheres. The principle of sphere sovereignty in a more radical way proposes the principle of structural pluralism which emphasizes the ontological distinction of various social institutions or associations. The public sphere's unique ways of work as thought by Arendt and Habermas will be highly valued in the principle of sphere sovereignty. The principle of sphere sovereignty is commonly known as articulated by the Dutch theologian and politician, Abraham Kuyper. His teaching on the principle of sphere sovereignty can be utilized for interpreting Arendt's and Habermas' thoughts of the public sphere. This interpretation is done in order to value and to improve Arendt and Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere.

Chapter 7

THE PRINCIPLE OF SPHERE SOVEREIGNTY ACCORDING TO ABRAHAM KUYPER AND THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF A THEOLOGY OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

7.1 Introduction

Arendt's and Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere, as explained in the previous chapters, though having so many strengths still have empty lacunae that can be filled by the principle of sphere sovereignty as articulated by Abraham Kuyper. Before I go to the next chapter, in which I will engage at large and in depth with the issue, I firstly have to do two tasks in this chapter. The first task is to give a systematic explanation of the principle of sphere sovereignty according to Kuyper. This explanation is vital since this principle will become the theoretical framework for interpreting the philosophy of the public sphere. The second task is the constructive articulation of the building blocks of a theology of the public sphere which consists in an interpretive identification of the public sphere as a sovereign sphere.

7.2 The principle of sphere sovereignty

The principle of sphere sovereignty is most often associated with Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), though he was not the first thinker to have developed this idea in substance, though perhaps not in name. For instance, John Calvin (1509-1564), Johannes Althusius (1563-1638), Ernst Ludwig von Gerlach (1795-1877) and Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876) had already thought through the idea. Bob Goudzwaard found that though the very idea of sphere sovereignty had existed in the time of the Reformation, only von Gerlach and Groen had brought the idea to "a more structured delineation and elaboration" (Goudzwaard 1991, 336). Kuyper went farther than Groen in popularizing and developing the idea to a more mature stage. Compared to Groen, for example, Kuyper had expanded the principle of sphere sovereignty beyond the enclave of the church-state relation, and applied it to the relations among many social institutions (Van der Vyver 2002, 213). Kuyper was the thinker who popularized the idea through his famous speech, "Sphere Sovereignty", at the establishment of the *Vrije Universiteit*, Amsterdam in 1880. This speech is considered by James D. Bratt as "the most memorable speech Abraham Kuyper delivered over a long lifetime of notable orations" (Bratt 2010, 34; cf. Bratt 2013, 130). Kuyper did not only develop the idea but also implemented the principle of sphere sovereignty by starting and leading a denomination, founding a political party of which he would be prime minister, setting up

newspapers, and founding a university. The significance of Kuyper's implementation of the principle makes George Harinck dare to conclude that indeed it was not Kuyper's idea, but rather his activities that have had more impact and still live on in Dutch society (Harinck 2002, 277). Certainly, Harinck does not deny the importance of Kuyper's idea. He says, "Of course, his idea would still be of some academic interest..." (Harinck 2002, 277). Both the idea and the implementation of the principle of sphere sovereignty not only laid down his impact on Dutch society, but also established Kuyper's own legacy. "Kuyper was nothing", Craig Bartholomew writes, "if not culturally and socially engaged" (Bartholomew 2017, 131). Among many of Kuyper's inspirational ideas, the principle of sphere sovereignty is the theme most discussed by theologians, political scientists, and ethicists in many countries in the West (Lee 2010, 87).

In this section, I am presenting a historical and systematic explanation of the principle of sphere sovereignty. In describing the principle, I start from the historical background to understand the historical context of Kuyper's notion. I also explain how the Calvinists influence Kuyper's understanding of the principle. I then go on to explain the principle systematically.

7.2.1 The historical background

7.2.1.1 The struggle with the liberals

The liberals took control of the country mainly through the Dutch Constitution of 1848. Though more relaxed compared to the Constitution of 1814, the Constitution of 1848 provided the liberal hegemony and continued to give the state control over other spheres such as the church (van der Kroef 1948, 317-318). As indicated by Bratt, the liberals extended the implementation of "a simple, uniform set of laws to every corner of the kingdom". By this step, they tried to remove every local or special exceptions or privileges. "In short", Bratt concludes, the liberals "stood for the standardization and rationalization of society and economy that are hallmarks of 'modernization'" (Bratt 2013, 66). The implementation of the liberal principles embodied in the Constitution of 1848 would also be extended to the realm of education.

This implementation sparked a fire of dispute between the neo-Calvinists and the liberals (Harinck 2014, 5-6). The dispute was on the character of the public school. The disagreement was held by two political leaders in the Dutch parliament, between G. Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876), a neo-Calvinist, and Johan Rudolf Thorbecke (1798-1872), a liberal politician. Groen, according to Harinck, who was the only significant opponent to the liberals, encouraged all public schools in the country to be Protestant, since the Netherlands was a Protestant nation. Thorbecke suggested that public schools be non-religious, as they would be funded by public money. The dispute came to its culmination in the adoption of the 1857 law on primary education, which

removed confessional religious schools from public funding by the state, while at that time 95 percent of the country's population held a confessional religion. Groen and the Christians could do little at that time other than founding Christian schools and establishing a Christian school association (in 1860) to strengthen the fortress. At that time there were only 58 Christian schools among 3422 primary schools.⁷⁵ Groen expected the bargaining position of Christians to grow as the growing Christian school movement put pressure on Parliament to have a judicial review of the 1857 primary education law. "This experience", Harinck writes, "made the neo-Calvinists suspicious of the uniform character of the public domain".

The liberals' intention to control schools was based on their belief that in order to have a "fundamental change in a society", they had to enter into education, as public schools would be the critical "battle ground for the minds of the young" (Wintle 2000, 268; Kaemingk 2018, 79). "Education", writes Michael Wintle, a historian from the Universiteit van Amsterdam, "was a vehicle through which the state sought to expand its competences and reform the country, while at the same time it was a tool with which individuals and groups sought to defend their own way of life or ideology" (Wintle 2000, 267). By controlling the schools, the liberals tried to remove all potential and "protective barriers" which could be impediments to reform in the country or change the society fundamentally (Wintle 2000, 68).

Undeniably, the Dutch liberals' educational philosophy was inspired by the French Revolution. In Paris, the revolutionary schools were used to bring up young revolutionaries by liberating them from the "monkish spirit" of their Catholic family and assimilating them into the culture and values of the Revolution (Kaemingk 2018, 80). Copying the French way, for instance, happened through the state's controlling of the curriculum to liberate kids from their religious identities and to assimilate them into the vision of the liberal nation-state (Kaemingk 2018, 81). During the nineteenth century, the liberal Dutch nation-state tried to extend its bureaucratic grip on private schools by forcing them to change their curriculum, funding, governance, and philosophical orientation (Kaemingk 2018, 80). For example, the philosophical orientation of private schools had to be changed from the Protestant Biblical orientation to the modern rationalistic orientation. The national administrators of the educational system then tried to dominate private schools through efforts such as declaring all religious and private schools as public and directly overseeing private schools, by which steps, "a homogenous Dutch nation would come into being" (Siep Stuurman 1983, 116; quoted in Kaemingk 2018, 81).

⁷⁵ According to Bratt, Groen gave up his seat in Parliament and resigned. In Bratt's record the association is called "The Union for Christian National Education". See Bratt 2013, 69.

The modern rational orientation in primary education, which contained a deeply anti-Christian character, led the Christian school association founded by Groen to accept Kuyper's proposal in 1869 to call upon Christian parents to remove their children from the public schools (Harinck 2014, 6). Kuyper delivered this proposal in his opening speech at the annual convention of the association in Utrecht (Bratt 2013, 69). The two main reasons for Kuyper, according to Harinck, were to make Christian parents feel the urgent need for Christian schools, and to encourage Christians not to avoid the liberals, but instead to oppose them. Kuyper's proposal indeed brought division inside the association. Some members wanted to keep their children in the public schools and avoid a national division between Christians and non-Christians. Kuyper had anticipated this division, not only for a tactical reason, but in the belief that liberalism was finally nothing but an anti-Christian movement (Harinck 2014, 7). Kuyper did oppose the liberals, not only regarding the education system but mainly for fighting against the French revolutionary spirit embodied in Dutch laws. That is why, according to Harinck, Kuyper called himself "antirevolutionary". "[T]he main Antirevolutionary opponents", Harinck writes, "were themselves liberals" (Harinck 2014, 10).

In his opening speech at the Christian school association's convention, Kuyper reminded the Calvinists that they had to recognize their position as a minority (Bratt 2013, 69). Kuyper suggested that the older Protestant Holland no longer existed. What existed then was a "flowering of Catholic life" and the emergence of a mixture of liberal Protestants and free-thinkers. Religious minorities tended to have one of four ways of responding to the liberal hegemony: "assimilation", "moderation", "retreat", or "retribution" (Kaemingk 2018, 82). The first means being absorbed; the second, holding some convictions and modifying others; the third, leaving the public sphere; the fourth, trying to take back and restore the old Christian hegemony. Kuyper – to borrow Arendt's understanding of freedom – did not choose from one of these choices but initiated something new, even unexpected. He reminded his comrades of their folk character as Calvinists, with the main principle of "rights for all and freedom for each" (Bratt 2013, 69-70). Here, Bratt sees that Kuyper proposed the Calvinist philosophy of diversity and endorsed the association to work for "a full and fair pluralization of the public schools". The pluralistic solution Kuyper proposed could be differentiated from assimilation and moderation in his refusal to have any engagement with liberal convictions, and could also be differentiated from retribution and retreat, for the first opposes the pluralistic nature of society, the second opposes the public nature of religions (Kaemingk 2018, 82).

Generally, the struggle with the liberals, unlike the struggle with state sovereignty as we will see in the next section, was mainly a struggle of ideological dominance and uniformity, rather

than political. As we have seen, the liberals promoted the uniformity of rationalization, as shown in the promotion of “the efficiency of uniform standards” (Bratt 2013, 66). The uniformity sought by the liberals is considered by Kuyper to be “the *curse* of modern life” (UCML, 35). It is a curse, Kuyper explains, since it “propels us on a road that leads to the destruction of life”. Indeed, it is a curse, rather than a blessing, since this false uniformity “disregards the ordinances of God revealed not only in Scripture but throughout his entire creation”. The ordinances of God indicate that “it is in multiform diversity, not in uniformity, that the finest fiber and deepest principle of natural life is found” (UCML, 35-36). Not only does he accuse the liberals of having a false uniformity, Kuyper also finds it inconsistent. While at the pragmatic level they tried to impose uniformity, at the philosophical level, there were many groups competing each other. Kuyper says, “A school of Kant, and a school of Hegel...Plutonists and Neptunists, Darwinists and anti-Darwinists compete with one another in the natural sciences...Everywhere contention, conflict, struggle” (LC, 131). In short, the seed of the principle of sphere sovereignty which emphasizes the ontological uniqueness and independence of social spheres in a pluriform society came through this period of struggle with the liberals. As we have seen, liberal uniformity was a fruit of the French Revolution. Kuyper in general did struggle a great deal with the French Revolution, not as much with the formal results as with the basic principle which he analysed in depth.

7.2.1.2 The struggle with the French Revolution

The principle of sphere sovereignty did not come out only from Kuyper’s struggle with the liberals but also from his struggle with popular sovereignty. The historical context of this struggle was that Kuyper did face the impacts of the French Revolution. The struggle with the French Revolution, without exaggerating, can be seen as spread throughout Kuyper’s intellectual and activism life. The struggle with the liberals was also the struggle with a fruit of the French Revolution. The anti-revolutionary spirit was also similar. It does not mean that Kuyper did not recognize the good fruits or good impacts of it but he engaged with its “poisonous element” (CSSOCL, 314).⁷⁶ In this part, however, I will focus on two major points, namely, the dethroning of God and the designation of the sovereignty of the people, and the emphasis on individualism and the destruction of the organic character of society. Now, I will start with the first. For Kuyper, the root principle of the French Revolution was an anti-theistic conviction, namely, “neither God,

⁷⁶ More completely, Kuyper says, “Again, I do not deny the fruit of the French revolution. By God’s plan, even its sinful appearance it has served to spread Calvinistic liberties. I do not complain about this but am grateful for it – on one condition: that the poisonous element it introduced into the organism of the European states not be overlooked. For it did more than just copy Calvinistic liberties. It also introduced a system, a catechism, a doctrine; and this system, running counter to God and his righteousness, destroys the bond of law and order, undermines the foundations of society, gives free play to passion, and gives the lower material rule over the spirit”. See CSSOCL, 314.

nor master” (PP, 53). This conviction made this revolution be known as “the first great ideological revolution” (Buijs 2016, 200). This revolution, which guillotined King Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette, not only ignored and opposed God but had principally, in their religious and political scheme, dethroned the sovereign God and appointed the human being to occupy the vacant seat (LC, 87). Human will determined everything and became the source of all authority and power. The sovereignty of the people, in Kuyper’s thinking, became “the deepest fountain of all sovereignty”. The sovereignty of the people is derived from the authority of the individual free will (CG1, 93). Each person has his or her own right to determine his or her own course. A free person thus stands together with other people who are indeed equally free. This was the foundation of the French Revolution with its principle of “social contract”. For Kuyper, this kind of contract could not be proved historically and could be considered as a “pure fiction” (CG1, 94). Therefore, the French Revolution failed to recognize “a deeper ground of political life”, but only rested in “the state of nature [that was] the criterion of what [was] normally human” (LC, 87; PP, 37). “[T]he ideal of humanity”, Kuyper said in his address, was “emancipated from God and from his established order” (PP, 53). The dethroning of God resulted in the rejection of God’s order in which each creature is subject to God, and constructed an order that posits individual free will as the basis of authority and freedom (PP, 37). Firstly, we will see the problem with the sovereignty of the people, then the side effects of individual free will.

Giving sovereignty to the people, according to Kuyper, would allow them to “inevitably abuse their sovereignty” (Kaemingk 2018, 123). For Kuyper, “Authority over men cannot arise from men”, since, immediately this authority opens the possibility for “the right of the strongest”, as shown in the tyranny of a majority over against a minority, although “history shows, almost on every page, that very often the minority was right”. The tyranny of a majority, as it appeared in the French Revolution, meant that civil liberty was provided only in order to agree with the majority group, although, for instance, for a Christian that majority was an anti-theistic one (LC, 109). When individual free will as the source of the sovereignty of the people is applied consistently, and each person has the same right to agree and to oppose, then “no comprehensive and overarching administrative government ever arose” (CG1, 94). It is possible in a city that there are some who agree and some who oppose. Thus, for this system, the minority has no choice but to submit to the will of the majority. A majority’s general will then would be embodied in the constitution or the law, as recommended by Article IV of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1793). This article states, “Law is the free and solemn expression of the general will”. The sovereignty of the people as embodied in a constitution or a law would “dominate” minorities since a general will has occupied “the seat of God” (OP, 23). The

sovereignty of the people could also deliver a great deal of authority to a king, even to an almost absolute character. This was shown in the power of Napoleon Bonaparte and William I of the Netherlands. The sovereignty of the people, hence, violated the kingship of Christ. Conversely, Kuyper says, “there could be no question of popular sovereignty in the minds of men who, as church members and citizens alike, worshiped Christ as their King” (CSSOCL, 296).

The designation of Napoleon inspired Kuyper to conclude that the French Revolution resulted in “the shackling of liberty in the irons of State-omnipotence” (LC, 88). The French revolutionaries had succeeded in guillotining Louis XVI (reign: 1765-1793), but also had succeeded in designating Napoleon Bonaparte (reign: 1799-1804 consul, 1804-1815 emperor). The French historian Pierre Goubert explains, “The all-powerful prefects personified Napoleonic government. They held more powers than the intendants of the ancient regime and were effective instruments of a unifying centralism that owed much more to Bonaparte than to Louis XIV” (Goubert 1991, 220). Goubert then gives some examples. The top-down system of appointment was extended to all kind of bureaucracies including law, finance, and religion, at least even until 1905. All judges were appointed directly without a fair selection.

What occurred in France, was well replicated in the Netherlands. The Kingdom of the Netherlands was established in 1813 and two years later the first king, William I of Orange Nassau (1772-1843), was enthroned. He became king following the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 at the Battle of Waterloo and reigned until 1840. Although Napoleon was defeated, his political scheme was imitated by William I (Harinck 2014, 3-4). He wanted to force the unification of the country and wanted to rule – borrowing Harinck’s term – in “a Napoleonic way”. William I saw an opportunity to apply the Napoleonic way since this goal could be accepted by many. These potential proponents had felt the failure of the Dutch Republic in the past century due to too many divisions that weakened the power of the federal government. The Dutch Constitution of 1814, thus, entrusted almost all authority to William I. Here, for me, the Constitution of 1814 embodied the sovereignty of the people. The result of this delegation can be imagined. In Harinck’s historical sketch, in general, the King swallowed up all the freedom and liberty of the people. There was no freedom that could apply outside of the King’s authority. The Dutch Constitution of 1814, which provided this almost absolute authority to William I, was very tight regarding the freedom of social spheres (van der Kroef 1948, 317). “There was not much room for citizen’s political involvement”, Harinck writes, “under the Constitution of 1814” (Harinck 2014, 4). The king also gave very little leeway for religious freedom, but in general, church order was regulated by the government. The opening of a new church was controlled by the state and splinter groups outside the existing churches were closely monitored (Harinck 2014, 3-4). The first king of the new Dutch

kingdom established a single central yet powerful administration of the church's synod. As a consequence, for Kuyper, this establishment "legally banished in the Netherlands the kingly regime of Christ over his churches" (PR2, 290). The King thus undermined "Christ's honor in any way" (PR2, 291). Though not an established church in terms of the English model (Bornewasser 1981, 154), the central synod of the Reformed church established by King William I was considered by Kuyper as a "caesaropapist model", not in the sense that the Dutch government claimed a spiritual character, but in that the church had "an episcopal hierarchy" (OC, 394). At first glance, it seems that the officially acknowledged church was very special, but it was actually not like that. As the only "public" church, the Reformed church enjoyed many facilities from the government, such as financial support for ministers and church buildings (Bornewasser 1981, 154-155). Nonetheless, the Reformed church was indeed allowed to have only very small space for freedom, like a candy that is sweet but actually contains poison. The price "for its privileges, [was that] the Reformed Church had to accept a degree of State interference" (Bornewasser 1981, 155). The appointment of church deacons and elders was controlled by the government and the preaching was overseen by the authorities. The congregations were obliged to fulfil the wishes of the town councils. For Kuyper, what happened was that the whole of church life was altogether put under the control of the state, namely, the control of King William I (OC, 400). Jeroen Koch says that actually the King occupied the top position of the entire Dutch church hierarchy (Koch 2006, 73). No wonder the seceders in 1834 wanted to complain over the government.

The Secession of 1834 was for William I the case for the application of nearly absolute power. A group of orthodox believers was in conflict with the government as they wanted to be outside the existing, officially acknowledged Reformed church and did not want to apply for recognition, since one of their complaints concerned state control over church order. The seceders wanted to "return to the standpoint of the fathers" (Bratt 2013, 14) since the existing Reformed church, having enjoyed their "special relationship with the authorities" and being "particularly favoured and protected" (Bornewasser 1981, 171), had unfortunately "violated the Reformed church order" (Harinck 2014, 5). The action then undertaken against this dissident group was painful. Sad to say, the Reformed church leaders cooperated with the official authorities to crack down on their fellow Reformed orthodox followers (Bornewasser 1981, 171). Their meetings were broken up, several ministers were imprisoned and their houses were guarded by soldiers (Bornewasser 1981, 171). "[T]he Secession", Harinck concludes, "was a first sign in the Netherlands that the French ideal of the sovereignty of the people imposed uniformity in the public domain that violated the *freedom* of the people" (Harinck 2014, 5; his emphasis). The seceders then found their religious ground of freedom, rather than the political one. Their source of freedom was not found in the

constitution or the king's recognition, but in the Calvinist doctrine of election by grace (Harinck 2014, 5). From this experience, Harinck believes, the next generation of neo-Calvinists, including Kuyper, became more suspicious of the modern state's role in providing the liberties for the people (Harinck 2014, 5). Therefore, in my view, the neo-Calvinists had to develop a conception of their own that could secure the freedom of the people. The principle of sphere sovereignty then came out as the solution.

The French Revolution was not only troubled in terms of the sovereignty of the people but also over individual free will. In his address, *The Problem of Poverty*,⁷⁷ Kuyper states, "The French Revolution disturbed that organic tissue, broke the social bonds, and left nothing but the monotonous, self-seeking individual asserting his own self-sufficiency" (PP, 38). The same criticism was also raised by those who had a negative view of the revolution, such as the British historian of philosophy, Frederick Copleston. The individualism of the French Revolution was negatively categorized as an "anarchic individualism" which was substituted for "social stability", impacting on the destruction of "the social cohesion", and raising the threat of "the foundation of the society" (Copleston 1994, IX:1). The concrete indication of this destruction of social cohesion appears in social conflict. The French Revolution resulted in an idolatry of Mammon in the form of a conviction that "the possession of money" is "the highest good" (PP, 39). This conviction could produce, at the same time, social conflict, since human beings who were in "a deep-seated social need" would oppose each other in the struggle for money. It is commonly known that people even dare to kill others for money, because "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils" (1 Tim. 6:10). This condition was exacerbated by the failure of the bourgeoisie to control their desire for the possession of material goods and deny their desire to show off their luxuries, which eventually triggered the rise of wrong desires among poorer people (PP, 41). In the Apostle John's language, the pride of life of the bourgeoisie had triggered the desire for the eyes and the desire of the flesh of the poorer.

The French Revolution was distinguished from the Christian religion in the sense that the latter, inspired by God's love, brought "loving compassion into the world", while the former prioritized "the egoism of a passionate struggle for possessions" (PP, 37). What was presented by the revolution, for Kuyper, was even "the most brutal egoism" (PP, 45). The Christian principle is very different. Christianity expects there to be "a God-willed *community*, a living, human organism. Not a mechanism put together from separate parts; not a mosaic...inlaid with pieces

⁷⁷ This address is a revision of the previous publication, *Christianity and the Class Struggle*, trans. Dirk Jellema (Grand Rapids: Piet Hein, 1950) translated by Dirk Jellema. This 1991 translation was a "through revision by James Skillen of Jellema's translation following a careful reading of the Dutch". Long sentences were broken up and the language was adjusted to contemporary English usage. See "Preface" in PP, 1.

like a floor, but a *body* with limbs, subject to the law of life” (PP, 45-46). By exercising “an architectonic critique of human society”, Kuyper wanted to articulate “a different arrangement of the social order” which was “a more appropriate – therefore more livable – social order” (PP, 44-45). This order was indeed the very principle of sphere sovereignty. Though Kuyper in his speech at the first Christian Social Congress (1891) did not elaborate this principle (he had done so earlier, as explained above, in 1880), this speech was certainly delivered in the framework of what James Skillen calls, a “healthy societal differentiation”. “Kuyper urges social solidarity (organic social life) in his own country and even internationally”, Skillen writes, “but he does so on a basis that demands genuine respect for the differentiated integrity of society’s many institutions, communities, and social relationships” (Skillen 2011, 13). By using the metaphor of the human body, Kuyper wanted to emphasize the unity and diversity of human society, which indeed is the scheme of the principle of sphere sovereignty. “We are members of each other”, Kuyper gave as an example, “and thus the eye cannot get along without the foot, nor the foot without the eye” (PP, 46). By the principle of sphere sovereignty, which is applied in the multiformity of social spheres, Kuyper opposed the uniformity of both the French Revolution and German state sovereignty. He said, “The uniformity of Caesarism [the Bismarckian Germany] is our external enemy, the uniformity of Cosmopolitanism [the Napoleonic France] is our internal enemy” (UCML, 41).

7.2.1.3 The struggle with German state sovereignty

In articulating the principle of sphere sovereignty, Kuyper was not only struggling with French popular sovereignty but also with German state sovereignty. In 1871, Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898) came to power in Germany, and he reigned until 1890. Germany at that time consisted of kingdoms (e.g. Prussia, Bavaria), duchies, principalities, free cities (e.g. Hamburg, Bremen), and so forth. Bismarck tried to unite Germany by encouraging a national loyalty of all regions since regional or confessional identities often triggered ideological, social, or political divisions (Lerman 2008, 31). A German historian, Katharine Anne Lerman writes, “Although his methods often proved highly controversial and counterproductive, Bismarck’s domestic policies were driven by his determination to consolidate the new national state” (Lerman 2008, 33). One of his domestic policies was *Kulturkampf* (cultural struggle), which held sway around 1871-1879. This struggle was mainly against Catholicism, since Bismarck saw the Catholic Centre Party and the Roman Catholic Church as “subversive forces” opposed to his aim of consolidating the new state (Lerman 2008, 35). He then applied state control over the church, such as intervention into the appointment of the clergy and the running of education, introducing compulsory civil

marriage, and expelling the Jesuit Order, which was considered to be serving a hostile power. His regime imprisoned members of the clergy, requisitioned church property, and left vacancies in parishes unfilled. The German chancellor also established state censorship of sermons and church publications, and attacked the Catholic schools (Bratt 2013, 67). The cultural struggle against the German Catholics did not only consist in direct harmful actions but also raised national sentiment against Catholicism (Koch 2006, 55). *Kulturkampf*, for Bismarck, was first an act based on careful political calculation. Nonetheless, he miscalculated. Far from consolidating the new state, the Catholic Centre Party was still hostile to Bismarck's regime (Lerman 2008, 35). German Catholics were unlikely to forget or forgive his *Kulturkampf*. Bismarck and his domestic policies, especially *Kulturkampf* gave Kuyper a real political example of how a state could become "an octopus, which stifles the whole of life" (LC, 96). Starting from this experience, articulating a principle of sphere sovereignty was imperative, to outline how the state had to occupy its own place without invading other spheres. This Kuyperian principle would claim that "The sovereignty of the State and the sovereignty of the Church exist side by side, and they mutually limit each other" (LC, 107).

The sovereignty of the state, as in the German case, was the result of German philosophical pantheism. "Ideas are incarnated in the reality", Kuyper said in his lecture, "and among these the idea of the State was the highest, the richest, the most perfect idea of the relation between man and man" (LC, 88). Here, the German people already believed in the pantheistic principle that "the spirit of the German *Volk* and the Spirit of God were one and the same" (Kaemingk 2018, 122). The state had then become "a mysterious being with a hidden ego; with a State-consciousness, slowly developing; and with an increasing potent State-will, which by a slow process endeavored to blindly reach the highest State-aim" (LC, 88-89). The state, as Kuyper explained it, was not a Rousseauist aggregation of individuals but an organic whole with organic members. Here, we can differentiate between German state sovereignty and French popular sovereignty. The state's will became so powerful that everyone or everything had to bow down before it. The state in this line of thought had become a very god. For Kuyper, it was clear that "such an all-embracing and immanent theory of sovereignty could never cultivate a free and diverse public square" (Kaemingk 2018, 123). Kuyper therefore articulated the principle of state sovereignty, based on the sovereignty of Christ over all things, and put the state back in its proper place in order to empower civil society and cultivate a free and diverse public sphere. "Sphere sovereignty", said Kuyper in his inaugural speech of the *Vrije Universiteit*, "defending itself against State sovereignty, that is the course of world history even back before the Messiah's sovereignty was proclaimed" (SS, 469). Kuyper learned much more from his predecessors in the

Calvinist tradition, firstly on the Messiah's sovereignty, and secondly on the principle of sphere sovereignty.

7.2.1.4 The heritage of the Calvinists

Kuyper did not articulate the principle of sphere sovereignty from zero. He did learn from other thinkers. I will describe only some of them: John Calvin (1509-1564) and Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876). Although many people doubt whether Kuyper had ever studied Johannes Althusius (1563-1638) directly or indirectly, the thinking of this 16th century Calvinist-inspired political philosopher can be considered as anticipatory of Kuyper's. Therefore, my short assessment of Calvin's influence will be followed by a brief sketch of Althusius' main insights, as an example of implications that apparently are inherent in Calvin's thought. While discussing Calvin, I am not speaking here on Calvin's whole legacy on politics, especially after such a great commemoration, and a wide publication of everything relating to "Calvin" in 2009. I also am not providing a comprehensive overview on Calvin's thinking on sphere sovereignty or Calvin's whole influence on Kuyper.⁷⁸ I will focus on certain points to bring us a taste of the traces of Calvin's thought in Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty, and also to encourage our understanding of the principle itself. The sovereignty of God is central to Calvin's theology. For example, Calvin believes that nothing happens outside or against God's will (van der Kooi 2016, 48). In his thinking, God, "The Creator of all things is the governor – the Lord – who has all power and rules all" (van der Kooi 2016, 49). The sovereign God created the "cosmological order of the universe" (van der Kooi 2016, 54). The same sovereign God also created the societal order with the many social spheres in human life. In his exposition of Ephesians 5:21-6:9, Calvin said, "Society consists of groups, which are like yokes, in which there is mutual obligation of parties;...so in society there are six different classes, for each of which Paul lays down its peculiar duties" (quoted in Spykman 1989, 84). In commenting on Peter's imperative "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution" (1 Pet. 2:13), Calvin says, "for the verb *ktizein* in Greek, from which *ktisis* comes, means to form and to construct a building. Suitable, then, is the word 'ordination'; by which Peter reminds us, that God the maker of the world has not left the human race in a state of confusion, that they might live after the manner of beasts, but as it were in a building regularly formed, and divided into several compartments. And it is called a human ordination, not because it has been invented by man, but because a mode of living, well arranged and duly ordered, is peculiar to men" (quoted in Spykman 1989, 84). These explanations tell us that Calvin thought about the existence of the diverse social spheres, which Althusius later

⁷⁸ On Calvin's thought on sphere sovereignty, see Spykman 1976, 185-207.

formulated as “associations-in-consociation” and which Kuyper articulated as the principle of sphere sovereignty (Spykman 1989, 84-85).

Church and government, for example, in Calvin’s thought, should “coexist in close harmony” and together become “equal organs of authority under God” (Bartholomew 2017, 132). The dominion of one over another, in Bartholomew’s words, can be categorized as “tyrannical”. We can see Calvin’s emphasis on the multiformity of social spheres through his elevation of the calling of magistrate. He says, “No one ought to doubt that civil authority is a calling, not only holy and lawful before God, but also the most sacred and by far the most honorable of all callings in the whole life of mortal men” (Calvin 1960, IV.xx.4). Reading in the context of the ecclesiastical domination in medieval society, Calvin’s elevation of the political calling indicates that he proposed an ontological equality between church and state. Certainly, this kind of relation must not be limited to the church-state relation only. “What we see here”, Skillen notes, “is a further enlargement of Calvin’s conviction that different spheres of human life have their own internal order of authority and freedom under God” (Skillen 1973, 189).

It is interesting to note that Sheldon Wolin, an American political theorist, has discovered Calvin’s uniqueness among the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers in maintaining that human “societal life was divinely ordered” (Mouw 2012, 42). In Wolin’s reading, both Luther and the Anabaptists viewed the non-church social spheres “as a dark, disordered mass trembling on the brink of anarchy and seemingly outside the beneficent order of God” (Wolin 2004, 161). Though Wolin is considered to exaggerate somewhat, Richard Mouw at least appreciates his emphasis on Calvin’s view on divinely ordered society (Mouw 2012, 43). Kuyper, according to Mouw, certainly stands in this tradition.

In short, Skillen draws eight themes from Calvin’s political thought which has influenced Dutch Calvinist political theory (Skillen 1973, 190-191). First, “the absolute sovereignty of God over the total organic community of mankind in its creation, fall, and redemption”. Second, “the divine authority for, and direct sovereignty over, human state life”. Third, “the relative freedom of each area of life in its own sphere under God”. Fourth, “the divine origin of the state for the preservation of the human race in face of man’s sin”. Fifth, “the mutual obligation of rulers and subjects in the constitution of civil society”. Sixth, “the antirevolutionary spirit of obedience on behalf of the citizenry”. Seventh, “the necessity for positive civil laws to manifest the law of God which demand public equity”. Finally, “the confession that the possibility for just government is due to the common grace of God”.

While Kuyper did learn from Calvin, he took distance from Johannes Althusius (1563-1638). It was unfortunate, since until that time, Althusius was “the clearest and most profound

thinker which Calvinism has produced in the realm of political science and jurisprudence” (Carl J. Friedrich 1932; quoted in Witte, Jr 2010, 22). More specifically, Althusius had articulated “A more friendly and auspicious antecedent for sphere sovereignty” (Bratt 2013, 134). Kuyper was not indeed unfamiliar with Althusius since he did his doctoral dissertation on the comparison between Johannes a Lasco and Calvin’s thought in Emden (Bratt 2013, 135). Emden was where Althusius was appointed “a legal counsel for the city (Stadtsyndicus)”, a place where he became deeply involved in a number of legal negotiations, and where he later became an elder in the Reformed church (Witte, Jr 2010, 23). A Lasco was a pastor in Emden. Kuyper, however, got a negative impression of Althusius’ thought through his reading of Otto von Gierke’s writing. Von Gierke interpreted Althusius as “a secularizing thinker” (Chaplin 2011, 368; cf. AS, I:652-654). For von Gierke, Althusius treated “the process of human association as entirely immanent in its drive and court of appeal” (Bratt 2013, 134). Von Gierke, a contemporary of Kuyper, in a book published in 1879 used Althusius in constructing his project on the evolution of the German constitutional state, “even in its new imperial form, to be the stable middle between French libertarianism and Russian autocracy” (Bratt 2013, 134). Althusius, then, in Kuyper’s mind, was serving – what Bratt calls as - “a false hope and a grim danger”. Therefore, rather than using Althusius’ thinking as an epistemological source for Kuyper’s principle of sphere sovereignty, we can take it as an anticipation of Kuyper’s principle (Bartholomew 2017, 134) and in my view, as a comparative reading for understanding Kuyper’s own idea. Moreover, as noted by Herman Dooyeweerd, the Dutch Calvinist philosopher, Althusius, as a Calvinist jurist, was the thinker who articulated “the first modern formulation of the principle of internal sphere sovereignty in the social relationships” (Dooyeweerd 1984, 663; see also Spykman 1976, 184; van der Vyver 2002, 213; Bartholomew 2017, 134).

Althusius begins writing his *Politics* with the very definition of the term. He says, “Politics is the art of associating (*consociandi*) men for the purpose of establishing, cultivating, and conserving social life among them. Whence it is called ‘symbiotics’.⁷⁹ The subject matter of politics is therefore association (*consociatio*), in which the symbiotes pledge themselves each to the other, by explicit or tacit agreement, to mutual communication of whatever is useful and necessary for the harmonious exercise of social life” (Althusius 1995, 48). While we understand politics as a science studying government and the state, Althusius understands it as an art of association rather than a science. Politics is then connected to the art of human association in a society. Here, Althusius understands that the relationships of citizens with one another in a state

⁷⁹ Symbiosis is “a biological concept that refers to the association between two organisms that live close together and depend on each other in various ways” (Ossewaarde 2007, 111).

is not simply as fellow citizens but much more as “co-workers who, by the bond of an associating and uniting agreement, communicate among themselves whatever is appropriate for a comfortable life of soul and body. In other words, they are participants in a common life” (Althusius 1995, 49). By these explanations, we understand that Althusius’ basic conviction is that God created the human being as “a communal creature” who requires mutual friendship, love, and communication with others (Skillen 1974, 174). For Althusius, “human nature was indelibly associational” (Bratt 2013, 133). Kuyper would later have a similar social ontology, “Our human life...is so structured that the individual exists only in groups, and only in such groups can the whole manifest” (SS, 467; quoted in Bratt 2013, 133-134).

As communal creatures, human beings live in multiple associations shared according to common law (*lex communis*) and proper laws (*leges propriae*). The common law of all associations is that there are heads/ authorities in each association while the rest are subjected to them (Althusius 1995, 49). Althusius quotes Ephesians 5:21 in his text, “Be subject to one another in fear of the Lord”. Adam was designed as the head of his wife, Eve. Similarly, government, parent, teacher, and so forth are intended to be the heads of certain kinds of community. The duties of the authorities in these communities are “administering, planning, appointing, teaching, forbidding, requiring, and diverting”, in order “to serve and care for the utility of others”, and to achieve “its appropriate end” (Althusius 195, 49-50). While common law is applicable to all communities, proper law is distinguished from one community to another. Althusius says, “Proper laws (*leges propriae*) are those enactments by which particular associations are ruled. They differ in each species of association according as the nature of each requires” (Althusius 1995, 50). Althusius is saying that each social sphere is governed by a peculiar law corresponding to its own very nature. Dooyeweerd concludes that Althusius was working from an “anti-universalistic standpoint with respect to the inter-structural relation between the different types of social relationship” (Dooyeweerd 2013, III:663). This diversity is derived from creation by God (Skillen 1974, 178). Human beings did not create this diversity, but as Skillen underlines it, can only discover and develop those associations. This understanding anticipated the importance of the order of creation in relation to social diversity in Kuyper’s principle of sphere sovereignty. Kuyper says, “There is no uniformity among men, but endless multiformity. In creation itself the difference has been established between woman and man” (LC, 26).

Althusius is mainly directing his notion of proper law to restrain excessive ecclesiastical power. Skillen notes that his main ambition is to “discover *God’s* order for the creation (including human social life) not the order which the church had sought to impose upon it” (Skillen 1974, 172; his emphasis). Althusius seems to be echoing the Calvinistic Reformational spirit over

against the old scholastic Roman Catholic thinking. Both Althusius and Kuyper emphasize the role of the creational order as the root of sphere sovereignty. As a Calvinist, Althusius believes in the direct governance of the sovereignty of God over all aspects of human life (Skillen 1974, 173). He is de-sacralizing the mediatorial role of the medieval church. While Kuyper was facing the octopus-like character of the state that stifles all aspects of human life (LC, 96), in the late medieval era Althusius faced the octopus-like character of the church.

Althusius then explains some symbiotic associations in human societies, in categories such as natural associations, civil associations and public associations, and in concrete associations such as families, states, cities, and so forth. For example, while the family is a natural, simple and private association, the *collegium* (e.g. bakers, tailors, philosophers) is also simple and private yet civil (Skillen 1974, 179). In each association, the symbiotes have a kind of communication with one another (Skillen 1974, 180). For instance, communication between a husband and a wife is different from the communication that occurs when that husband is in the role of university lecturer, and his wife is a student at the same university. Those associations are wholly sovereign in themselves, do not relate hierarchically each other, and are not amalgamated as in a mosaic (Ossewaarde 2007, 113). Symbiotic associations, as Marinus Ossewaarde concludes, rather than constituting a whole or a unity, are “a never-ending process of differentiating organisms” in which each contains the possibility of having new potential associations continuously and spontaneously. It is interesting that Althusius, anticipating Habermas’ understanding of the public sphere as consisting of private individuals, emphasizes that public associations “are founded upon these primary, private associations; not the other way around” (Skillen 1974, 179). “The public association exists when many private associations are linked together for the purpose of establishing an inclusive political order (*politeuma*). It can be called a community (*universitas*), an associated body, or the pre-eminent political association. It is permitted and approved by the law of nations (*jus gentium*), and is not considered dead as long as one person is left”, says Althusius. (Althusius 1995, 64). Above all, the only “monism” in Althusius’ thinking is “the glory of God and the welfare of our neighbour” (Skillen 1974, 185). What Althusius developed well, namely, common law, the proper laws of social spheres, the ontological equality of spheres, which were directed to the glory of God, would then appear in a more mature form in Kuyper’s thinking. Before being developed by Kuyper, Althusius’ idea would firstly be developed by Groen van Prinsterer.

Skillen says, “The important influence of the modern revival of Calvinism both in Dutch political politics as well as in the development of Dutch Calvinistic political theory cannot be understood apart from the work of Groen van Prinsterer” (Skillen 1973, 217). By this appreciation,

we begin an explanation of “Wim Groen”, as he was usually called (van Dyke 1998, 6). Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876) had even become an archivist of the House of Orange and a member of Parliament (Bratt 2013, 16). He was an aristocrat who came to the Calvinist faith through the regular biblical exposition of a Genevan court preacher, J. H. Merle d’Aubigne (Bartholomew 2017, 136; Hall 2009, 293). At the time he came to “a profound spiritual rebirth and intellectual revitalization”, he was seriously ill. (Skillen & McCarthy 1991, 54). The Calvinist faith led him to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ, not only in the individual realm but also in the socio-political public realm as well (Hall 2009, 293). Groen played a vital role for Kuyper, both in his thinking and life. Groen even became “something of a surrogate father to Kuyper”, for instance, by endorsing this young pastor for a parliamentary candidacy in 1871 (Bratt 2013, 62). In short, Kuyper could see in Groen “a career of conviction, not compromise; of reform, not routine; of full Calvinism, not vague piety” (Bratt 2013, 71). Thus, Groen emerged promisingly, as Bratt discovered, as “a paternal model [Kuyper] could admire”. I am not intending to unfold a comprehensive overview of their relationship in their intellectual activities and lives.⁸⁰ I will rather focus on the principle of sphere sovereignty. As we have discussed before, Kuyper came to formulate the principle of sphere sovereignty following his struggle with the liberals, mainly on the character of public schools, in which had been preceded by Groen. Kuyper entered this struggle by joining the Christian school association founded by Groen.

Groen played a vital role in Kuyper’s learning process of political theory (Bratt 2013, 71). Kuyper even accepted a list of political readings from Groen (Bratt 2013, 74-75). In the letters they exchanged, some names were mentioned: Burke, Stahl, Guizot, de Tockqueville, and Lamennais. An example showing how Groen influenced Kuyper can be traced in the latter’s earlier important address, “Uniformity: The Curse of Modern Life”. In this address, Kuyper celebrated “multiform diversity” as the “deepest principle of natural life” (UCML, 36). For Kuyper, the Revolution and its spirit were behind the curse of uniformity (Bratt 2013, 72). In his address, Kuyper pointed to the French Revolution as “the birth year of modern life, as the beginning of that new direction”, that was the “striving for imperial unity” (UCML, 24). This imperial unity was not fought through “a mighty military arm” as usual, but through “another strategy”, even “a longer road”, through the implementation of the basic principles, namely, liberty, equality, and fraternity, to provide a uniformity which could become a homogeneity, and finally come to “unification by centralization toward Caesarism” (UCML, 24). As noted by Bratt, Kuyper learned this ideological analysis from Groen, who had already critiqued the French Revolution very sharply. Groen had emphasized himself as “antirevolutionary” and “Christian

⁸⁰ For the explanation on the relationship between Groen and Kuyper, see Bratt 2013, 69-77.

historical” (van Dyke 1998, 6). By the first he meant he was “opposed to the ‘systematic overturning of ideas’ whereby truth and justice are founded on human opinion rather than divine ordinance”. At the same time, in the second phrase he was open to “revealed norms for human life, corroborated by the experience of the ages”. In Bratt’s words, as a historian, Groen put great emphasis on “the markers of Netherlandic tradition” (Bratt 2010, 36). These historical lessons, however, were viewed in the light of – what Bratt classifies as – “the generic Reformation” teaching.⁸¹ Like Burke, Groen positively acknowledged history as “the known march of the ordinary providence of God” (van Dyke 1998, 7). Here, we can consider that Groen was echoing Calvin’s belief that “God’s providential care is the driving force in history” (van der Kooi 2016, 48). By holding on to the providential work of the sovereign God in history, Groen argued that there was “an affirmation that the diversified structures of society, including limited powers of government itself, have been established and recognized in the Netherlands” especially since the Reformation, in the process of an organic growth of Dutch history (Skillen & McCarthy 1991, 55-56). Here, Groen had prepared a good way for Kuyper to grow the principle of sphere sovereignty which preserves the multiform diversity of social spheres.

Groen’s main work was *Lectures on Unbelief and Revolution*, published in 1847. In these lectures, he tried to provide “a fundamental critique of the liberal order and a brief outline of its proper antidote” (Bratt 2013, 75). It can be said that Kuyper’s critical attitude toward the liberals and the French Revolution, as discovered by Bratt, was derived from Groen. Groen meant by “Revolution” the “overturning of the general spirit and mode of thinking which is manifest throughout Christendom” (van Prinsterer 1991, 58). Harry van Dyke says, “The case [Groen] argued was that the root cause of the malaise of his age was *unbelief* – unbelief as it was first elaborated into a system and then applied in a wholesale social experiment” (van Dyke 1989, 3; quoted in Bartholomew 2017, 136). By “Revolution ideas” he meant “the basic maxims of liberty and equality, popular sovereignty, social contract, the artificial reconstruction of society – notions which today are venerated as the cornerstones of constitutional law and the political order” (van Prinsterer 1991, 58). As I have explained before, in Kuyper’s critique of the French Revolution, as we now see, he used almost the same understanding and framework as Groen’s. Kuyper criticized the anti-theistic nature of the French Revolution and also saw the problem of its principle of popular sovereignty.

Kuyper, however, went farther than Groen in the principle of sphere sovereignty. Groen did not put stress on “a distinct internal character and private competency of the different societal

⁸¹ Dooyeweerd, however, considers that Groen did have a “compromise with the worldview of the Historical School”, which preventing him from “consistently applying this scriptural motive” in his political thought. See Dooyeweerd 1991, 288.

relationships over against the state” (Skillen 1973, 220). This means that Groen acknowledges the diversity of social spheres, but does not go any farther in developing the nature of each sphere as in the thought of Althusius. What Groen defended, according to Skillen, was “the need for some autonomy in the lower spheres of society” which would be used to guard against the evil effects of political centralization as seen in the French Revolution. Groen held to a kind of hierarchy, which Kuyper avoided, in which all other social spheres are grouped to the state as the central organ. Skillen sees that the relative autonomy of social spheres in Groen’s thinking must be honored in relating to this kind of hierarchy. Thus, for Groen, there was no essential nature that belonged to each association. Here, Groen took distance from Althusius and Kuyper. No wonder that for Groen there was no inner essential difference between a husband as the head of family and the king as the head of a state (Skillen 1973, 220-221). The only difference was that the state has its own “sovereign authority”.

Regarding the church and its relations with the state, in which Groen was influenced by Calvin, he maintained the separation of those spheres, though he did not go as far as becoming an “ardent adversaire de la separation de l’Eglise et de l’Etat” (van Prinsterer 1860; quoted in Skillen 1973, 224). Groen believed that “in order to submit Church and State, each in its own sphere, to the immediate power of Him to Whom has been given all power in heaven and on earth, in order to establish not an atheistic state but a lay (secular) state; not an absolutist state, but a state subordinated to the divine will, a Christian state” (van Prinsterer 1860; quoted in Skillen 1973, 224). In Skillen’s words, Groen held a conviction that “Church and state are two independent spheres, each having its own authority in direct responsibility to God”. It means that for Groen, the church and the state must not be subjected to or intervene in each other’s sphere, but rather, each must recognize the authority of the other. Spykman calls Groen’s conception the “idea of sphere-independence” (Spykman 1976, 179). Here, Groen developed a more mature social scheme than before, thus preparing a good way for Kuyper’s enlargement of the conception to the whole society.

In Skillen’s analysis, the most important contribution Groen provided is calling Dutch Christians to enter the political arena, bringing their faith into the public, where revolution and liberalism were dominant over the cultural activities in his time (Skillen 1973, 225). Groen did not want to make a separation between theology and politics (Hall 2009, 293). Groen referred to Hughes Lammenais, a French priest and philosopher, who remarked, “everything proceeds from doctrines: manners, literature, constitutions, laws, the happiness..., culture, barbarism...”, and so forth (van Prinsterer 1991, 57). For Lammenais, everything in our world is derived from doctrinal principles or presuppositions. For Christians who really understood this conviction, Groen

exhorted them to hold consistently to biblical values and bring those values to the public (Hall 2009, 294). Therefore, Groen criticized his fellow Protestants who held a “false dichotomy” between the eternal, spiritual destiny and the temporal, earthly responsibility to shape their daily affairs (Skillen & McCarthy 1991, 54). By bringing Biblical values into the world, Christians had tried to make history adjust to God’s will and in this way, as discovered by Skillen and McCarthy, for Groen, Christians could truly flourish. This calling would indeed be echoed by Kuyper. For Kuyper, “the divine desire that human beings engage in cultural activity was *a central motive* for God’s creating the world” (Mouw 2011, 6; my emphasis). Thus, following Calvin and improving on Groen, Kuyper presented his address, lectures and writings putting forward the very principle of sphere sovereignty. I now proceed to discuss the systematic exploration of that principle.

7.2.2 The systematic elucidation

7.2.2.1 Christ as the sovereign King

The principle of sphere sovereignty rests in the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. I will firstly discuss Kuyper’s understanding of sovereignty. Kuyper defines it as “the authority that has the right, the duty, and the power to break and avenge all resistance to its will” (SS, 466). Kuyper distinguishes between sovereignty and absolute sovereignty. The latter rests only in God. He says, “If you believe in Him as Deviser and Creator, as Founder and director of all things, your soul must proclaim the Triune God as the only absolute Sovereign” (SS, 466). The sovereignty of God, Kuyper says, “has been conferred absolute and undivided upon the man-Messiah” (SS, 468). Christ is “the *Messiah*, the Anointed, and thus the *King* of kings possessing ‘*all* authority in heaven and on earth’” (SS, 464; his emphasis).⁸² The absolute sovereignty possessed by Christ means that his authority and power are “extending over all things visible and invisible, over the spiritual and the material” (SS, 467). Kuyper’s emphasis on Christ as King is also important, compared to liberal Christians who favour the office of Christ as prophet and pietist Christians who put more stress on Jesus as “savior and healer of souls” (Anderson 2016, xiv). Kuyper is thus filling a lacuna in the history of Christian understanding of Christ.

That Christ is sovereign in heaven is clear for us. What Kuyper wants to emphasize is Matthew 28:18 with the three words: “and on earth” (Buijs 2017, xviii). “Christ as (spiritual) King”, Govert J. Buijs writes, “gathers on earth a people that is subject to him, is obedient to him. It is not an earthly people, and yet it is (also) a people on earth”. Therefore, Kuyper declares,

⁸² In his inaugural address, “Sphere Sovereignty”, Kuyper refers to three verses in describing Christ’ absolute sovereignty. In his own words, “To be king, for that I was born and for that I came into the world” [John 18:37]. “All authority in heaven and on earth is mine [Matt. 28:18]. “One day all enemies will be subdued and every knee shall bow before me!” [Rom. 14:11]”. See SS, 467.

“there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over *all*, does not cry: ‘Mine!’” (SS, 488). Here, Kuyper emphasizes that “The dominion of Jesus’ kingship extends also to family, society, state, scholarship, art, and every other sphere of human activity” (PR2, 264).

Christ as the sovereign King dominates all spheres of human life through the delegation of sovereignty to human beings. “Sovereignty rests in God”, Kuyper says, “and can therefore proceed only from Him” (SS, 468). Christ has delegated his sovereignty “by dividing [our] life into *separate spheres*, each with its own sovereignty” (SS, 467; Kuyper’s emphasis). While Christ possesses absolute sovereignty, each sphere owns a delegated sovereignty. Here, Kuyper affirms that “human freedom is safe under this Son of Man anointed as Sovereign because, along with the State, every other sphere of life recognizes an authority derived from Him – that is possesses sovereignty in its own sphere” (SS, 468). Since the state, along with other sovereign spheres, receives its sovereignty from Christ, therefore, the “perfect Sovereignty of the *sinless* Messiah at the same time directly denies and challenges all absolute Sovereignty among *sinful* men on earth” (SS, 467; Kuyper’s emphasis). The principle of sphere sovereignty which recognizes Christ as the sovereign King truly challenges and rejects the Hegelian system of the state as “the immanent God” (SS, 466). Each state and each government must acknowledge that “all authority of governments on earth originates from the sovereignty of God alone” (LC, 82). The principle of sphere sovereignty which recognizes Christ as the sovereign King also truly challenges and rejects the liberal system of Caesarism which derived from the principle of popular sovereignty. “Therefore, in opposition both to the atheistic popular-sovereignty of the Encyclopedians, and the pantheistic state-sovereignty of German philosophers”, Kuyper concludes, “the Calvinist maintains the Sovereignty of God, as the source of all authority among men” (LC, 90).

God delegates sovereignty to social spheres in the creation. Kuyper says that the “second sovereignty”, next to the sovereignty of the state, “had been implanted by God in the social spheres, in accordance with the ordinances of creation” (LC, 94). Kuyper also says that sphere sovereignty “lay in the order of creation, in the structure of human life; it was there before State sovereignty arose” (SS, 469). In *Our Program*, Kuyper explains how God delegates sovereignty to nature and human beings. He says that God set up the law of nature to exercise sovereignty over material objects, such as the strong having authority over the weak (OP, 20). The law of nature also directs the authority of climate and soil over the world of plants. Kuyper also says that in the animal world, one animal may have authority over another. In our individual person, there is a law that directs our blood and body, and also the power of logic has authority over our ability

to form judgment. The role of Christ in this order of creation is not as its founder but as the protector of sphere sovereignty (SS, 469).

Though believing that sphere sovereignty is rooted in the order of creation, Kuyper surprisingly said little about the basis for believing it (Mouw 2012).⁸³ Herman Bavinck, Kuyper's colleague, tries to fill this gap. He says, "Everything was created with its own nature and is based on ordinances appointed by God for it. Sun and moon and stars have their own peculiar tasks; plants and animals and man have their own distinct natures. There is a rich diversity. But in this diversity, there is also a supreme unity...Every creature received its own nature, its own life, and its own law of life" (Bavinck 1928; quoted in Spykman 1976, 179-180). In my view, both Kuyper and Bavinck rest their grounds of the principle of sphere sovereignty on Genesis 1:11-12, mainly on the explanation, "each according to its kind". Therefore, the sovereignty owned by each social sphere is given by God in the order of creation.

The human fall into sin destroyed God's original design of sphere sovereignty. Firstly, sin brings into human life an attempt to reach uniformity. For Kuyper, "unity is the ultimate goal of all the ways of God" (UCML, 21). Kuyper acknowledges the intrinsic difference of forms and configurations in our life. And for him, only God, on "one day", can and will "lead from all this diversity toward unity, out of this chaos toward order...all dissonances [dissolving] into harmony". Alas, the world "in its sinful endeavor has arrogated this same ideal for itself. The world, too, strives for unity". Kuyper calls worldly unity "a false uniformity". In the human "history of sin", Kuyper says, human beings have been trying to achieve that false uniformity in the model of "an imperial unity" (UCML, 23). Kuyper mentions examples which I will not explore for the purpose of brevity: Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, the Caesars of Rome, Louis XIV, Napoleon, and also of course, Otto von Bismarck, who was Kuyper's contemporary. I have discussed in depth some practical examples of uniformity in the liberals, Napoleon, William I, and Bismarck. For Kuyper, false uniformity is a kind of "curse", since with the imposition of uniformity comes the elimination of diversity which brings to destruction the richness of life (UCML, 32, 35). The main problem with imperial uniformity and centralism is the invasion of the state into other social spheres. Here, the state is violating Christ's absolute sovereignty and destroying sphere sovereignty. Thus, Kuyper enacts the principle of sphere sovereignty in order

⁸³ Whether the principle of sphere sovereignty is consistent with Biblical teaching and the Reformed tradition, Kuyper says, "Should anyone ask whether 'sphere sovereignty' is really derived from the heart of the Scripture and the treasury of Reformed life, I would entreat him first of all to plumb the depths of the organic faith principle in Scripture, further to note Hebron's tribal law for David's coronation, to notice Elijah's resistance to Ahab's tyranny, the disciples' refusal to yield to Jerusalem's police regulations, and, not least, to listen to their Lord's maxim concerning what is God's and what is Caesar's. As to Reformed life, don't you know about Calvin's 'lesser magistrates'? Isn't sphere sovereignty the basis of the entire Presbyterian church order? Did not almost all Reformed nations incline toward a confederative form of government? Are not civil liberties most luxuriantly developed in Reformed lands? Can it be denied that domestic peace, decentralization, and municipal autonomy are best guaranteed even today among the heirs of Calvin?" (SS, 480-481).

to keep the state in its own sphere. Historically speaking, Kuyper says that as the principle of sphere sovereignty flows from the order of creation, then “once arisen State sovereignty recognized Sphere sovereignty as a permanent adversary, and within the spheres the power of resistance was weakened by the transgression of their own laws of being, that is, by sin” (SS, 469). Throughout the course of human history, imperial or dictatorial governments have always invaded other social spheres in order to achieve their own political or even individual ambitions. We can widen the application of human sinfulness to the destruction of the principle of sphere sovereignty by the invasion of the market (or money) into other human spheres; this brings a false uniformity to each sphere, each being run by the principle of financial profit thereby losing its own unique identity or nature. This danger was actually anticipated by Kuyper himself. He says, “Hence also rises the danger that one sphere in life may encroach on its neighbour like a sticky wheel that shears off one cog after another until the whole operation is disrupted” (SS, 468). The final effect is mentioned: “the whole operation is disrupted”.

Kuyper acknowledges the impact of sin in human social spheres. He says, “True, sin here also has exerted its disturbing influence and has distorted much which was intended for a blessing into a curse” (LC, 91). But thanks to common grace provided by God, this “fatal efficiency of sin has been stopped”. Common grace, as will be discussed at length in the next chapter, does not only resist the destructive effects of sin negatively, but also positively endorses the development of civil good and righteousness. We can mention many examples of this. The scientific sphere can still discover truth in nature and can still make human life flourish. Common grace is at work as the provisional remedy for the sin that impacts human life in this fallen world, as is the redemptive work of Christ.

The redemption brought by Christ has a cosmic scope and impacts the restoration of the principle of sphere sovereignty. In Colossians 1:20, Paul says, “and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross”. Christ’s redemptive work cannot be restricted only to the individual benefit of salvation from sin but extends to “the redemption of the world, and to the organic reunion of all things in heaven and on earth under Christ as their original head” (LC, 119). Thus, it serves “to reestablish the proper function of family, religious life, state, and all other institutions” (Smidt 2007, 133). Kuyper says that the order of Christ’s work is as “first the original Mediator of creation and after that also the Mediator of redemption to make possible the enforcement and fulfilment of the decree of creation and everything entailed in it” (CGCR, 185). Thus, the principle of sphere sovereignty, which is rooted in the order of creation, and of which Christ is the Mediator, can only be restored by the same Christ who is the mediator of redemption.

In speaking of the restoration of the fallen world by Christ's redemptive work Kuyper means "transforming the world, turning oppression into freedom, injustice into justice, hatred into love, oppressive swords into plowshares – although always partly and provisionally" (Buijs 2017, xxvi). Thus, as endorsed by Buijs, a Christian should not be silent about social injustice in which "God's original intention for his creation is violated". It means that Christians have to enter this fallen world to make each social sphere discover and develop according to its nature in order to make human life truly flourish. Each social sphere is ontologically related to others within a structural pluralism.

7.2.2.2 The principle of structural pluralism

The principle of structural pluralism teaches that "God has created the world with various structures... which order life and coordinate human interaction" (Spykman 1989, 79). These various structures include family, government, the church, schools, and so forth. This term correctly describes the principle of sphere sovereignty. Kuyper believes that "Our human life, with its visible material foreground and invisible spiritual background, is neither simple nor uniform but constitutes an infinitely complex organism" (SS, 467-468). This complexity "is so structured", Kuyper continues, "that the individual exists only in groups". Kuyper calls the parts of this infinitely complex organism "'cogwheels', spring-driven on their own axles, or 'spheres', each animated with its own spirit". Kuyper gives some examples of these cogwheels or spheres: a scientific world, a business world, the world of art, ecclesiastical life, and so forth, "each comprises its own domain, each has its own Sovereign within its bounds". Each sphere, Kuyper emphasizes, "obeys its own laws of life, each subject to its own chief". These spheres "do not owe their existence to the state, and... do not derive the law of their life from the superiority of the state, but obey a high authority within their own bosom; an authority which rules, by the grace of God, just as the sovereignty of the State does" (LC, 90). There is an authority within each sphere to which those within it are subjected, and nothing except God himself can take precedence over that (LC, 91). Thus, the state is not allowed to invade a sphere. Spykman says, "Each sphere has its own identity, its own unique task, its own God-given prerogatives. On each God has conferred its own peculiar right of existence and reason for existence" (Spykman 1976, 167). Govert J. Buijs concludes, "Kuyper's great insight was that each of these spheres have their own normative order. The inner goal of the sovereignty of the spheres, is the realization of this inherent normativity. Without the guidance of normativity, the sovereignty of the spheres is blind and might even turn out to be destructive" (Buijs 2008, 20-21).

Kuyper differentiates between the mechanical character of the state and the organic character of society (LC, 91). Whatever human beings receive directly from creation will be organically developed. The development will be spontaneous, as we can see in the family with its blood relationship. Government is directly appointed by God and does not have “a natural head, which organically grew from the body of the people, but a mechanical head, which from without has been placed upon the trunk of the nation” (LC, 92-93). This mechanical path is pursued by transplanting government from outside society, in the metaphor used by Kuyper, in order to become a kind of buffer so that it does not fall. The organic character, on the other hand, develops spontaneously “not by the law of inheritance or by appointment, but only by the grace of God” (LC, 95). Kuyper gives some examples. In the sphere of science or art, for example, a genius or maestro receives gifts only by grace from God, and so “is subject to no one and is responsible to Him alone Who has granted it this ascendancy”, and will “rule over all and in the end receive from all the homage” due to scientific or artistic superiority. Kuyper’s doctrine of common grace, thus, comes to play on the main stage, by God’s abundant grace given to those persons. Hence, we can conclude that a genius or a maestro holds authority within the scientific or artistic sphere, an authority that has been delegated by the sovereign God. Thus, the sphere of science or art is sovereign, since it obeys its own laws of life and is subject to its own authority.

Though each sphere has its own laws of life and follows its own authority, the various spheres are related yet not independent of each other. As parts of this complex organism, Kuyper says, “the cogwheels of all these spheres engage each other, and precisely through that interaction emerges the rich, multifaceted multiformity of human life” (SS, 467-468). Rather than invading other spheres, each sphere may enrich other spheres which finally enriches human life. A family that functions properly may provide spiritual, psychological, physical readiness and maturity for its members, making them able to become involved in other spheres: business, art, religion, scientific, and so forth (Van Til 2005, 274). Therefore, the principle of sphere sovereignty is also called “principled pluralism” (Spykman 1989, 79): this consists of structural and confessional pluralism (I will engage with this in the next section). This maintains that all human beings live within – borrowing Spykman’s expression – “a network of divinely ordained life-relationship”. People thus fulfil their callings within “the plurality of communal associations” rather than finding meaning and purpose in the all-embracing megastructure of society, that is “the central bureaucratic seat of authority”, or in a free and sovereign individuality, as the collectivist view holds. Here, the principle of sphere sovereignty or principled pluralism that affirms the vital role of communities in a healthy society takes distance from laissez-faire liberalism and socialist or nationalist collectivism, and stands between the two (Smidt 2007, 140).

Structural pluralism is “normative” since each sphere is a part of the original order of creation (Intan 2019, 64). Thus, the principle of sphere sovereignty endorses structural pluralism as something “good” (Smidt 2007, 137). There is normative good in structural pluralism not only because it was established by God but also because it functions to empower what Peter Berger and Richard J. Neuhaus calls “the mediating structures”. They are “those institutions standing between the individual in his private life and the large institutions of public life” (Berger & Neuhaus 1977, 158). As Berger indicates, these mediating structures are important to assist the “megastructures” of societal life to work for human flourishing. Referring to Berger in his other work, Mouw writes, “states and corporations need to look ‘below’ themselves for ‘moral sustenance’, providing room for the significant influence of those ‘living subcultures from which people derive meaning and identity’” (Mouw 2012, 37). Kuyper’s principle of sphere sovereignty, however, goes beyond the present-day discussion on mediating structures. Mouw finds, “Kuyper is not merely interested in strengthening mediating structures; he also wants to understand that these so-called mediating structures are themselves organizational manifestations of more basic spheres of interaction” (Mouw 2012, 37).

7.2.2.3 The principle of confessional pluralism

Confessional pluralism refers to “the right of the various religious groups that make up a society to develop their own patterns of involvement in public life through their own associations – schools, political parties, labor unions, churches, and so on – to promote their views” (Spykman 1989, 79). Kuyper really holds to confessional pluralism. We can trace his argumentation through several points. Firstly, we consider his notion of Christ’s kingship and eschatological unity. As indicated before, for Kuyper, true unity of all creatures or all human beings will be accomplished by Christ at the end of history. In maintaining freedom of conscience, Kuyper exhorts us to avoid “coercion in all spiritual matters” and replace it with “persuasion” (MN, 219-220). Coercion on religious matters, for Kuyper, is Christ’s eschatological prerogative. He says, “Someday there will be coercion, when Christ descends in majesty from the heavens, breaks the anti-Christian powers with a rod of iron... He has a right to this because he knows the hearts of all and will be the judge of all. But *we do not*. To us it is only given to fight with spiritual weapons and to bear our cross in joyful discipleship” (MN, 220; my emphasis). Kuyper then affirms and encourages us to accept “the position of equality before the law” with those who hold a different worldview to us. Recalling Groen’s thinking, Kuyper asks for a guarantee of constitutional liberty for the performance of the religious duty of citizens. It means, as indicated by Spykman, that the state must secure freedom of religion for all citizens (Spykman 1989, 86). Spykman calls this kind of

tolerance, which is based on Christ's eschatological role, "eschatological tolerance" (Spykman 1989, 85). He bases his argumentation on Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. In this parable, Jesus shows to us the antithesis between "good seed" and "weeds". Jesus says, "Let both grow together until the harvest" (verse 30). Jesus then explains the meaning of the parable, "The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age" (verses 39-40). It is not our task to handle "the weeds" in this temporal period of our life.

Going back from the eschatological application of Christ's kingship to the alpha point, God created human beings with a religious faculty. Following Calvin, Kuyper also believes that all human beings are "by nature 'incurably religious'" (Spykman 1989, 81). Kuyper says, "If faith is to be a human reality in the regenerate, it must be an attitude (*habitus*) of our human nature as such; consequently, it must have been present in the first man; and it must still be discernible in the sinner" (EST, 266). We can easily see in human beings what Kuyper calls "ethical powers" and "the pistic element", how personal and sinful they are.⁸⁴ Thus, faith is unavoidably present in every person. Not only that, but "every act of thought or observation...can only be established in us by faith" (EST, 132) and "human intercourse is founded" upon faith (EST, 134). Kuyper also says, "For all knowledge also proceeds from faith of whatever kind" (SS, 486) and that "faith consecrates [a person] in the depths of his being" (SS, 467). In short, Kuyper concludes, "The person who does not believe, does not exist" (SS, 486). However, Kuyper does not see faith as only an abstract or bare set of philosophical presuppositions (Kaemingk 2018, 95). "He who cleaves to something", Kuyper writes, "holds himself fast to it, leans upon and trusts in it" (EST, 128). The notion of holding, leaning, and trusting indicates that for Kuyper, faith is "a deeply intimate, relational, and even mystical" dependency on something (Kaemingk 2018, 95). Since religion or faith "is and will always be the expression of what is central in our lives" (CGCR, 198), it is a violation of human rights and a destruction of human life whenever the state fails to provide freedom of religion for its citizens, including the freedom to express their religiosity in some social spheres.

By these lines of argument, Kaemingk considers that Kuyper is criticizing the modern claim to religious neutrality and, as noted by Wolterstorff, "'challenging the Lockean model' of the liberal public square 'at its very foundation'" (Wolterstorff 2003, 208; quoted in Kaemingk 218,

⁸⁴ In his lecture *Calvinism and Science*, Kuyper shows the important roles of faith. He says, "Every science presupposes faith in self, in our self-consciousness; presupposes faith in the accurate working of our senses; presupposes faith in the correctness of the laws of thought; presupposes faith in something universal hidden behind the special phenomena; presupposes faith in life; and especially presupposes faith in the principles, from which we proceed; which signifies that all these indispensable axioms, needed in a productive scientific investigation, do not come to us by proof, but are established in our judgment by our inner conception and given with our self-consciousness" (LC, 131).

97). The modern liberals who labelled themselves as non-religious or secular, for Kuyper were also religious. He says, “*Their dogmatics* is no different. Their ‘dogmatics’ I say, for however much they rage against dogmas, they are themselves *the most stubborn dogmatists*. A dogma, after all, is a proposition that you want others to accept on pain of being proven wrong” (MFCD, 115; my emphasis). Their dogma, which is “the modern worldview” was taught through “the Catechism of Rousseau and Darwin” (LC, 189). Kuyper mentions “the doctrinaire democrats” who held a system which is “the logical consequence of the Revolution principle of utter self-sufficiency” (OP, 91). He also calls to our attention the presence of “the sectarian school of the modernists” (OP, 192). This kind of school was the public school, which had become “a counter church” (OP, 193). If the liberals or the modernists can use the public sphere for sharing their worldview, can have their own social institutions, meanwhile they are religious, therefore, all religions must be provided the same opportunity to be involved in the public sphere and to initiate their own social associations.

If human beings cannot live without faith or religion, thus it must be logically possible that there are many worldviews or religious convictions in this present world. From his understanding of Christ’s eschatological kingship, it is clear that Kuyper acknowledges the diversity of faith in the world. Though Kuyper accepts and maintains the diversity of religious worldviews, it does not mean that he “celebrates” it (Kaemingk 2018, 102). Though Kuyper thanks God for the many types of diversity, including the diversity inside Christian churches, he does not thank God for the diversity of religious beliefs (Kaemingk 2018, 103). In more contemporary language, “confessional pluralism simply reflects the recognition that it is not the function of the state to discern the ultimate truth for those under its rule. This recognition of confessional pluralism does not, for principles pluralists, constitute *an acceptance of relativism*” (Smidt 2007, 139; my emphasis). Here, Kuyper does not agree with Calvin and with article 36⁸⁵ of the Belgic Confession (Smidt 2007, 135). Though Calvin obviously does not want to surrender the right to leave matters of religion in the hands of civil government (Calvin 1960, IV.xx.3), he encourages the civil government “to defend the sound doctrine of piety” (Calvin 1960, IV.xx.2). Here, government is exhorted to protect right doctrine which would mean punishing those who violate right doctrine. We can see Kuyper’s own explanation in detail. In his address, *Calvinism: Source and Stronghold of Our Constitutional Liberty*, Kuyper says that “differences of opinion may be tolerated” (CCOCL, 294), following Calvin’s declaration “provided the main truths of Christianity are

⁸⁵ Article 36 of the Belgic Confession reads, “And the government’s task is not limited to caring for and watching over the public domain but extends also to upholding the sacred ministry, with a view to removing and destroying all idolatry and false worship of the Antichrist; to promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and to furthering the preaching of the gospel everywhere; to the end that God may be honored and served by everyone, as he requires in his Word”.

confessed”. Kuyper explains, “It was [Calvin’s] position that no heresy be tolerated on major points of the Christian confessions but that deviations on minor matters had to be tolerated” (CSSOCL, 304). Thus, though Calvin did not tolerate heresy as deviation from major doctrines, there had been many developments since then, by Huguenots, Dutch republicans and in the American constitutions (CSSOCL, 305). By this finding, Kuyper certainly affirms the Calvinist contribution to freedom of conscience. Kuyper certainly disagrees with article 36 of the Belgic Confession. Since 1905, Kuyper had persuaded his church to remove these words from his church’s confession, and to amend the article (OP, 64; also OP, 64n8).

Kuyper’s attitude to avoid celebrating the diversity of religious faith is shown through his conviction on antithesis. There is an antithesis between sinners and believers. Of the first, he says, “The faith life of the sinner is turned away from God in *απιστία*, and attaches itself to something creaturely, in which it seeks support against God” (EST, 280-281). On the second, he says, “this faith, which was originally directed only to the manifestation of God in the soul, was now to be directed to the manifestation of God in the flesh, and thus become faith in Christ” (EST, 281). Kuyper also describes the antithesis between evolution as a worldview and Christianity (EV, 429-430, 439; cf. Bartholomew 2017, 25).⁸⁶ In short, Kuyper describes, “The Antithesis is present in our science and our art, in our jurisprudence and our pedagogy. It penetrates everything; everywhere it asserts itself in two directions” (KCA, 11-18; text translated by Van Dyke, 6). Thus, instead of prescribing the pluralism of faith, Kuyper says, “Ideological fragmentation and division is simply the reality of life lived after the fall into sin” (Kaemingk 2018, 103). The conviction of Christ’s right to eschatological unity led Kuyper to cooperate with other religious politicians (such as Catholic politician, Herman Schaepman (1844-1903). Coalitions could be entered into for political purposes but also “in particular to avert much evil” (KCA, 11-18; text translated by Van Dyke, 2). Kuyper believes, “Excessive divisions weaken and fragment our national strength”. Rather than being built on antithesis, political coalitions could be built on the conviction of God’s generous common grace. “Faith-based politics”, Bratt explains Kuyper’s reason for unfolding the doctrine of common grace in *De Heraut* over six years, “requires some common ground with people of fundamentally different convictions – at least to establish mutual intelligibility and respect for the rules of the game, and at most to build coalitions on issues of common interest” (Bratt 2013, 198).

Confessional pluralism does not believe only in the facts of the unavoidable diversity of religions in this present temporal world, but also affirms the public nature of religions. Kuyper

⁸⁶ Kuyper says, “Evolution is a newly conceived system, a newly established theory, a newly formed dogma, a newly emerged faith. Embracing and dominating all of life, it is diametrically opposed to the Christian faith and can erect its temple only upon the ruins of our Christian Confession”. See EV, 439.

believes that “every kind of faith has in itself an impulse to speak out” (LC, 131). Every faith tends to encourage the integrity of its followers which means they have the same thinking, speech, and acts, both in private and public life. Kuyper says, “You cannot be a human of one piece, a person of character and intelligence, and still allow yourself to be tempted to split your conscience in two, professing your God in one half and in the other half bowing before laws that have nothing to do with him. That does not comport with reason nor it square with your conscience” (OP, 31). Therefore, “To ask a Christian to privatize his or her faith and behave like a liberal in the public square” Kaemingk draws the logical consequence, “was no minor request, for Kuyper it was a command to convert” (Kaemingk 2018, 114). Kuyper emphasizes, “whatever you may choose, whatever you are..., you have to be it consistently... in your entire world- and life-view; in the full reflection of the whole world-picture from the mirror of your human consciousness” (LC, 134). As a conclusion, Kuyper thus envisions “a diverse public square in which faiths could advocate for their convictions, could build their institutions, and could live out their unique cultural practices” (Kaemingk 2018, 114).

7.2.2.4 The state as the sphere of spheres

The principle of sphere sovereignty places the state in its own place, as occupying its own sphere without invading other spheres. Kuyper, however, encourages the state to become “the sphere of spheres” (SS, 472). In playing this role, the state “encircles the whole extent of human life”. “Therefore, in a nobler sense”, Kuyper emphasizes, “not for itself but on behalf of the other spheres, it seeks to strengthen its arm and with that outstretched arm to resist, to try to break, any sphere’s drive to expand and dominate a wider domain”. Kuyper later gives a more detailed explanation in his lectures, saying the state has three main functions (LC, 97). The first function is whenever “different spheres clash, to compel mutual regard for the boundary-lines of each”. The second function is to “defend individuals and the weak ones, in those spheres, against the abuse of power of the rest”. The third function is to “coerce all together to bear personal and financial burdens for the maintenance of the natural unity of the State”. The state plays a vital role in applying and maintaining the principle of sphere sovereignty, each sphere needing to occupy its own place, the authority in each sphere not abusing that authority within the sphere, and each sphere being involved in the maintenance of the natural unity of the State. In Mouw’s words, the first is “the adjudication of intersphere boundary disputes”; the second is about the “intrasphere conflict”; the third is on the “transpherical patterns” (Mouw 2012, 36). Regarding the first, the state “must provide for sound mutual interaction among the various spheres, insofar as they are externally manifest, and keep them within just limits” (SS, 468). Regarding the second, by the

fact of sin, “personal life can be suppressed by the group in which one lives, the state must protect the individual from the tyranny of his own circle” (SS, 468; Kaemingk 2018, 130). Regarding the third, we can mention an example as simple as “roads”, which “[t]horoughfares are used to conduct the affairs of many spheres” (Mouw 2012, 36). The state has also to secure that no individual may be forced to join or withdraw from an association (OP, 158). He or she must have a constitutional liberty to join or to withdraw from an association any time he or she wishes without being bullied or oppressed over his or her decision. In short, the state has to fulfil its own task mainly for “promoting public justice between the communities” (Kaemingk 2018, 129; cf. Bartholomew 2017, 139). Public justice is the “enforcement of the fulfilment of public offices and the protection of persons and groups from interference from others” (Keene 2016, 74). The state has the task, referring to Proverbs 29:4, of giving “stability to the land by justice” (SS, 468). The state is “the administrator of public justice and righteousness” (Spykman 1989, 87). Referring to Psalm 72 and 82, Spykman stresses the function of the state as “the public defender of the powerless” (Spykman 1989, 87). The righteous and just God favors the poor and the weak, Spykman explains, not because they are ‘better’ or holier than the rich”, but as the Bible often shows, the poor and needy are “the victims of injustice and unrighteous discrimination” (Spykman 1989, 88). This paragraph has outlined the state’s main task regarding structural pluralism. The state also has to secure confessional pluralism, along with the application of freedom of conscience and freedom of religion in civil society and in the public sphere.

To carry out this glorious task, Kuyper approves the recognition of a suitable constitution. Kuyper says, “And here exactly lies the starting-point for that cooperation of the sovereignty of the government, with the sovereignty in the social sphere, which finds its regulation in the Constitution” (LC, 97). The Constitution or “The Law here has to indicate the rights of each, and the rights of the citizens over their own purses must remain the invincible bulwark against the abuse of power on the part of the government” (LC, 97). Kuyper also endorses a representative system that may secure the principle of sphere sovereignty. He states, “it remains the duty of those Assemblies [or the general house of representatives] to maintain the popular rights and liberties, of all and in the name of all, *with* and if need be *against* the government” (LC, 97; his emphasis). Regarding the funding of civil society, Kuyper was at one time against state funding. He could foresee how power could be influenced by money. He says, “money creates power for the one who gives over the one who receives” (SS, 478). Later, he modified his position, adopting a more favorable opinion of the state funding of civil society (Kaemingk 2018, 131). Here, Kaemingk shows how Kuyper’s position had improved: the state has to assure accessibility to social services

such as education and health care but without discriminating against religious worldviews and without imposing a single working ideology.

7.3 The building blocks of a theology of the public sphere

The principle of sphere sovereignty as thought by Kuyper will be used to interpret the philosophy of the public sphere as conceived of by Arendt and Habermas. There are two presuppositions behind this interpretation. First, as is commonly known, an interpretation of texts needs a larger framework.⁸⁷ Second, in building a theology, an interpretation from the point of view of theology can be used as a tool. Thus, the principle of sphere sovereignty becomes the framework for interpreting the philosophy of the public sphere. The aim of this interpretation is to build a theology of the public sphere. The interpretation of the public sphere from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty can start with the identification of the public sphere as a sovereign sphere. This interpretive identification comprises the building blocks of a theology of the public sphere.

By the principle of sphere sovereignty, all social spheres can be recognized as sovereign spheres (Chaplin 2011, 140).⁸⁸ Thus, on the base of certain criteria, we can recognize the public sphere as a sovereign sphere. At the outset, we should review two statements that indicate very clearly that the public sphere is a sovereign sphere. These two statements come from two different sides: one from the philosophy of the public sphere and one from the principle of sphere sovereignty. Firstly, Hardiman, an authoritative Habermasian philosopher in Indonesia, when interpreting Habermas' *Between Facts and Norms*, states that "The public sphere then is understood as an autonomous [or independent] space differentiated from the state and the market. It is autonomous since it does not receive its life neither from the administrative power nor the capitalist economics, but from its own sources" (Hardiman 2009, 135). In explaining civil life, which in some senses is the public sphere,⁸⁹ Kuyper himself states, "Our civil life, in contrast, both in family and society, and in the state and science, has a totally different origin, has a totally different meaning, obeys a totally different law, has a totally different goal, and leads to a totally different life" (PR2, 304). Here, Kuyper is affirming that the public sphere is a sovereign sphere.

⁸⁷ Robert Morgan is correct when he says, "The study of texts is always undertaken within a larger framework whether this is recognized or not. The larger framework, constituted by interpreters' interests, determines what questions are considered important, what methods are found appropriate, and what explanations are deemed satisfying" (Morgan with Barton 1988, 22; quoted in Green 1995, 411-412).

⁸⁸ Chaplin refers to J.D Dengerink's finding, in which he gathers together all the social spheres mentioned by Kuyper in the latter's various works: household, family, town or village, province, state, church, guild, charity, university, school, art academy, trade union, factory, stock exchange, business, fishery, trade, labor, commerce, technology, agriculture, hunting. See Chaplin 2011, 140.

⁸⁹ Index of "public sphere" refers to "civil life" in PR2, 479.

A sovereign sphere, according to Kuyper's principle, has its own authority, one which it does not receive from the state or from other megastructures such as the market. All social spheres have their own authority. This is common law (*lex communis*), according to Althusius. The authority ruling in a sphere comes, according to Kuyper, by the grace of God. The clear examples are a genius in the realm of science and a maestro in the realm of art. In my opinion, going by the principle of structural pluralism, Kuyper presupposes a different model of the application of authority depending on the nature of each social sphere. Thus, though the authority of each sphere relies on common law, it does not mean that there is a common or single application of authority over various social spheres.

In the dramatic public sphere as conceived by Arendt, authority is in the hands of those who are courageous enough to initiate something new, to perform great deeds and speak memorable words that set-in motion a revolutionary moment and so overturn the situation. For instance, on 31 October 1517, Martin Luther posted his 95 theses in Wittenberg, which in only two months were spread throughout Germany (Roper 2016, 96). Luther, who is also used by Arendt as an example of a revolutionary person, had great courage, daring "to mount such an assault on both the papacy and on the fundamental values of the Church" (Roper 2016, 97), by the grace of God. Luther thus made a new beginning in the history of the Christian church, namely, the rise of Protestantism. These brave people are among those who lead new movements brought into being by their extraordinary actions or words.

According to Habermas, in the political public sphere there are three kinds of people who have influence in the public sphere (BFN, 363-364) on the basis of their past reputation. First, those who have already acquired reputation and trust such as experienced elites and institutions, such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace. Second, those who have already acquired a reputation and trust in a specific public sphere, such as religious leaders and scientists, also play a role in the public sphere. Third, those who are seeking to build a reputation of trust within the public sphere try to make important contributions recognizable by the public in order to gain legitimization, using communicative action to make their contribution. They cannot use bribes but must use arguments that can "mobilize convincing reasons and shared value orientations" (Marsh 2001, 137). Apart from these groups, the dominant players in the public sphere are the major media themselves (Marsh 2001, 138). These are the major players in the ideal public sphere. While the major players in the ideal public sphere may use communicative action, in the real public sphere there are some players who try to use manipulative strategic action, such as political or commercial advertising to gain public influence (Marsh 2001, 137-138). Habermas points out that "Public opinion can be manipulated but neither publicly bought nor publicly blackmailed. This is

due to the fact that a public sphere cannot be ‘manufactured’ as one pleases” (BFN, 364). These dominant players lead the public sphere by using the forceful authority of better arguments (STPS, 36; TCA1, 24-26, 28, 36, 42; TCA2, 145; BFN, 103, 179, 182, 306). “The public audience”, Habermas emphasizes, “possesses final authority” (BFN, 364). To sum up, the major players must assume that “the practice of reaching understanding is public, is universally accessible, is free of external and internal violence, and permits only the rationally motivating force of the better argument” (BFN, 182). Habermas requires the condition of communication to provide the key to success in deliberative politics, such as the freedom to continue rational argumentation, the freedom to choose the themes of discussion, the freedom to access information, the freedom to participate in argumentation, and the freedom from inside or outside coercion in the process of reaching understanding (BFN, 230). Of course, the better arguments are comprised of the acceptance of validity claims in communicative action, namely, the satisfaction of truth, rightness, and sincerity. The dominant players who lead the public sphere with better arguments certainly do so by the common grace of God, as a genius in the scientific sphere and a maestro in the artistic sphere would also do.

Each sovereign sphere has its own ends and laws of life. In Chaplin’s words, each social sphere is “established for a particular purpose”, and has “received a divine mandate to fulfil its own function” (Chaplin 2011, 140). Each social sphere has its own – as Chaplin calls it – “inner necessity”. The public sphere is a sphere where citizens can discuss and decide their own political courses, contribute in the law-making processes and have social control over the government. It is clear that for Kuyper, “God has instituted the magistrates by reason of sin” in order to avoid “a veritable hell on earth” (LC, 81). The government is “an instrument of ‘common grace’ to thwart all license and outrage and to shield the good against the evil” (LC, 82). Nevertheless, by the very fact of sin, the government is comprised of sinful human beings who can fall into despotic ambition. Hence, Kuyper states that we “must ever *watch* against the danger which lurks, for our personal liberty, in the power of the State” (LC, 81; my emphasis). Citizens are invited to watch over the government and to inhibit any deviation of power by the government. Citizens can exercise their watch, that is social control, through the medium of the public sphere. Not only over the state: Kuyper encourages “Christians to speak up as a voice of protest as long as society failed to conform to God’s word” (Bacote 2005, 73). In the Bible we often read that prophets rebuked kings who were wrong, even in the presence of the people. The prophet Nathan rebuked King David when he committed adultery and John the Baptist rebuked King Herod Antipas who took his brother’s wife illegally. Samuel accused King Saul in the presence of the elders and the people. Saul then said to Samuel, “I have sinned; yet *honor* me now *before* the elders of my people and

before Israel” (1 Sam. 15:30; emphasis added). What Saul was requiring was only to save his face before the people (Auld 2011, 178) since he was accused publicly. Prophets represent the religious authorities, which are the part of civil society and use the public sphere to counterbalance political power.

God also invites the people “to seek the welfare of the city” in which God has placed them, and to “pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare [they] will find [their] welfare” (Jer. 29:7). Seeking the welfare of the city involves “critical engagement” of the people rather than “assimilation, revolution, and escapism” (Lundbom 2004, 351). The first means accepting whatever exists. The second means opposing whatever exists. The third means ignoring whatever exists. In terms of the public sphere, a critical engagement means that people are invited to think, contribute, and decide their political courses through the medium of the public sphere, including questioning, criticizing, developing, and changing things. This kind of public engagement is also anticipated by Kuyper himself. In *Our Program*, Kuyper expects there to be “a well-organized link between people and ruler” (OP, 112) in which the people are also invited to take “control over the future of the country” (OP, 110). The voters, Kuyper writes, may “form their opinion about where the country’s affairs ought to be headed” through the “means of conversations, public lectures, meetings, political writings, and the daily press”, and finally “give their trust only to a candidate of whom it is known in advance or during the election campaign that he will act as the mouthpiece of this opinion” (OP, 110). Here, Kuyper clearly indicates the role of the public sphere as the means of forming public opinion. This statement implies the possibility of public opinion being incorporated into law. By these lines of argument, we see God’s mandate for the public sphere.

The public sphere is a sovereign sphere in terms of its distinctive ways of working and its laws of life. In the simplest scheme, the public sphere is differentiated from the private sphere, civil society, the market, and the state. It is distinguished from the private sphere as the latter is the sphere of closeness and intimacy while the former emphasizes openness and consequently cannot avoid certain kinds of distance. The public sphere prioritizes the public or common good over private good. The public sphere is differentiated from civil society in that the latter is a network of voluntary associations outside the state and outside the market, these consisting of social spheres with their own functions and ends, while the former is a space of communication where private individuals come to discuss and where civil society may verbalize its concerns. The players in the public sphere are not limited to the personnel of civil society but also include the private individuals who do not belong to any voluntary associations or social institutions. The public sphere is distinguished from the market or business enterprises since the latter emphasize

the role of money or capital, whereas the former, in its ideal form, must be free from the power of money. The public sphere is also differentiated from the state since the former does not have political power and must be free from it. The public sphere does not have a bureaucratic-administrative role and cannot articulate laws and public policies.

The public sphere has its own model of power, namely the communicative model. Instead of the command-obedience model which is usually employed in the government and military realms, the public sphere uses the communicative model of power, meaning that power is used with respect to reciprocal others, to act in concert and reach agreement. Here, we can connect this kind of power with freedom. While the government monopolizes force and violence (HC, 31) – a Weberian view of the state – the public sphere emphasizes the freedom to initiate something new other than the existing choices and the freedom to take a yes or no position. Thus, the public sphere accentuates non-coercive communication and expects an ideal speech situation.

In the public sphere there is no hierarchy as exists in the church, the government, the military, or other institutions. The only authority in the public sphere is the forceful authority of better arguments. The public sphere employs order and network rather than hierarchy. There are no social ranks or institutional hierarchy in the public sphere. The public sphere is also differentiated from the realms of laboring or art, which usually require that workers or artists work alone. Though there are thousands of workers in a factory, they all have to labor alone without speaking to each other in order to reach their productivity targets or efficiency ratio. Though there are many people working in art, they mostly have to work alone in order to concentrate, find inspiration, and produce a beautiful work of art. Solitude sometimes becomes one of the greatest needs of people working in art. The public sphere, however, requires the presence of reciprocal others.

By these lines of interpretive identification, it is clear that as a sovereign sphere, the public sphere receives its distinctive nature, sovereignty, laws of life and so forth from God. Hence, this interpretive identification indicates two theoretical facts. First, it opens up opportunities for a broader and deeper interpretation of more elements of the public sphere based on the principle of sphere sovereignty. Second, it shows the great need of articulating a theology of the public sphere. If the public sphere as a sovereign sphere receives its sovereignty from God, it means that the elements of the public sphere can be interpreted theologically. This interpretation includes and results in the legitimacy of its existence, the correction of its weaknesses, the appreciation of its strengths, and the theological expansion of its implications. We are now moving on to the construction of a theology of the public sphere, which is an interpretation of the philosophy of Arendt and Habermas from the perspective of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty.

Chapter 8

THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE PUBLIC SPHERE

8.1 Introduction

The theology of the public sphere, in my reconstruction, is built through the interpretation of the philosophy of the public sphere as conceived of by Arendt and Habermas from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty as thought by Kuyper. Thus, in this chapter, I will take several steps. First, I will interpret their thinking in understanding and appreciation, criticism and correction, and give a complementary relation from the perspective of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. Second, I will articulate a theology of the public sphere, based on a Kuyperian interpretation of the Arendtian/Habermasian philosophy of the public sphere. In articulating the theological interpretations and reflections, I will primarily use Kuyper's theology but also other theologians, both Kuyperians and other Calvinist/Reformed theologians, including contemporary theologians, as well as some theologians from other traditions. Third, I will implement these theological interpretations and reflections on the public sphere for the further development of public theology, in the sense of a theology of the public sphere. Key themes that thus will be discussed are among others the relation between the societal role and theological basis of the private sphere, of civil society, and of the public sphere, a theological assessment of the threats that all spheres are facing, especially the public sphere, and a theological assessment of the role of religion in the public sphere.

8.2 The private sphere

From the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, Arendt's rejection of the private sphere and her complete separation of the public sphere from the private sphere is not acceptable since all social spheres including the family have an equal dignity and are interdependent in a complex organism. Arendt departs from the ancient Greek view of *oikos* as the sphere of necessity, labor, and force/violence and thus has a negative view of the private sphere. Habermas has a more favorable and a more consistent view of the private sphere than Arendt. With his historical sketch of the conjugal bourgeois family Habermas views it as an "audience-oriented intimate sphere" where rational-critical debates occur, hence coming to a conclusion that "a public sphere evolved from the very heart of the private sphere itself" (STPS, 159-160). Here, the descriptive condition of the private sphere in the modern era is totally different from the descriptive condition of it in the ancient Greek period in which the former showed interdependency between the private sphere and the public sphere. Thus, we cannot use the ancient

Greek notion of *oikos* as a prescriptive portrait of the private sphere as Arendt attempts to do. We also cannot fully be satisfied with an instrumental paradigm of the private sphere as thought by Habermas. Habermas uses the private sphere instrumentally, namely, the family *only* for the sake of the public sphere. Rather, we need a more fundamental conception of the private sphere with a universal or general implication.

A more fundamental conception of social sphere including the family is articulated by Kuyper as we have seen in the previous chapter. Before engaging more in detail with such conception, I now first want to highlight Kuyper's concept of society as a complex organism in connection with Arendt's institutional separation of the private and the public sphere. Kuyper believes that human society is like a "cogwheel" in which all social spheres "engage each other, and precisely through that interaction emerges the rich, multifaceted multiformity of human life" (SS, 467-468). Kuyper believes that God created human beings with a rich faculty for social interaction inside a sphere and also through the interdependency of social spheres. Thus, it is impossible for a social sphere such as the public sphere to flourish truly without having any connection with the private sphere. First of all, we have to look upon Kuyper's conviction that God created human beings in a social relationship with others in social associations. For Kuyper, the basic unit of society is not the individual as thought by the French Revolution and political liberalism. Rather, it is the family (OP, 143). Each individual is unavoidably bound to a family by birth. The deep ground of Kuyper's conviction on this matter, and of his principle of sphere sovereignty in general, is his fully trinitarian view of God (Heslam 2002, 25). In Kuyper's own words, the root and dominating principle of sphere sovereignty is not "soteriologically, justification by faith, but in the widest sense cosmologically, *the Sovereignty of the Triune God over the whole Cosmos*, in all its spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible" (LC, 79; his emphasis). As a Calvinist, Kuyper bases his thinking on the sovereignty of the Triune God. The ontological basis of the interdependency of social spheres then, is indeed the principle of *perichoresis* (divine interpersonal and mutual cooperation). This principle "points to a continuous mutual penetration and surrounding (Gk. *perichōreō*) of Father, Son, and Spirit; they totally submerge in one another...This is a beautiful way of saying that uniqueness and unity do not necessarily diminish each other. The biblical background for the theory of perichoresis is evident" (van der Kooi & van den Brink 2017, 96). I will return later to discussing this principle in more detail.

The perichoretic relationship of the Triune God provides a social ontology that human beings live in "a plurality of associations" and participate in "a divinely ordained network of life relationships" (Spykman 1992, 245). In his address, *The Problem of Poverty*, Kuyper even

mentioned this principle, namely, that human beings indeed live in “a God-willed community, a living, human organism”. It means that biblical teaching opposes individualist and collectivist anthropologies. This does not mean that Arendt and Habermas accept these anthropologies; indeed, they find problems in them. While individualism presupposes human beings to be atomistic individuals, collectivism treats human beings as mere gears, bolts or screws in a larger societal mechanism. While the former does not do justice to the social facts of human beings living in social associations such as the family and other kinds of communities, the latter puts human beings under the control of megastructures such as the state, the market, and the church. Instead of individualism or collectivism, the Bible advocates “a pluralist view of communal living” (Spykman 1992, 247). This principle is also expressed by Althusius’ term “associations in consociation”.

Biblical social thought in Kuyper’s line requires human beings to live in a community and each community to be interdependent on each other. Arendt’s total separation of the private sphere from the public sphere is in contradiction to this principle. Instead of following the ancient Greek notion of *oikos*, rather, we have to build another fundamental and firm principle of the private sphere that might contribute to the public sphere. Kuyper gives space for the family to play its role in contributing to the public sphere. For instance, Kuyper discusses the role of the Christian family as nurturing Christians to act in the public sphere. Christians are strengthened to speak and act in the public sphere on “their own institutional base” to “nourish and sustain such speaking and acting” (Wolterstorff 2004, 279). The institutional base, as Kuyper meant it, is made up of Christian families, schools, universities, and so forth. Christian parents in particular “have a duty when they raise their children to see to it that a consciousness is awakened in them that matches Christ and has him as its center” (PR2, 449).

Kuyper even deepens his view on the private sphere by introducing the “sovereignty of the conscience” which ideally is nurtured in the private sphere, namely, in the sphere of the family. The sovereignty of the conscience is the sovereignty of the individual, which has its place in the principle of sphere sovereignty. In Kuyper’s view, the sovereignty of the conscience is “the palladium of all personal liberty” (LC, 107). Liberty of speech and liberty of worship, for instance, come out of the sovereignty of conscience (LC, 108). The sovereignty of conscience, as part of the principle of sphere sovereignty, has never been subjected to human beings but “always and ever to God Almighty” (LC, 107). It means that each individual person has to be responsible to God for his or her conscience. Hence, neither church nor the state is allowed to interfere or force an individual person to make decisions such as joining a religion or believing in a conviction. The sovereignty of the conscience, by which we speak out in the public sphere, is firstly nurtured in

the private sphere, namely, in the family. This nurture entails nurture for civil life, which comprises all social spheres such as society, the state, the arts, the sciences, and so forth (PR2, 301, 449). Thus, for Kuyper, the restoration of democracy in a nation must be an organic restoration and it must start in the family (MN, 225).

Empowering the private sphere, i.e., the family, has implications for public theology. First, public theology should engage with all private issues, though unfortunately Arendt does not support this in the public sphere. All forms of violence in the private sphere, such as child abuse, sexual abuse, or domestic violence, however, are politically and publicly relevant to be discussed.

Second, the family has a vital role to play in readying individuals for involvement in and contribution to several social spheres, including the public sphere. Public theology should, then, come into the public sphere bringing primarily theological arguments to strengthen its position and empower the role of the family. At the same time, public theology should maintain the ontological identity of the family as “intimate and familiar companionship, mutual love, fidelity, patience, mutual service, communication of all goods and right (*jus*)” (Althusius 1995, 57). This understanding of the identity of the family is also found by Habermas in the bourgeois conjugal family, though in an underdeveloped and more instrumental view. The family should not be reduced to a mere instrument serving political purposes as it was in the French Revolution. Though apparently pursuing the ideal of “more egalitarian and affectionate families”, the French Revolution was trying, in fact, to lead French citizens to make their homes into “sites of patriotic regeneration and to educate their children in the principle of citizenship” (Desan 2013, 470). Indeed, revolutionary culture was attacking the very integrity of the family. In opposition to this spirit, Kuyper articulated the principle of sphere sovereignty, which maintains the integrity of each social sphere by avoiding an instrumental approach. Third, public theology should fight to protect the family as a mediating structure from the invasion of megastructures such as the state and the market, which work through the power of politics and the power of money; this they can do by being critical of such invasions. Here, Kuyper, Arendt and Habermas are in the same camp. Three of them, unfortunately, will be different in their thinking on civil society.

8.3 Civil society

Arendt’s struggle with mass society and the modern condition of the rise of the social, along with her conception of heroic or aesthetic politics barred her from developing a more systematic and mature conception of civil society. After being influenced by the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, she later expressed sympathy for the principle of the council system but did not discuss in depth the principle of civil society. That she left underdeveloped her conception of civil

society is unfortunate. Habermas has a more systematic and mature conception of civil society than Arendt. Nevertheless, Habermas places civil society in the periphery of the public sphere. Both Arendt's underdeveloped conception and Habermas' marginalization of civil society are unfortunate since civil society is of vital importance for the public sphere. Not only is civil society the most important player in the public sphere in facing up to the state and the market, civil society also can define public or common good over against private good. In particular, the vital importance of civil society to the public sphere leads Michael Edwards to equate the former with the latter. He says, "In its role as the 'public sphere', civil society becomes the arena for argument and deliberation as well as for association and institutional collaboration" (Edwards 2004, 55). In general, as has been proven historically, civil society has fostered the development of Western societies by providing "the courage of self-criticism and constant moral renewal" (Buijs 2015, 36). The terms used sound very close to the idea of the public sphere. Thus, the presence of "a free civil society" spoken of by Govert J. Buijs is not only a must but also, more importantly, a "precious gift" for every society; this is not only for essential reasons but also for pragmatic reasons in "making steps forward in the constant development, the permanent march toward a humane and morally engaged society".

From the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, Arendt's lack of a mature conception of civil society and Habermas' misposition of civil society are deficient. Civil society in the Kuyperian worldview is predominant, not just because civil society is the place for nurturing individuals before they come to the public sphere; more fundamentally, civil society is the realm in which human beings may flourish and state sovereignty be guarded. Civil society has an ontological equality compared to state sovereignty since God delegates his sovereignty not only to the state but also to other social spheres.

8.3.1 Civil society and the crises in the public sphere

The empowerment of civil society is important for facing the crises of the public sphere which Arendt and Habermas lament. In civil society it is important to define what is the meaning of public concern in contrast to private interest. Arendt criticizes the invasion of private interests into the public sphere because of her notion of the rise of the social. Not only that, the empowerment of civil society through the principle of sphere sovereignty as proposed by Kuyper is the best way of facing the excessive use of state authority as exhibited in Bismarck's octopus-like power, Napoleon's almost absolute authority, and more importantly the totalitarian governments of the twentieth century. The empowerment of civil society can have an impact on the public sphere since critics of civil society resist state power through the public sphere. Besides

that, in speaking of world alienation Arendt criticizes the accumulation of wealth; this problem could be solved through the empowerment of civil society as implied in Kuyper's principle. Arendt's situation is different from the contemporary situation. Arendt mourned the accumulation of wealth in that it creates a society of laborers who have no possibility of political action as she conceived of it. Today, the accumulation of wealth through e-commerce and online business does not necessarily imply the creation of a society of laborers. Nevertheless, the empowerment of civil society by the principle of sphere sovereignty encourages the emergence and development of various social spheres, which fit human nature and ends and set up social controls to avoid wild capitalism invading society. By being empowered in this way, citizens are well prepared in their various social spheres to be public participants capable of delivering memorable words and performing great deeds such as political actions.

While civil society can play a pivotal role for facing up to the accumulation of wealth and its negative effects, it can also seem to face the crises of the refeudalization of the post-bourgeois public sphere and the colonization of the lifeworld. In his criticism of the refeudalization of society, Habermas even suggested a reorganization of all institutions or organizations involved in the public sphere, that must be "radically subjected to the requirements of publicity" (see section 5.8.2). Habermas' institutional solution to this kind of crisis of the public sphere seems very similar to the empowerment of civil society as expressed by the Kuyperians. Nevertheless, reorganizing the inner structure of social spheres according to the principle of publicity is likely to be simply an instrumental solution and not an intrinsic or essential one. Though the principle of publicity might secure the presence of debate in the public sphere that is public, rational and critical, in my opinion, this is only external pressure. A more radical solution could be found in an internal reorganization of all related institutions or organizations according to their own *telos*, their own fittedness to human nature and human ends. For instance, whenever a newspaper functions properly according to its essential principles, it will provide information and a public debate that is both rational and critical. The conglomeration of the media in the industrialization of the public sphere can be resisted by empowering civil society by the principle of sphere sovereignty. The empowerment of civil society is important not only for bringing solutions to those crises but also to avoid the usage of system integration through what Habermas calls the "administrative and monetary steering mechanism". The empowerment of civil society marks the primacy of social integration through agreement-oriented communication among various social spheres. Not only that, the empowerment of civil society is also important for avoiding the use of the public sphere for representative publicness. Civil society asks for public rational critical debate and also for accountability and responsibility on the part of royal persons and public authorities

in their use of public money in buying luxuries and showing them off in the public sphere. The empowerment of civil society by the principle of sphere sovereignty has its ontological root in the theological fact that human beings are created in the image of God.

8.3.2 Civil society and the image of God

The root of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty which empowers civil society, is the biblical teaching on the image of God and common grace which we are dealing with here in depth. The doctrine of the image of God as the root of the principle of sphere sovereignty which strengthens civil society is important for mainly in two things: firstly, as the image of God human beings are created with various capabilities and relationships that can be accommodated and expressed in and through social spheres; and next, that as the image of God, God the Creator delegated his sovereignty over human beings. Kuyper's example of a genius and a maestro as being authoritative in the realm of science and the realm of art shows that human beings are created in the image of God with reasoning and artistic capabilities.

Before looking at Kuyper's doctrine of the image of God, we first have to see Herman Bavinck's preliminary clarification. He emphasizes that in accordance with scriptural teaching and the Reformed confessions, we have to highlight the idea that the human being is the image of God; he does not only bear or have that image (Bavinck 2004, 554). This idea implies two things, that "God himself, the entire deity, is the archetype of man", and that "this image extends to the whole person" (Bavinck, 2004, 554-555). By the first point, Bavinck means that "image" refers not just to one person of the Godhead, but that it is "much better for us to say that the Triune being, God, is the archetype of man", though "we, having been conformed to the image of Christ" are becoming like God. By the second point, Bavinck means that human beings are the image of God in their total existence, "in soul and body, in all his faculties and powers, in all conditions and relations".

Kuyper believes that although all creatures manifest God's glory, and that all creatures are good since they are the "effect of His counsel, for they embodied a divine thought", the creation of the human being is "special, more exalted, more glorious" since the human being is created as the image and likeness of God (WHS, 219). The human being as the image of God not only embodies a divine thought and is a manifestation of divine omnipotence but moreover is "a concentration of his essential features as to make it the very impress of his being" (WHS, 219-220). "The image must be", Kuyper writes, "therefore, a concentration of the features of God's being, by which He expresses Himself" (WHS, 221). This concentration of God's features means that the human being is "a reflection of God" (WHS, 223). As the image who reflects God's being,

the human being is not created only in original righteousness but also in “his being, his nature, and upon his human existence” (WHS, 223). Thus, we have to distinguish between human nature and human direction (WHS, 225). Regarding the direction, a human being was created with original righteousness. Regarding his nature, the human being was created as the image of God with reference to the attributes, states, and qualities of human beings communicated by God (WHS, 230).

In general, Kuyper refers to Ursinus’ list (WHS, 229). As the image of God, the human being is created with several aspects. First, “the immaterial substance of the soul with its gifts of knowledge and will”. The centrality of the soul takes up Calvin’s conviction that the human soul is “the proper seat of [God’s] image” (Calvin 1960, I.xv.3). Second, “all in-created knowledge of God and of His will”. We can think of Calvin’s notion of the sense of the divine and the seed of religion. Third, “the holy and righteous inclination of the will, and moving of the heart, i.e., the perfect righteousness” which refers to the direction of the human being before the Fall. In the state of integrity, the image of God was presented “in the light of the mind, in the uprightness of the heart, and in the soundness of all part” (Calvin 1960, I.xv.4). According to Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10, the original creature of God had pure knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Fourth, “the holy bliss, holy peace, and abundance of all enjoyment”. Fifth, “the dominion of creature”. This list is certainly not a comprehensive one since it does not mention certain aspects such as the trinitarian interpersonal relationship reflected in the human being.

Other voices may enrich Kuyper’s insights in this respect. Compared to Kuyper, Stephen Tong constructs a more comprehensive list of human meanings of the image of God, namely, the sense of spirituality, the sense of morality, the sense of rationality, the sense of eternity, the sense of sovereignty or dominion, the sense of creativity, the sense of perfection, the sense of relationship, the sense of fellowship, and the sense of hope (Tong 2007, IA: 145-162). In short, “The idea of *imago Dei* covers human nature in its total extent and in all its parts” (Spykman 1992, 224). In Herman Bavinck’s words, the image of God exists, firstly “in the essence of our humanity: with soul and body as substrate”; secondly, “in the capacities and abilities of that essence: knowing, feeling, willing, and acting”; and thirdly, “in the properties and gifts of that essence and their capabilities: holiness, knowledge, righteousness” (Bavinck 2019, 36). The variety of human institutions as shown by the notion of civil society is based on the fact that the human being is created as the image of God with various faculties, which can flourish in and through the various social spheres.

Based on these explanations, we can draw some implications for civil society. For instance, the sense of spirituality requires religious institutions or associations to become

containers for accommodating and developing this sense. The sense of rationality brings out a need for the realm of education both in schools and universities. The sense of creativity asks for associations or academies of art. The sense of relationship or fellowship encourages human beings to seek and to build a family. In each social sphere, God delegates his sovereignty through the persons to whom are given the special gifts of God. These persons thus become the authority within each social sphere.

The image of God in human beings is not limited to nature and direction but also consists in a relationship with God, with our fellow human beings and with creation. Bavinck says, “People cannot be viewed loosely as mere individuals; human beings are not *atoms* or *numbers*” (Bavinck 2019, 49; my emphasis). The relational approach even sometimes is considered as doing “most justice to the full biblical witness” (van der Kooi & van den Brink 2017, 265). Actually, the first human being is created for this threefold relation.⁹⁰ The creation story of Genesis 2 gives full attention to this threefold relation: with God (verses 8-17), with creation (verses 15, 18-20) and with fellow human beings, one with another (verses 21-25). In verses 8-17, God gives the man food and habitat, the task of managing nature, and just one rule, not to take and eat the forbidden fruit. In relation with nature, verse 15 draws the calling for the man to cultivate and to preserve the garden. Verses 18-20 show how the man rules over nature by naming the animals. Genesis 2:18, 21-25 presents how God provides a suitable helper for the man, how the man loves the woman beautifully, and how they live together as one flesh, naked but not ashamed.

We will now discuss firstly the relationship between the human being and God and between the human being and nature. Being the image of God firstly speaks of the relation between the human being and God. The place of this relation to God is central in the Bible’s teaching on humanity (Kärkkäinen 2015, 275). The relationship between the human being as the image of God and God himself is fundamental to Christian anthropology; an anthropology in which it is lacking can even be categorized as anti-Christian (Hoekema 1986, 76). Romans 11:36 speaks of “God as the source (*ek*), sustainer (*dia*), and goal (*eis*) of all things” (Moo 1996, 743), meaning that the human being receives physical and spiritual life from God, is preserved by the Creator and tries to please him. In Luther’s famous understanding of *coram Deo*, the human being lives in God’s sight. Tong’s famous definition says, “Man is not what he thinks, what he eats, what he gains, what he behaves, what he feels, but man is what he reacts before God”. No wonder, the human being lives as one who is “primarily responsible to God” (Hoekema 1986, 75). In short,

⁹⁰ In Kärkkäinen’s study, the relational interpretation of the image of God came forward at the time of the Reformation. See Kärkkäinen 2015, 274.

the very basic understanding of humanity as being in the state of the image of God is “relatedness to God” (Kärkkäinen 2015, 280).

The human relation with God, in Bavinck’s analysis, is distinctive in comparison to animals. He says, “An animal exists before God in a state of bondage, a human person in a state of dependence” (Bavinck 2019, 50). Bavinck calls this peculiar relation to God “religion”. Religion is an attempt “to know the excellencies of God” which “nurtures piety, *pietas*, reverence, and love for God” (Bavinck 2019, 51). Religion involves “knowledge and activity (trusting, believing, willing faith)” (Bavinck 2019, 53). In a more complete definition, Bavinck says, “Formally, religion is the distinctive relationship or position of human beings to God, expressing itself in all life, and based on the distinctive relation of God to human beings” (Bavinck 2019, 59).

Human beings’ rule over nature is another essential part of being the image of God (Hoekema 1986, 78), as Middleton’s careful exegetical study also proves. In Genesis 2:15, man is called to cultivate nature. The Hebrew term *lā-‘ā-ḥā-dāh* is translated by the New American Standard Version as “to cultivate”. Wenham says that this is a common verb usually meaning “cultivating the soil” (Wenham 1987, 67). The word “cultivate” comes from the Latin word *colere*, which is also the root of the word “culture”. No wonder then, the task of cultivating nature is called the “cultural mandate”. Hoekema defines it as “the command to develop a God-glorifying culture” (Hoekema 1986, 79). While Hoekema gives only a short definition, Spykman provides an expanded one. Spykman defines it as the calling “to open up and to develop (“have dominion” and “subdue”, which means rendering tender, loving, stewardly care) the creational resources along multifaceted lines – farming, linguistics, architecture, dogmatics – as God’s representatives, to his glory, and as a blessing to our fellowmen” (Spykman 1992, 109). In my opinion, by creating the human being as the image of God, God allows for continuation in preserving and developing nature. In other words, God creates, the image of God preserves and develops nature.

Moving on from discussing the relation of the human being with God and with nature, I will now focus on the relationship between fellow human beings. The human being is the image of the Triune God. It means that the image of God in an individual human being cannot be separated from others. God says, “It is not good that man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18). This is God’s only negative evaluation alongside seven positive evaluations (“And God saw everything...it was (very) good”). This means that the creation of Adam as the image of God would not be complete without the creation of Eve. Thus, God created Eve for Adam. The creation of woman (Eve) did not come about to solve “the feeling of loneliness of the man”, but “to establish the *deeply social nature* of humanity” (Kärkkäinen 2015, 299; my emphasis). The designation of the woman as a “helper” should not necessarily be understood as “subordination”, since the two terms are not

synonymous. Even God is our helper (e.g. Ps. 54:4; Heb. 13:6). Moreover, the Hebrew word *‘ezer* (helper) is masculine in gender though here it is used to refer to a woman (Hamilton 1990, 175). The masculine gender ensures her equality.⁹¹ Genesis 2:18 tells us that man and woman were created by God so that human beings “might cultivate mutual society between themselves” (Calvin 2009, I:128). We can connect this verse with Genesis 1:27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”. Barth understands the last clause of this verse to be the interpretation of the previous sentence “in the image of God he created him” (Barth 1958, 184). This line of argument means that for Barth, the uniqueness of human beings compared to brute beasts resides in the fact that God bestowed on human beings “the image of God in the uniqueness of his plurality as male and female” (Barth 1958, 188). For Barth, the image of God lies in the “fundamental relational character” or the “interpersonal, intercommunal character” (Middleton 2005, 49). Though appreciating Barth’s insight on human relationality, Middleton makes two criticisms of his interpretation of Genesis 1:27 on linguistic points (Middleton 2005, 49-50). First, in Hebrew poetic parallelism, the third line does not usually repeat the previous idea. Instead, the third line progressively introduces a new idea. This means that “male and female he created them” cannot be taken to be the interpretation of the previous line “in the image of God he created him” and therefore the third line cannot be understood to refer to the essence of the image of God. Second, the term “male” (*zā-kār*) and “female” (*naqēbāh*) are biological not social terms so cannot endorse the idea of human relationality. Noah uses these terms for the animals that were brought into the ark. The social terms used in Genesis 2 are *īš* (man) and *’iššāh* (woman). In spite of the exegetical problem in Barth’s interpretation, his notion of the interpersonal relational dimension of the image of God remains valuable.

This relational character and notion of fellowship as emphasized in Genesis 1:27 and 2:18 bring us to a consciousness of our being in a community. God did not only create a single individual person but he created *them*, he created a community with unity and diversity. In Arendt’s words, God created plurality with equality and distinction. According to the Trinitarian paradigm, the unity and equality of human beings relates to the image of God in human essence. Diversity or distinction is diversity of gender. This tiny new community is a reflection of the Triune God, firstly in a family then in a society; in it human beings form “rich, many-dimensional personal relations among them”, to borrow Poythress’ expression on Trinitarian relationships

⁹¹ It is interesting that in Kärkkäinen’s finding, Enlightenment philosophy does not have the “resources to rehabilitate the equality of women”. Connected to “his denigration of the body as opposed to the soul” and using the notion of “the true self”, Descartes prefers the “hierarchic subordination” though in principle he opens up “the life or reason for all of humanity”. Kant advocates the notion of complementarity. Feminine qualities such as beauty, compassion, sympathy, and feeling complement masculine qualities such as reflectiveness, learning, and profundity. See Kärkkäinen 2015, 299.

(Poythress 2011, 25). In short, “God has impressed his Trinitarian character on our relationships” (Poythress 2011, 31).

In a newly published book (based on manuscripts dating from the end of the 19th century), *Reformed Ethics*, Bavinck explores the rich, many-dimensional relationships among human beings. There are four types, namely, “relationships that center on the family”, “relationships existing in society and by virtue of society”, “relationships of, in and for the sake of the state”, and “relationships of and for the sake of humanity” (Bavinck 2019, 60-61). The first three relationships are clear, but it is interesting to look closely at the fourth. Bavinck says, “[H]umanity in its successive generations is a unity, an organism to which we are related”. In the context of this book those relationships, particularly the fourth, imply several ethical imperatives, which are outside the objectives of this piece of research.

The threefold relation of human beings as the image of God defines civil society. The relation with God is expressed through religious associations. The relation with fellow human beings is expressed through social associations. The relation with other creatures is expressed through a wide range of associations set up by different interest groups, environmental activists, animal lovers and so forth. The cultural mandate as part of the human relation with nature enriches the notion of civil society in that the human being is called on to cultivate nature, and this is carried out in the various fields of science. These fields of science can flourish not only through universities but also through research centers and associations of scholars with the same expertise.

Human capabilities and relationships as the image of God supply the ontological foundation for various associations outside the state and the market; their being included in society is meant to do “justice to the dignity of the human person” (Woldring 2000, 176). It means that “particular social structures” are “designed to give organized communal expression” for “the specific human capacity” (Chaplin 2011, 272). Such “normative validity” is principally grounded in “the created imperatives of human nature itself” (Chaplin 2011, 273). The comprehensive human capacities and relationships, in my opinion, imply not only the plurality of social associations but also the complementarity or interdependency of those social structures (cf. Chaplin 2011, 275). The ontological implications of human nature and relationships on the basis of social structures and their interdependency within civil society must be understood in the framework of the distinction between civil and non-civil or even anti-civil associations (Anderson 2011, 151). In such cases we cannot apply total free inclusion. Dog-training clubs, hunting clubs or shooting clubs can be categorized as non-civil associations (Alexander 2006, 98). Religious and racial-hatred associations can be categorized as anti-civil associations (Alexander 2006, 35). In particular, anti-civil associations can become a threat to civil society. To reduce the threat to civil society from

such anti-civil associations, we could follow Kuyper's lead in proposing that the state be the sphere of spheres responsible for keeping each social association in its proper place and defending weaker parties in social associations from the tyranny of the stronger and the depredations of hate-mongers.

Philosopher Govert J. Buijs articulates a definition of civil society that can be identified as a partial implementation of the ontological understanding as mentioned by Woldring and Chaplin above. Buijs defines civil society as "the concept now emerging, (that) points to a wide range of actions...that people, individually but most often together, undertake in order *to care for or heighten the quality of (each) others life or of the world*" (Buijs 2005, 21; my emphasis). In a more formal way, he says it "in a broad sense is a society that maintains public-institutional space for the realization of care-values". This definition presupposes two important aspects, firstly, the presence of an institutional differentiation which at its best distinguishes civil society from the state, the market, and the private sphere; and secondly the presence of values which people hold and follow: the "personal responsibility for the quality of life of others, especially those who are weak and not able to fully stand up for themselves" (Buijs 2005, 22). In an explicit definition, Buijs explains that "care-values" are the "values that express the intention of mutually and if necessary asymmetrically recognizing, preserving, and promoting the specific dignity and integrity of other human beings and of other partners in being (like animals and the environment)" (Buijs 2005, 25). Buijs gives examples of the Kantian formulation of the human being as an end and never as a means, and the Christian notion of *agape* as examples of care-values. The value system diametrically opposed to care-values is "agonistic values". Agonistic values are "those values that express the intention to win a game, contest or struggle, and in which the outcomes are perceived as a zero-sum game (although sometimes at the end of the day the situation might accidentally turn out to be a win-win solution). Agonistic values are therefore very much oriented toward the desired results" (Buijs 2005, 25). This value system certainly tends to use manipulation, to prioritize results over ways and means, and essentially to use the framework of "power-relationships" (Buijs 2005, 26). Care-values are embodied in institutions such as hospitals, rehabilitation centers, nurseries, orphanages, and also in other social institutions such as educational and religious institutions and associations, art academies and associations, and so forth (cf. Buijs 2005, 29). The care-values understanding of civil society is more needed especially in term of the fact that human being has fallen into sin.

Though the human being has fallen into sin, this threefold relationship and human nature are not completely gone. Kuyper differentiates between the direction and nature of human beings as the image of God (WHS, 223). While the direction, the original righteousness, was "completely

and absolutely lost” and the human being fell into sin, the human “being, his nature, and his human existence...cannot disappear entirely; for, however deeply sunk, fallen man remains man” (WHS, 223). Human nature remains, but the direction has changed to unrighteousness. “[T]he being of the instrument”, Kuyper writes, “though terribly marred, remained the same, to work in the wrong direction, i.e., in unrighteousness” (WHS, 225). By the loss of original righteousness comes the loss of the relationship with the true God, though the religious character of the human being still exists. As indicated by the Synod of Dort, all aspects of the human being are totally depraved. Romans 3:10-18 describes this damage.⁹²

8.3.3 Civil society and common grace

Human beings as the image of God having fallen into sin, human capacities and relationships are not spared from sin. Nonetheless, the Bible teaches that there is common grace. The doctrine of common grace could explain Kuyper’s finding that though the world is totally corrupted it still exceeds believers’ expectations (van der Kooi 1999, 96; cf. CG2, 10). Common grace, in Cornelis van der Kooi’s analysis of Kuyper’s doctrine, “has its deepest ground and meaning in the honor of God, in His sovereign will” (van der Kooi 1999, 98). Common grace, in my opinion, is poured out to glorify God’s supremacy over Satan and sin and to protect God’s creatures. Kuyper says, “For note well that grace not only restores the breach and heals the wound, but it applies the evil of Satan and the sin of man, directly against the will of Satan and the design of man, as a means to raise the self-glorification of God to an even higher level” (CG2, 133). Hence, “pure wickedness and corruption” would not “dominate the world” (van der Kooi 1999, 96). Common grace is an “instrument to halt the disintegrative effects of sin” and “to make possible the actualization of Particular Grace” (van der Kooi 1999, 97). Not only that, common grace is given by God to foster the development of all the many aspects of earthly life, such as culture, science, technology, society, politics, and so forth. Richard Mouw, in introducing Kuyper’s volume on common grace, celebrates this beautifully, “While our radical sinfulness poses a threat to the unfolding of God’s creating purposes, the Creator still *loves* his creation, and in his sovereign goodness he will not

⁹² First, the legal status of every human being is unrighteous or self-unjustifiable (verse 10). Second, as said in verse 11, the pollution of sin results in the loss of “the right apprehension of divine truth” or the “right apprehension or spiritual discernment of divine things” (Hodge 1996, 122). Here, sin affects human understanding and the human quest for the true God. Third, since no one acts with kindness (verse 12), sinners have “put off every feeling of humanity” and have lost “the best bond of mutual concord” among human beings (Calvin 2009, XIX:99). Fourth, verses 13-14 use metaphors of communication (throats, tongues, lips, and mouths). These metaphors are “vivid description of unrighteous communication” (Jewett 2007, 262). This unrighteousness is shown through the terms used by Paul such as “deceive”, “cursing”, and “bitterness”. These terms indicate the contamination, viciousness and violence in human utterance or speech (Fitzmyer 1992, 335-336). Fifth, the metaphors “feet”, “paths”, and “way” combined with “blood”, “ruin and misery”, and the loss of “the way of peace” in verse 15-17 describe the “destructive activities” and “wretchedness” that follow (Morris 1988, 168). Violence does not only fill human speech but also human deeds (Fitzmyer 1992, 336). Sixth, the lack of fear of God as written in verse 18 concludes the series and at a time plays the role of the “root error” of sinners (Moo 1996, 204).

allow human rebellion to bring great harm to that which he loves” (Mouw 2016, xxi; my emphasis). In Kuyper’s view, common grace reaches every place where sin and its destructive effects are found. “Common grace extends”, Kuyper says, “over our entire human life, in all its manifestations” (CG1, 497-498). Kuyper thus mentions several aspects as examples of the operation of common grace: “order and law”, “prosperity and affluence”, “healthy development of strength and heroic courage of a nation”, “the development of science and art”, the “inventiveness in enterprise and commerce”, the empowerment of “the domestic and moral life”, and the protection of “religious life against excessive degeneration”.

The best biblical example of common grace, especially in relation to civil society, is recorded in Genesis 4. This record is very important and interesting since it is written only a chapter after the human fall into sin and God’s punishment that follows. The consequence of Adam’s sin continues in his eldest son, Cain, and shows up in the act of killing his brother, Abel (Gen. 4). Cain is cursed (Gen. 4:11). This anathema is a “serious development”, since in Genesis 3 only the ground and the serpent are cursed and human beings are not (Wenham 1987, 107). Here we see the transmission of sin and the spread of destructive punishment. Common grace, however, is provided. Though Cain is “banished from the cultivated area” which is his “original home” (Wenham 1987, 107), he goes on living. Common grace restricts his death as an effect of sin. He even becomes the father of a tribe “which sets its mind to the task of subduing the earth and begins the development of human culture” (Bavinck 1989, 40). In other words, Cain becomes the father of those who carry out the cultural mandate and establish civil society. Cain builds a city and names it after his son, Enoch. He makes a new home. Jabal becomes the father of those who dwell in tents and keep cattle. The term “father” in this context can mean not only the founder but also the authority and leader of the subject in question. Jabal has authority among tent-dwellers and farmers. By separating his tents from his cattle, Jabal introduces a “cultural advance” since Abel lived with his sheep and was not a tent-dweller (Wenham 1987, 113). As the father of those who play the harp Jubal is the maestro in art or music associations. As the father of those who forge instruments of brass and iron (Gen. 4:17-22) Tubal-cain is the leader of the association of blacksmiths or hammersmiths. So we see the city built by Cain consists of a number of associations led by persons of authority. This network of associations can be called civil society, and these associations exist to help human beings to flourish. Victor Hamilton beautifully describes what is written in Genesis 4. “Genesis is making the point through the (disobedient) line of Cain”, he says, “many of the world significant cultural discoveries emerged. This point may provide another illustration of the grace of God at work in this fallen line” (Hamilton 1990, 239).

I will now draw some implications of the doctrine of common grace concerning the notion of civil society. First, though common grace lacks the power to solve the problem of sin and its effects completely, it nevertheless empowers civil society, the realm outside the church. Though the church is usually considered as part of civil society outside the private sphere, the state, and the market, in this context, the church, can be viewed as the locus of saving grace. While saving grace “ultimately cancels sin and completely neutralizes its consequences”, Kuyper defines common grace as “a *temporarily restraining* grace that stems and arrests the continued effect of sin” (CG1, 264; his emphasis). Thus, Kuyper says, saving grace “is connected with the elect of God” while common grace “covers the *entire sphere* of human life” (CG1, 264; my emphasis). By its connection with the elect of God, saving grace is *particularly* the business of the church. No wonder Kuyper calls the church “an institution of grace” (PR2, 302). Common grace, however, covers all spheres of human life, which *commonly* means human civil life, namely, the family, society, art, science, and so forth (PR2, 301). The consequence that follows is that common grace fosters civil society in empowering human beings to flourish in and through various social spheres outside of the church, though the church in the modern context is also a part of civil society.

Second, civil society in the Kuyperian worldview is rooted in the order of creation, where the root of common grace is also found. While “the origin of church life is located in [saving] grace”, Kuyper writes, “Our civil life finds its origin in creation” (PR2, 302). Kuyper also says that “this civil life is and remains the Creator’s original design that still governs the course of this life and will continue to do so until the end of the ages”. The operation of common grace is needed to preserve “the Creator’s original design” which will remain until the end by averting “the lethal consequences of the curse” and by maintaining “the continued...existence of all that came from the original creation” (CGCR, 174). Here, common grace is distinguished from saving grace in that the latter can create “new things”, namely “a new creature in Christ”. Hence, social spheres, which receive their sovereignty from God in the order of creation, can be maintained and developed only by the operation of common grace. In other words, common grace strengthens and fosters civil society.

Third, common grace is the universal operation of the Holy Spirit to provide intellectual knowledge and technical capabilities that may generate various fields of study as part of the realm of education or art in civil society. In this section, I borrow Calvin’s valuable explanation on the universal operation of the Holy Spirit. Cornelis van der Kooi commends, “Calvin’s theology is most fascinating because its pneumatology provides, on the one hand, a comprehensive theological framework with extensive attention to the universal action of the Spirit of God; on the other hand, it assigns the Spirit a decisive role in the relation of Christ to the believers” (van der

Kooi 2018, 75). About Bezalel, God says, “I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship” (Exod. 31:3). The divine spirit, based on his pleasures, distributes all excellent capabilities for the “common good of mankind” (Calvin 1960, II.ii.16). Though the Spirit of sanctification dwells and works only in believers, the Lord “quickens all things by the power of the same spirit” (Calvin 1960, II.ii.16) since the Spirit of God is “the sole fountain of truth” (Calvin 1960, II.ii.15). Bavinck affirms Calvin’s conviction by saying, “The Holy Spirit is the author of all life, of every power, and every virtue” (Bavinck 1989, 41). Bavinck also says, “It is true the Holy Spirit as a spirit of sanctification dwells in believers only, but as a spirit of life, of wisdom and of power He works also in those who do not believe. No Christian, therefore, should despise these gifts; on the contrary, he should honor art and science, music and philosophy and various other products of the human mind as *praestantissima Spiritus dona*, and make the most of them for his own personal use” (Bavinck 2004, 119). Thus, the excellent capacities provided by the Holy Spirit are not only limited to knowledge and craftsmanship for designing and constructing instruments which are the parts of technical and artistic abilities, such as in Bezalel and Aholiab, but are also extended to philosophy, medicine, physics, dialectics, mathematics, and other disciplines (Calvin 1960, II.ii.15-16). The Holy Spirit also works to provide ability in judgment, reading or learning, in government as for Saul and David, and in literature such as in Homer (Calvin 1960, II.ii.17). The Holy Spirit as the only source of truth, knowledge, and craftsmanship works through His universal operation to empower civil society by empowering geniuses, maestros and others that will involve, contribute, and exercise authority in the realm of science, education, and art.

Fourth, common grace affects not only the restraint of sin but also ensures that “order is maintained in social life, and civil righteousness is promoted” (Berkhof 1996, Systematic:436), things that are deeply connected to civil society. This order contains of at least two aspects, namely, moral order and social order. As the image of God, human beings with the moral order instituted by God still have moral obligations that govern human life even after the fall (cf. Ballor & Charles 2019, xvii). This is of course the act of common grace as stated by Kuyper himself, “[T]hanks to common grace, the spiritual light has not totally departed from the soul’s eye of the sinner. And also, notwithstanding the curse that spread throughout creation, a speaking of God has survived within that creation, thanks to common grace” (CG1, 490). The moral order or discernment in Kuyper’s thought is ontologically rooted in God’s inscribing his law into human hearts as Paul says in Romans 2:15. Kuyper says, “By the law of God [we mean] the universal moral law that was ingrained in man before his fall into sin and which nevertheless, however

weakened after the fall, still speaks so sharply, so strongly, so clearly among even the most brutalized peoples and the most degenerate persons” (OP, 76).

Besides this moral order, there is also a social order. Social order means that people do not want to live in a chaotic situation. In a more sophisticated statement, social order refers to the fact that however it may be conceived of theoretically, “the essential notion of ‘society’ is scientifically and practically meaningful only when it refers to routinely observable phenomena about which lasting statements are possible” (Dandaneau 2007, 4495). To avoid chaos and maintain a society with regular order, common grace is needed to restrain sin by providing the possibility of constituting law and instituting government. Kuyper says, “The essential character of government as such does not lie in the fact that canals are dug, railways built, and so forth, but in the sovereign right to compel subversives by force and if necessary subdue them with the sword” (CG3; quoted in Ballor & Charles 2019, xxiii). The government is then “an instrument of ‘common grace’ to thwart all license and outrage and to shield the good against the evil” (LC, 82). In my opinion, common grace for the preservation of social life is not only shown through the government but also through other various social spheres in the framework of the principle of structural and confessional pluralism. Here, civil society as strengthened by Kuyper’s principle of sphere sovereignty plays a pivotal role in maintaining social order. Jordan J. Ballor and J. Daryl Charles are right when concluding, “Through spheres like the state, family, and work God’s common grace is present to preserve, protect, and promote social life” (Ballor & Charles 2019, xxiv).

The government is an instrument of common grace, which operates through general revelation, mainly through the human conscience. The law written in the human conscience provides what Calvin calls “equity”, which is the goal, rule and limit of all constitutional laws (Calvin 1960, IV.xx.16). Constitutional laws in various countries restrict human sins directly. This restriction is needed since the sinful nature of human beings is not only “destitute and empty of good”, but also “concupiscence”, and “so fertile and fruitful” (Calvin 1960, II.i.8). Without the restriction of constitutional laws with fines and penalties, “the earth would immediately have turned into hell” (CG1, 265). Contrariwise these constitutional laws guarantee human rights, including the sovereignty of the conscience, the freedom of assembly, the liberty of speech, and so forth, things that are the basis of civil society. Constitutional laws must be paralleled by the establishment of government. Government is God’s minister for human good and God’s representative for implementing his revenge (Rm. 13:4; cf. 12:19). Punishment dealt out by governments provides “a deterring effect”, while rewards serve as incentives (Berkhof 1996, Systematic:441). No wonder, in countries where there is good law enforcement by a good

government based on just constitutional law, society is ordered and civil society is strengthened. In this case, common grace does not only allow for the constitution of laws and the institution of government but also makes it possible for human beings to obey the laws and to have civil righteousness. In a more radical understanding, Kuyper believes that “the sinner knows the justice of God, and the revelation of God in the human heart and in creation still continues to function even after the fall” (CG1, 491). This fact affirms the existence of civil righteousness on the basis of common grace (Ballor & Charles 2019, xxi). Though this civil righteousness is not salvific, Ballor & Charles praise the impact of common grace in that it enables Christians to affirm that there is something good in the fallen world. This conviction is in accordance with Kuyper’s belief that “in the unconverted, all kinds of powers certainly function, albeit only partially in the direction ordained by God” (CG2, 342). Thus, Ballor & Charles emphasize that civil righteousness is the result of God’s grace rather than of human effort, and that it falls short of true righteousness (Ballor & Charles 2019, xxii).

Fifth, common grace promotes civil society through its operation in “the internal part” and in “the external dimension” of human existence (CG1, 539-540). When common grace operates in the inner part of human existence, it produces civic virtue, natural love, public conscience, integrity, mutual loyalty, and so forth. When common grace operates in the outer part of the human being, it brings forth many other fruits: human dominion over nature, the growth of human understanding through science, the scientific and technological inventions which enrich human life, the flourishing of arts, the multiplicity of human enjoyment, and so forth. Various social spheres that enrich human life and constitute civil society concern both the inward or outward operations of common grace.

Sixth, public opinion, which is an important manifestation of the public sphere, can be an instrument for the operation of common grace when it becomes social or political control with a view to avoiding sin. The pressure of the media, for instance, can avoid the corruptive attitude of public authority. Public opinion can be fruitful while it works under “the influence of God’s revelation”, the control of the “conscience”, and harmony with “the light of nature, or by the Word of God” (Berkhof 1996, Systematic:441). Civil society in these conditions can form public opinion through the medium of the public sphere and have as an effect the restraint of sin, the maintenance of social order, and the promotion of civil righteousness.

8.3.4 Civil society and the principle of structural pluralism

The principle of structural pluralism teaches that God delegated his sovereignty over various social structures which exist to enrich human life and which are coordinated through an

interdependent relation with one another. The principle of structural pluralism provides an ontological empowerment of civil society that can be differentiated from an instrumental approach to it. Here, I am using Jonathan Chaplin's analysis (Chaplin 2010, 14-33). Chaplin finds that the contemporary standard definition of civil society is constructed "from an instrumental point of view". In the definition provided by Ernest Gellner, for instance, civil society is employed as an instrument toward a political objective such as the limitation of the power of the state. Christian social pluralists such as Kuyper with his principle of structural pluralism would suggest that the instances of civil society "must be respected for what they are intrinsically if they are to be of any use instrumentally".

The intrinsic value of various social spheres is found in the notion that they have "irreducible identities". The most important aspect of this notion is not found in the multitude, the autonomy, the variety or the independence of social spheres. Rather, the notion emphasizes the "fittedness to constitutive human ends" of those institutions and associations. Chaplin explains, "And since human beings have by creation been constituted to flourish through the pursuit of many such ends, then a corresponding plurality of qualitatively distinct institutional forms will be required to channel and structure that pursuit". The consequence of this notion is clear. "To misidentify or suppress the irreducible ends of a social institution, or to conflate them with that of another", Chaplin writes, "is to inhibit the flourishing of the people participating in them or influenced by them. Respecting the plural irreducible identities of institutions is thus indispensable to a healthy and just human society".

Respect can be shown to irreducible plural identities in at least two ways, namely, "the principle of nonabsorption" and the ontological equality of social institutions and associations. First, based on Kuyper's conviction that God's delegated "laws of life" operated internally in each social sphere, the "divinely created identity" of social spheres generates the "principle of nonabsorption" which stands alongside the principle of distribution. Chaplin interprets Kuyper's understanding of the sovereignty of a sphere not as an end in itself, but as arising from the irreducible identity of each social sphere and as functioning to maintain and to defend that identity. Second, it is clear that the irreducible identity, in that it is divinely created, must be followed up by the paradigm of an ontological equality of various social spheres. There is no "metaphysically founded hierarchy" such as between sacred and secular institutions.

The notion of irreducible identities must not be directed to the implication of an independent dysconnectivity of various social spheres. Instead, the principle of structural pluralism obviously desires the interconnectedness or interdependency of those entities. Chaplin employs the term "interdependencies" to capture the very idea. By this term, he indicates the

“relationships between *genuinely autonomous* units (free individuals and differentiated institutions), and that these units nevertheless stand toward each other as *mutually dependent*, if each is to flourish” (his emphasis). Chaplin carefully notes that Kuyper “regularly invoked organic metaphors to speak of the close interconnections among the various institutions of society”. What is unfortunate in the eyes of Chaplin is that Kuyper emphasizes the guarantee of the independence of each social sphere over against external threats rather than their interconnectedness. Chaplin then finds a more promising emphasis in Dooyeweerd. One vital function of the interdependencies is to secure the irreducible identities of various social institutions and associations. Chaplin says, “Each institution is dependent upon the unique forms of service only other institutions can supply. Multisided institutional interdependency is constitutive of a human society reflecting the design of the Creator”. Dooyeweerd’s notion of enkaptic interlacement could well describe how interdependencies secure the irreducible identities of various social institutions and associations. Any further exploration of this theme is, however, beyond the limit of this research. We now move on to the implications of the arguments of civil society to public theology.

8.3.5 Civil society and public theology

I am now moving on to the implications of these lines of the theology of civil society for public theology. First, since the bases of civil society in Kuyper’s view are human nature and relations as the images of God, public theology enters into the public sphere to remind civil society not to forget its ontological basis. Here, public theology is not primarily coming to engage with practical and technical issues, which are not its main capacities, but is rather plunging into the philosophical and ethical issues. Applying Habermas’ philosophy, public theology must emerge into the public sphere to prevent the colonization of the lifeworld by the corrupt game of the power of money and political power, which among other things can sacrifice the sacredness of human being on which civil society is based. In this understanding, public theology has to come to the public sphere using its ontological arguments to protect various social spheres from the invasion of megastructures, namely, the state or the market, and to remind the state of its role as the sphere of spheres to guard the boundaries of various social spheres and to protect the weaker parties from the oppression of the stronger in a social sphere. This task points to what Moltmann said, that public theology has to come to the public sphere not only for getting involved in “the public affairs of society” but even more for standing in “the name of the poor and the marginalized in a given society” (Moltmann 1999, 1). In the Kuyperian scheme, public theology’s role is to remind the state to provide public justice.

Second, though Arendt's complete separation of the public sphere from the private is incompatible with the Kuyperian worldview, her warning concerning the invasion of private interests into the public sphere through the rise of the social must be considered. This fact asks civil society to come forward and play an important role in defining public interests as distinguished from private interests. When sovereign social spheres properly function, they detect public problems that disrupt the development of institutions or associations. Conversely, they encourage public discussion towards achieving human flourishing in various social spheres and motivate public discussion to ensure public justice is carried out by the government. Here, public theology really needs civil society to supply issues that will be discussed in the public sphere so public theology can bring the inheritance of Christianity to make a contribution through these issues.

Third, public theology presupposes the operation of common grace to provide a possibility for the unregenerated public to comprehend and to absorb publicly-relevant Christian theological contributions. While the common grace of God supplies the possibility for the presence and the flourishing of civil society, it also certainly encourages the possibility of communication among diverse religious citizens. Here, the term "public" both in public theology and the public sphere does not firstly refer to the "place" of having conversations but mostly to the "openness", namely, the possibility for "any party to engage in debate...with universal access and open debate for all the members of society" (Kim 2011, 10).

Fourth, the principle of structural pluralism requires that public theology itself should be the product of well-functioning churches and theological seminaries according to their irreducible institutional identities. In other words, the presence of public theology in the public sphere shows that public theologians coming from properly functioning churches and seminaries. Not only that, since public theology itself engages very much with civil society, public theology could function as the voice of conscience to defend the principle of nonabsorption, the ontological equality of various social institutions and associations, and their interdependencies. In brief, public theology brings the specific contribution of the principle of structural pluralism mainly by reminding society about the irreducible identities of social institutions and associations. Public theology thus comes to strengthen civil society. Civil society could have vital importance in the public sphere, if and only if there is a revitalization of the public sphere in order to make it open and fair.

8.4 The revitalization of the public sphere and the distribution of sovereignty

The need to reinvigorate the public sphere in Arendt's thought comes mainly from the socio-cultural fact of the modern rise of the social and from the socio-political fact of

totalitarianism and its destructive impacts. The first fact, in short, is the invasion of private interests into the public sphere. The second fact, in brief, is the totalitarian strategy using the atomized and isolated individuals in a mass society which results in the killing of moral considerations and of unique individual spontaneity. By the first, there was a lack of publicness. By the second, there was a lack of the freedom of speech and opinions in the public sphere. Arendt reinvigorates the public sphere by identifying it as the locus for freedom, politics, and power. To be free is to deliver unexpected action and speech in front of others in the public sphere. While the private sphere is principally focused on solitary interest, the public sphere is directed to consider the presence of plural others. Politics is thus the delivery of action and speech in front of plural others. Politics is located in between human beings. When political action and speech are delivered, power is released.

The need to reinvigorate the public sphere, in Habermas' theoretical scheme, comes mainly from the socio-cultural and political facts and tendency of representative publicness and the colonization of the lifeworld. The first tendency, in brief, is the invasion of private luxurious life into the public sphere. The second tendency, in short, is the invasion of political and economic power into the public sphere. Habermas reinvigorates the public sphere by introducing the historical fact of the bourgeoisie entering the public sphere on equal terms, rationally discussing common concerns, even the themes previously monopolized by the aristocracy; in this way they became a counterbalance to state sovereignty. The public sphere, then, is no longer a space where a luxurious private lifestyle is displayed but a space for discussing common concerns, on the principle of inclusivity. Habermas later articulates systematically the notion of the political public sphere as the locus for citizens affected by government laws and policies to form their will and opinions and contribute to the law-making processes in the official political system.

From the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, Arendt and Habermas' efforts to reinvigorate the public sphere are to be appreciated, for several reasons. First, what Arendt and Habermas complained about is the same as Kuyper's concern, that is, one among others, the invasion of state sovereignty into other spheres. Nevertheless, Kuyper goes farther than Arendt and Habermas. For Kuyper, no sovereign sphere should be allowed to invade other social spheres, not only the private, economic, or political spheres. In brief, in their critique of the modern condition Arendt and Habermas "only" complain about the invasion of private, economic, and political interests/power. Second, the empowerment of the public sphere as conceived of by Arendt and Habermas, in opening it to public participation as a counterbalance to state sovereignty, is in line with Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty which, in its original version, was also articulated to guard the state from its octopus-like role. Third, the revitalization of the

public sphere as seen by Arendt and Habermas in the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty shows the distribution of sovereignty or authority. Not only do the state and the market have power but other social institutions also have sovereignty. In a more radical way, Kuyper believes that God delegated sovereignty to various social spheres. Thus, the public sphere cannot be monopolized by private interests, royal precedence, political agendas, and market benefits, but must also be open to the involvement of various social spheres.

The principle of sphere sovereignty certainly acknowledges the importance of the public sphere. Nonetheless, Kuyper never systematically articulated either a philosophy or a theology of the notion of the public sphere. The contribution of Arendt and Habermas to Kuyper's scheme is to highlight the importance of the public sphere. We need more research to unearth what Kuyper says about the ontology of the public sphere which he speaks about in various places in his writings. In Wolterstorff's analysis, Kuyper even imagined a third city in addition to Augustine's two distinct cities, that is, "the city of our *common* humanity" (Wolterstorff 2004, 278-279). The public sphere is a space outside the city of God or the city of the world. In the public sphere as conceived of by Kuyper, the citizens of both cities come together to speak. "The citizens of the *civitas Dei*", Wolterstorff writes, "participate along with the citizen of the *civitas mundi* in the structures, solidarities, and practices of the city they share, the *civitas genus*". Kuyper even mentioned "the public arena" in which Christians are also called to work, "to proclaim what they understand to be true" (CG2, 765). Here, the public sphere is a space outside the confessional groups. Regarding the principle of structural pluralism, Kuyper also conceives of the public sphere as a space outside various social spheres. Kuyper says that the press, which is the public sphere, "is a kind of mediator, an unofficial interpreter if you like, between nation and government" (OP, 39). Nations certainly means public, the people who are gathered in various social spheres.

I will now try to articulate the importance of the public sphere from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, both structural and confessional pluralism. The public sphere is necessary for the principle of confessional pluralism for several reasons. First, the principle of confessional pluralism in its very meaning presupposes a constitutional public – rather than a private one – a manifestation of various religious groups through certain social spheres. Hence, those religious associations or institutions might be able to speak out or to act out of their convictions in the public sphere for the common good of society. Second, Kuyper endorses the persuasive approach in all spiritual matters, rather than a coercive approach, which is Christ's eschatological prerogative. This persuasive approach takes place in the public sphere and should not be limited only to religious matters but also expanded to social and political matters. Third, since faith cannot at all be separated from the life of the human being, the public manifestation of

it in all forms is a must. There is a strong tendency inside each religion to express its faith in public. Kuyper rejects the privatization of religion, thus taking distance from the liberal view of religion which views religion as belonging to “the realm of the inner life” (OP, 58). This conception is problematic since it ignores the fact that religion as a worldview has “an all-embracing system of principles” (LC, 19). This unity of a life-system as indicated by Kuyper does not have a temporal coherent meaning rooted in the past, strengthened in the present and giving confidence for the future, but also has a relational content. The relational content of a life-system consists in a threefold relation: to God, to fellow human beings, and to the world. One clear indication that a worldview impacts our relation to the world is Kuyper’s conviction that there is a causal relation between science and faith. “Every science in a certain degree”, Kuyper writes, “starts *from faith*, and, on the contrary, faith, which does not lead to science, is mistaken faith or superstition, but real, genuine faith, it is not” (LC, 131; his emphasis). Since religion or faith as a worldview embraces all aspects of human life, it unavoidably encourages its followers to bring it into the public sphere. Thus, Kuyper’s vision of the public sphere is “a crowded one”, rather than “a naked public square” (Bratt 1998, 14).

While from the perspective of the principle of confessional pluralism the public sphere is necessary, is it also necessary from the perspective of the principle of structural pluralism? Certainly, this principle presupposes the necessity of the public sphere. First, the public sphere can be used as a space for strengthening the sovereignty of each sphere and the inner necessity in public discourse regarding the nature of social associations or institutions. For instance, whenever the realm of education, namely schools or universities, is contaminated by the power of money, that is, when the economic sphere invades the educational sphere, the public can speak out and criticize this intrusion and thereby encourage the autonomy of the realm of education. Second, the public sphere can function as a space in which various social spheres function properly in contributing to other spheres as well as maintaining their boundaries. For example, university professors can speak out in the public sphere to propose solutions to societal problems and can contribute to the formation of laws and public policies. Third, the public sphere can be used as a touchstone for the state to assess whether it is invading other spheres. Whenever the state has excessive power, it does not allow other spheres to criticize it though they have valuable contributions to make for the common good of society. In other words, while the principle of sphere sovereignty is first articulated to keep the state in its own place, the public sphere can be used as a test of whether the principle of sphere sovereignty works in a society or not.

The public sphere as conceived of by Arendt and Habermas and as implied in Kuyper’s theology is very important for public theology. In short, public theology presupposes the public

sphere. The establishment and fall of public theology depend very much on the existence of an open, free, and plural public sphere. Arendt's notion of the public sphere allows public theologians to act and speak individually, heroically, with courage and spontaneity, to deliver memorable words and perform great deeds freely, even to initiate something new and unexpected. Habermas' notion of the public sphere allows public theologians to deliver communicative actions and deliberative discourses to contribute to the law-making processes. Kuyper's implied notion of the public sphere asks public theologians to speak for the church as a mediating structure and to speak as Christian voices in a crowded public sphere as part of a confessional group. In brief, Arendt and Habermas' notion of the public sphere, seen in the light of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty, provides the impetus for public theologians to become involved in the public sphere, to make a contribution and speak for the common good of society. Public theologians can speak to other participants in the public sphere if they are connected through the lifeworld.

8.5 The lifeworld, the common world and social spheres

From the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, the lifeworld and the common world are of great importance since those notions describe the horizon of communication within each social institution or association. If the lifeworld is understood as “the totality of shared beliefs, values, and ideals that society culturally inherits” (Lee 2006, 19), each social association or institution has an internal communication based on the lifeworld. Moreover, those beliefs, values and ideals will finally be manifested in the common world. Professors, for instance, come together to communicate with each other in the realm of education and with the help of *homo faber* – to refer to Arendt's scheme – they will finally concretize it as a university. A university campus is a common world which at one and the same time relates and separates those involved in education, lecturers, students, and staff, who already existed before and will continue to exist after.

The Husserlian lifeworld as the basis of Arendt's immanent common world and Habermas' quasi-transcendental lifeworld, from the perspective of Kuyperian theology, has its ontological root in the self-communication of the Triune God. My conviction is that human communication is analogous to the self-communication of the Triune God. Hence, the lifeworld as the horizon for human communication has its ontological root in the divine lifeworld. If the lifeworld is understood as “the totality of shared beliefs, values and ideals that society culturally inherits” which becomes “the horizon or background for ethical decisions” (Lee 2006, 19), thus there must be a single, comprehensive, and permanent “lifeworld” as the horizon of the self-communication of the Triune God. The usage of the term “lifeworld” for God is certainly

anthropomorphic. Since in the Triune God there is only one essence of the Godhead, thus there must be a common intelligence and common knowledge, which imply a common consciousness (Hodge 2003, I:461). The common knowledge of the Triune God does not come from the complementary learning process or the co-experience of the three persons but simultaneously exists in itself. In short, the common knowledge of God is single, permanent, self-existing, simultaneous, complete and comprehensive, immediate, and fully conscious. This common knowledge in the Triune God presupposes coinherence between the persons in terms of the “Knowledge of one person in the Trinity involves knowledge of the others” (Poythress 2011, 29). This kind of knowledge is a kind of an anthropomorphic lifeworld and is a logical consequence of the perichoretic relationship of the divine persons. Thus, it is important to have a further view on the principle of perichoresis, developing what was said earlier (above section 8.2).

Perichoresis refers to a “divine *modus vivendi*” (Lee 2006, 98), a theological principle defining not only the Triune God’s inner relationship but primarily the inner coinherence. “Essentially God is not alone”, Kuyper believes, “but Triune in persons; hence there is between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit *a mutual relation*” (WHS, 444; my emphasis). This mutual relation is actually “mutual in-being” or “in each other reciprocally” (Vos 2012-2014, I:46). This mutual or reciprocal relation is connected by love. Kuyper emphasizes, “the Love-life whereby these Three mutually love each other is...alone the true and real life of Love” (WHS, 515). “In the meantime”, van der Kooi and van den Brink conclude, “the most beautiful and biblically authentic way to combine the oneness and the threeness in God (to the extent that we are able to do so) remains the doctrine of perichoresis” (van der Kooi & van den Brink 2017, 99).

Historically, perichoresis is “the most elegant way in which the Cappadocians argued against the suspicion of tritheism” (van der Kooi & van den Brink 2017, 95). Both Athanasius and the Cappadocians, in particular, brought out the concept of the “full mutual indwelling of the three persons in the one being of God” (Letham 2004, 178). This concept, as explained by Robert Letham, is the logical consequence of “the *homoousial* identity of the three and the undivided divine being”. Each person is fully God and each person indwelling each other thus “the three mutually contain one another”. This concept is important to emphasize the coexistence of the unity and uniqueness of divine persons at the same time (van der Kooi & van den Brink 2017, 96). The concept of divine mutual containment is maintained by Calvin on the basis of biblical evidence such as John 14:10 and John 17:3 (e.g., Calvin 1960, I.13.19; Calvin 2009, XVIII:167; Letham 2004, 264). Perichoretic relationships of the divine persons departed from the *opera ad intra* but also imply in “the interrelation, partnership, and mutual dependence of the trinitarian members... in the working of God in the world” or the *opera ad extra*” (Grenz 1994, 68).

Human beings as the image of God (*imago Dei*) or more precisely the “*imago trinitatis*” reflect the divine perichoresis. In particular, “the trinitarian perichoresis is the basis of human sociality” (Lee 2006, 103). The human reflection of the divine perichoresis has certain continuities and discontinuities. While I will later engage with the former, I note Letham’s articulation of the differentiation of the divine perichoresis and relationships between human beings. For him, human persons cannot exist in one another (Letham 2004, 178-179). They not only differ but are also apart, and even go in very different directions. Thus, “the analogy of three men who sharing a common human nature could never even remotely approximate the Holy Trinity”. It even implies tritheism or polytheism.

Nevertheless, there are some continuities between the divine perichoresis and human sociality. First, the image of God should be understood as the image of the Triune God. Thus, we cannot emphasize the individuality of the image of God without putting the same emphasis on the sociality of it. Second, based on the social ontology of the Triune God, the relational approach of the image of God becomes important. The Triune God is not to be understood as only three persons having an essence of God and each person having full divine essence. The Triune God can also be understood as the interpersonal relationships between the three Persons as indicated by Kuyper above. Thus, the human being does not only share the same essence as the image of God, with a reflective and representative function, but also that human being should live in interpersonal relationships connected with love. In other words, human beings cannot be human beings without having a relationship with their fellow human beings. There is no pure “me” in our lives without there being some kind of relationship with others. Here, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity challenges the Enlightenment concept of individuality (Lee 2006, 104).

Third, though human persons do not exist in each other like the divine persons since human persons have physical bodies, human persons can still “indwell” each other in immaterial aspects. Human persons can exist in each other in the realm of knowledge, namely, the lifeworld. We can meet each other in shared experience, shared understanding, shared values, shared visions, and shared commitments. For Arendt, these shared aspects of human knowledge are concretized in the common world. Fourth, the principle of divine perichoresis is reflected in the collective collegial principle in social organizations in which human beings or human leaders act together as divine persons do in similar actions. Fifth, as perichoresis indicates that “divine reality is complex and multifaceted” (Lee 2006, 98), although it is not as complex as the reality of God, human reality is also complex and multifaceted. Therefore, human relations become varied and the lifeworld is very diverse. Not surprisingly, the public sphere is polycentric. The notion of perichoresis which indicates inclusiveness is contrary to the collectivist understanding of human

beings. Collectivist anthropology reduces human beings to mere couplers in a large social machine, where there is meaning in human life only as long as it can synchronize with a particular megastructure (Spykman 1992, 245).

Sixth, perichoresis "embodies the ideals of inclusiveness, love, and freedom" (Lee 2006, 99). This also appears in the intersubjective relationships among human beings. Inclusiveness shows up in that human beings need to get out of themselves and meet others. Relationships among human beings are bound by love. And those relationships indicate an intersubjective freedom. In the Triune God, "freedom is inseparable from love" (Lee 2006, 104). Hence, freedom is not construed in terms of oppression but of loving friendship. As Moltmann said, "freedom does not mean lordship. It means friendship. Freedom consists of mutual and common participation in life, and a communication in which there is neither lordship nor servitude. In their reciprocal participation in life, people become free beyond the limitation of their own individuality." (Moltmann 1993, 56). The implementation of freedom requires a plurality of individuals (Lee 2006, 105).

Seventh, in the context of the era of social media, human persons are mutually inclusive in social media. When I befriend others on Facebook, we "indwell" in each other in a virtual space. I am in someone else's virtual space where I can participate in digital activities through Facebook. Likewise, they also enter into my virtual space. Jamie Susskind calls this "the digital lifeworld". He says, "When you imagine the digital lifeworld, imagine a dense and teeming system that links human beings, powerful machines, and abundant data in a web of great delicacy and complexity" (Susskind 2018, 29). The digital lifeworld consists of three main developments, namely, "increasingly capable systems", "increasingly integrated technology", and "increasingly quantified society". By the first, Susskind means the development of "computing machines of extraordinary capability" (Susskind 2018, 30-31). By the second, he finds that "In the digital lifeworld, technology will permeate our world, inseparable from our daily experience and embedded in physical structures and objects that we never regarded previously as 'technology'. Our lives will play out in a teeming network of connected people and 'smart' things, with little meaningful distinction between human and machine, online and offline, virtual and physical, or, as the author William Gibson puts it, between 'cyberspace' and 'meatspace'" (Susskind 2018, 42). By the third, he discovers, "In the digital lifeworld, a growing amount of social activity will be captured and recorded as data then sorted, stored, and processed by digital systems. More and more of our actions, utterances, movements, relationships, emotions, and beliefs will leave a permanent and semi-permanent digital mark. As well as chronicling human life, data will increasingly be gathered on the natural world, the activity of machines, and the built environment.

All this data, in turn, will be used for commercial purposes, to train machines learning AI systems, and to predict and control human behaviour” (Susskind 2018, 61).

This thinking has several implications for public theology. First, public theology may only make a contribution in the public sphere if theologians enter the horizon of public knowledge: this is a prerequisite for public communication. This means there must be a pre-public involvement in the private or communal space, and participant candidates must follow the issues circulating in the public sphere. This pre-public involvement is necessary to keep alive the public nature of public theology since it is public theology only as long as it engages with the public affairs of society (Moltmann) and thus becomes a *relevant* participant in the public sphere (Katie Day). This pre-public involvement is also important for shaping public theology’s immanent aspects, namely, its subjects and its approaches. Thus, its transcendent voices which are taken from the religious particular traditions might be properly delivered in the relevant context. Second, it is an ontological imperative for public theology to be involved in social media. The aforementioned explanation provides us with much deeper reasons for entering social media beyond mere practical reasons. Public theology is involved in social media not because of its popularity, but rather because of its nature as a reflection of perichoresis, in which human beings coinhere each other in the virtual space of social media. Social media nowadays has become a new medium of the public sphere. Social media indicates “[t]he technological takeover of communication” (Simanowski 2018, ix). Social media can become a medium, for instance, for self-revelation and reciprocal concern (see Jeske 2019, 35-48). Roberto Simanowski indicates that we are entering “a Facebook society”, namely, “a society whose forms of communication and cultural techniques are significantly determined by the practices of self-representation and world perception on Facebook” (Simanowski 2018, xv). Social media in general and *Facebook* in particular can be also the medium for political action and communicative action.

8.6 Political action and communicative action

There are several similarities between political action as conceived of by Arendt and communicative action as conceived of by Habermas. First, from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, in that both political action and communicative action principally take into account the existence of others rather than prioritizing self-interest, they are in line with the Kuyperian principle that human beings cannot live without gathering in communities and that those communities cannot walk without interdependency on each other. Second, political action and communicative action endorse non-coercive communication. This means that, in a more radical stage, both political action and communicative action require the common grace of God

to provide the possibility for non-coercive communication. The fact of sin corrupts human communication, filling it with manipulation and violence. The common grace of God might restrain the destructive effects of sin and constrain the constructive effects of civil righteousness.

Now we come to highlight the thinking of each philosopher, starting with Arendt's thinking on political action. First, the principle of sphere sovereignty has a less negative view of labor and work than Arendt's. While the latter criticizes labor and work as being the activities of solitary subjects with no necessity for considering the presence of others and with no possibility of disclosing who somebody is, the former appreciates them as unique activities corresponding to social institutions or associations. Thus, in Kuyper's structural pluralism, there is no hierarchy of human activities such as Arendt maintains. Labor may become the unique activity for those who gather in the realm of production while work may become the unique activity for those who gather in the realm of art. Political action may become the unique activity for those who gather in the political realm. For some senses, there is a need to have labor and work for certain purposes in certain communities. It is correct that labor and work are not proper for political activities. Here, Kuyper has a more consistent view of social activities than Arendt. No wonder Arendt inconsistently criticizes but also praises the merits of *homo faber* in the human activity of work. Hence, action is not merely the *differentia specifica* of human beings compared to animals or gods (D'Entrèves 1994, 66) but for the Kuyperian principle of sphere sovereignty, action is a *differentia specifica* of political associations. Political action certainly corresponds to the human faculty as the image of God, although only in part, next to other human activities.

Second, following the first point, the capacity to act in the view of Kuyperian theology is, then, a faculty of the image of God. Therefore, it means that God himself has a capacity to act and he communicates it to human being as his image. God certainly has often performed great deeds and delivered memorable words. God also has a capacity to initiate something new and he has exercised it in such acts as the creation of the world, when he created everything out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*). While plurality is the *conditio sine qua non* and *conditio per quam* for political action, certainly equality and distinction comprise plurality, exist in the realm of the divine and become the condition for God to have *opera ad intra*. The human being, as the image of God, is endowed with a capacity to act, a capacity to initiate something new and a capacity for the unpredictable, such as appears in a time of revolution.

Third, from the perspective of the Kuyperian principle of sphere sovereignty, the capacity to act is an application of common grace. How can sinners deliver memorable words and perform great deeds? Courage is needed for an actor to initiate something new or even unpredictable in a time of revolution, and this certainly comes by the operation of the common grace of God.

Freedom as shown in spontaneity and unpredictability must come from the common grace of God. The capacity to initiate something new, in Arendt's mind, comes from natality. For her, each human person is unique, thus "with each birth something uniquely new comes into the world" (HC, 178). Here, we see another provision of the common grace of God.

Fourth, while Arendt emphasizes the "irreducible particularity" (Kiess 2016, 157) of who a political actor is, Kuyper emphasizes the "irreducible particularity" of what a social institution is. For Arendt, a political actor cannot perform without an audience while for Kuyper a political actor cannot live without a political community. Thus, the irreducible particularity of a political actor presupposes the irreducible particularity of a political community. Here, Arendt and Kuyper's views complement each other.

Let us now consider Habermas' conception of communicative action from the perspective of the Kuyperian principle of sphere sovereignty. First, communicative action is a unique model of social relations in the public sphere. This identification is important, to take into account Althusius' explanation that each social sphere has its own model of relation or communication. From Kuyper's perspective, strategic action has its place as a unique model of social relations in other institutions such as the state and the military. Institutional differentiation, as proposed by Kuyper's principle of structural pluralism, requires the differentiation of the models of action used in different social institutions. The total rejection of strategic action from the realm of modern political community, as proposed by Arendt, is not acceptable to Habermas, who prefers communicative action to strategic action but does not reject the latter (see Habermas' critique of Arendt's conception of communicative power in Chapter 6). Kuyper's institutional differentiation comes to play an important role in solving this dispute. Habermas' prioritizing of communicative action as the model of relations in the public sphere can be much appreciated from the perspective of Kuyper's principle of structural pluralism.

Second, since communicative action designates "social interactions where language use aimed at reaching mutual understanding plays the role of action coordination" (TJ, 110), it is used in the public sphere, which means it is used for social interaction between various sovereign social spheres. Though it is possible for institutions such as the military to use strategic action as their unique model of interaction, social interactions among social spheres might use communicative action. Thus, this idea encourages the state to minimize its use of strategic action and replace it with communicative action. The use of communicative action as social interaction among social spheres is strengthened by the fact that the ontological equality of social institutions presupposes the rejection of the instrumental rationality that is operated in strategic action. Besides that, the Kuyperian notion of the ontological equality of social spheres can be related to the Habermasian

ideal speech situation. Since in Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty, a university has an ontological equality with the state, thus the interaction between them must be conducted in the lines of the Habermasian communicative action. Here, Habermas' contribution on communicative action develops Kuyper's principle of structural pluralism. This theoretical interaction is important, as Cristina Lafont puts it, as "[A] sociological theory of action that neglects the concept of communicative action and employs only the concept of strategic action cannot explain how social order is possible in the first place" (Lafont 2018, 499).

Third, from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, the rightness of interpersonal relations validly claimed by a speech act corresponds to the inner authority of a social institution. In the discursive public sphere, which presupposes freedom and equality, the authority of the better argument occupies the seat of authority. Meanwhile, a truth-claim of a speech act that corresponds to a certain state of affairs resembles the biblical principle of truth. The Hebrew term *emet* involves the ideas of "support and stability" which bring to the twofold notion of truth "faithfulness and conformity to fact" (Groothuis 2000, 60-61). This idea is also involved in the Greek term *aletheia* (Groothuis 2000, 62). Kuyper goes along with the same understanding, that truth is the representation of reality and the opposite of lie (EST, 114-119). As Christ declares Satan to be the father of lies (John 8:44), "the Scriptural narrative of the fall presents Satan as the first to whisper the lie, that what God had said was *not* true, and that moment marks the beginning of the conflict *for* the truth" (EST, 115; his emphasis). If Satan is the father of lies, God must be the father of truth since God is the "God of truth" (Ps. 31:5); the Son Jesus is the truth himself (John 14:6) and the third person of the Triune God is the "Spirit of Truth" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). God is called "the subjectivity of truth in person" (Tong 2017, 231), and the Holy Spirit is called "the sole fountain of truth" (Calvin 1960, II.2.15). Berkhof elaborates three ways of understanding that God himself is the truth, namely, the "metaphysical sense", the "ethical sense", and the "logical sense" (Berkhof 1996, Systematic:69). The first refers to the understanding that God is in himself as God really is and as distinguished from all false gods. The second refers to the reliability of his revelation in that he reveals himself as who he really is. The third refers to the epistemological and ontological consequences, in that God knows everything as it really is and creates in human beings the possibility of knowing things as they really are.

In Habermas' validity claims, sincerity means the congruity between speech and action, between a statement and its expression, between a promise and its fulfilment. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ asks for congruity between the calling on the Lord's name and the practice of God's will (Matt. 7:21). The calling on the Lord (*kurios*) means the surrender of oneself to implement his will since "[m]ere lip service (*λεγωον*, 'saying') to the Lordship of Jesus is of no

consequence. What is important is ‘doing’ (*ποιῶν*) the Father’s will” (Hagner 1993, 187). Sincerity means the rejection of lip service, the rejection of the discontinuity between words and deeds. The congruity of words and deeds is also emphasized by the Apostle John in his exhortation to the children of God. He says, “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). For Calvin, “the only true way of showing love” is to “prove it by the deed” (Calvin 2009, XXII:221). God himself has proved his love, as we see in the most famous verse of the Bible, John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...”. What is important, is not only a sentiment, feeling or a beautiful poem of love, but a sacrificial application of the feeling and the saying of love (cf. Yarbrough 2008, 205). Thus, sincerity is intended to prove through our deeds what we have spoken in our words. Communicative action performed in the public sphere must be validly congruous with the truth claim, the rightness of interpersonal relations and the sincerity of the speaker. These validity claims are in line with the biblical teaching on truth, rightness and sincerity.

Now I want to explore the implications of these lines of thinking for public theology. First, public theology uses communicative action and prefers the authority of better arguments when speaking in the public sphere. In the light of the principle of sphere sovereignty, public theology cannot use the same language as when it speaks inside a church or from a pulpit. A church has its own language but when public theologians speak in the public sphere, they have to use communicative action. This means two things, namely, that public theologians have to anticipate the possibility of being either received or rejected by other participants in the public sphere. It means also that the words of public theologians spoken in the public sphere must be in conformity with the truth, uprightness and sincerity of the speaker. Second, a sincere public theology must involve deeds, or practical actions, not only words. Public theology should not only speak but also show something in the public sphere. Public theology can at the same time deliver memorable words and perform great deeds in the public sphere, for the common good. Third, public theology must speak of truth claims, rather than posting hoaxes or delivering false claims, especially when dealing with public issues. Thus, public theology cannot speak about something which is not publicly clear enough. In this post-truth era, public theology must avoid the use of non-truth data for endorsing its arguments and opinions. Philosopher Lee C. McIntyre defines “post-truth” as “a form of ideological supremacy, whereby its practitioners are trying to compel someone to believe in something whether there is good evidence for it or not” (McIntyre 2018, 12). Public theology should commit to the truth, not only because validity claims of speech acts raised in communicative action require the truth claim, but principally because God himself is the truth. Thus, public theology should be careful not to fall into the post-truth games used by political

leaders for political domination (see McIntyre 2018, 13). Public theology should speak about public issues based on objective facts. Public theology then is exercising the communicative model of power, a modified Habermasian version of Arendt's notion.

8.7 The concept of power and the political role of conscience

Arendt's conception of power has several connecting points when viewed from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty as articulated by Kuyper. First, Arendt's criticism of excessive sovereignty echoes Kuyper's criticism of the notion of popular state sovereignty, though her understanding of sovereignty as identical with tyranny cannot be accepted. One of the clear marks of the excessive sovereignty of the state is its invasion into the public sphere. Thus, Arendt's and Kuyper's rejections are intended to preserve the nature and function of the democratic public sphere. Arendt equates sovereignty with the "domination of despotism" in which, regardless of how many persons possess it, whether it be one man or a majority, "decisions were bound only by its [or their] own will and desires" and the exercise of power was "undivided among and unchecked by others" (TWB, 44). She also says, "[I]n the realm of human affairs, sovereignty and tyranny are the same" (OR, 144). Here, sovereignty is differentiated from power. While power in Arendt's scheme does not coexist with violence, sovereignty must be maintained "only by means of violence" (TWB, 232). This understanding leads to the consequence that sovereignty cannot coexist with freedom. She says, "Where men, whether as individuals or in organized groups, wish to be sovereign, they must abolish freedom" (TWB, 233). She also says, "If it were true that sovereignty and freedom are the same, then indeed no man could be free, because sovereignty, the ideal of uncompromising self-sufficiency and mastership, is contradictory to the very condition of plurality" (HC, 234). Since freedom and power are located in the public sphere, thus, sovereignty abolishes the public sphere.

Arendt's critique of a reductive understanding of sovereignty is similar to Kuyper's critique of a unified people and state sovereignty. Arendt accuses the people of popular sovereignty like that of the French Revolution for its "unitary and homogeneous" sense that comes out of "the indivisible general will" (OR, 147; Arato & Cohen 2010, 140). Since people in modern society cannot rule directly, popular sovereignty coming from the general will of the people is submitted to a king, committee, assembly, or president as the sovereign representative that will finally abolish freedom and exclude the presence of others (cf. Arato & Cohen 2010, 140). Kuyper also reproaches the tyranny of the majority not only because the general will occupies the seat of God but also because the sovereignty of the people delivers authority to a king of an almost absolute character. This happened first in the case of Napoleon Bonaparte and then in the

installation of King William I of the Netherlands. A unifying centralism was applied first in France and then in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In Kuyper's own Dutch historical context, King William I absorbed all the freedom of the people as shown in the 1834 Secession case. The sovereignty of the people arising from the general will advances the sovereignty of a tyrant king, which is criticized both by Arendt and Kuyper. They do not only criticize the failure of people's sovereignty but also the excessive application of state sovereignty as seen by Kuyper in Bismarck's octopus-like state and Hitler's totalitarian state faced by Arendt.

Though having a similar critique of the failure of popular sovereignty and the excessive exercise of state sovereignty, Arendt is too reductive in equating sovereignty with the domination of despotism. By this kind of equation, Arendt has to come to the total abolition of sovereignty, which is inapplicable in the modern context (Arato & Cohen 2010, 169). What Arendt wants to abolish is "the myth of absolute, legally unlimited sovereignty as prerogative, discretion, and unbridled will" (Arato & Cohen 2010, 170). In this sense, we have to agree with Arendt, as Kuyper does. Nevertheless, not all sovereignties are absolute, abusive, and violent. Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty does more justice to the notion. For Kuyper, only God holds unlimited power or sovereignty. Human institutions hold delegated and limited sovereignty, limited to each institution. The principle of sphere sovereignty sees God's power as distributed into various social institutions according to its own nature and function (OP, 70). Thus, while for Arendt sovereignty, freedom and power are antithetical, for Kuyper sovereignty, freedom and power are congruous. In other words, while for Arendt sovereignty banishes the democratic public sphere, for Kuyper, sovereignty makes it flourish. When each institution applies its own authority or power, freedom exists. In short, the principle of sphere sovereignty endorses Arendt's critique of an absolute, abusive and violent application of both popular and state sovereignty but opposes her equation of the notion sovereignty with the domination of despotism.

Going on to a more radical analysis of Arendt's notion of sovereignty, we may see the problem of sin behind Arendt's generalization, and the challenge of excessive sovereignty from the absolute sovereignty of God. Arendt seems to draw her conclusion of equating sovereignty and tyranny from the context of late nineteenth century imperialism (Arato & Cohen 2010, 141; OT, 269-270). This means that her reductive understanding of the notion of sovereignty comes from her critique of the very condition of modernity. No wonder, she wants to keep "the place of sovereign power empty" (Arato & Cohen 2010, 141). For Arendt, since the seat of sovereignty can be occupied by a wicked ruler, it is better to keep the chair empty. Arendt then wants to abolish human sovereignty totally. Kuyper goes back even farther and finds that the seat of the wicked sovereignty denounced by Arendt is the result of the human effort to dethrone God, deny his

absolute sovereignty and establish human sovereignty instead. Kuyper criticizes the people's sovereignty as seen in the French Revolution as it would later enthrone Napoleon Bonaparte and grant him almost absolute power. He says, "The sovereign God is dethroned and man with his free will is placed on the vacant seat" (LC, 87). Sovereignty is displaced from God to men. In their political and social theory and culture human beings dethrone God from the highest seat of sovereignty and enthrone human sovereignty; this leads to the designation of human leaders to occupy the vacant seat, giving them nearly absolute power like God. When leaders begin to act sovereignly like God but with extreme cruelty, disappointment with the idea of sovereignty begins to emerge, resulting in a negative generalization and the total elimination of it. Hence, the solution to this difficulty is to restore God's sovereignty to its place in social and political theory and culture and find a distribution of power or sovereignty in human institutions. Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty resolves the difficulty of Arendt's negative view of the idea of sovereignty. When the sovereign God occupies the seat of the absolute and highest sovereignty and delegates sovereignties or powers to human institutions, including the sovereignty of individual conscience, freedom and power are possible, in Arendt's political theory, and they can maintain a democratic public sphere.

Second, both Arendt and Kuyper prefer a polycentric notion of power. Arendt locates power not in the sole holder of power, either individual or collective, but in the world in between human beings, in the space of appearance, in acting and speaking together. Power springs up between human beings whenever people get together and act in concert (CR, 151; HC, 200). For Arendt, the locus of power is in the public sphere. Kuyper, with his principle of sphere sovereignty, believes in the distribution of power. He says, "God called institutions of all kinds into being, and to each of them he granted a certain measure of power...He did not give all his power to one single institution, but he endowed each of those institutions with the particular power that corresponded to its nature and calling" (OP, 70). The polycentric sense in Arendt's notion of power can be understood in that there is a possibility of having many spaces of appearance. Kuyper's polycentric notion of power is clear by the distribution of it. The difference between Arendt and Kuyper's polycentric sense of power is that Arendt uses one definition that can be applicable in various situations while Kuyper uses different definitions and applications of power. It can be possible that there is a space of appearance inside each social institution such as inside a church, university or school. Kuyper goes beyond Arendt in understanding that there are various spaces of appearance not only among political actors but among social institutions.

In the light of the principle of sphere sovereignty, the power or sovereignty of social institutions comes from the sovereignty of God through the common grace of God; it is deeply

connected with the status of the human being as the image of God. God delegates sovereignty to the realm of art or science by giving common grace to a maestro or genius who have authority in each social association or institution which develop organically according to the sense of art or the sense of reason created by God in the image of God. Power in Arendt's scheme as the actualization of the capacity to act in concert is based on the human potentiality to speak or to act in concert, in a community. In the same way, we can apply the principle of sphere sovereignty in understanding Arendt's notion of power. The sovereign God creates human beings with the capacity to act and speak in concert, a sense of action and a sense of speaking, delivering common grace for the courage to act and speak spontaneously in the presence of an audience.

Third, power according to Arendt's theory is made possible by the sovereignty of the individual conscience in Kuyper's scheme. For Kuyper, the principle of sphere sovereignty does not only consist of sovereign social institutions or associations but also the sovereignty of the individual person (see LC, 107-109). He quotes some who say, "Everyman stands a king in his conscience, a sovereign in his own person...for everybody must have and has a sphere of life of his own, in which he has no one above him, but God alone" (LC, 107). Conscience "knows that it has received its power directly from God" (OP, 72). Thus, conscience is "never subject to man but always and ever to God almighty" (LC, 107). Conscience is "a certain mean between God and man", referring to God, having "a sense of divine judgment", and thus representing God's judgment (Calvin 1960, III.xix.15-16). Conscience as the representative of God's judgment refers to the imprint of God's law on human hearts (Rm. 2:15) which brings "an innate awareness of God's moral demands" (Moo 1996, 151). Conscience therefore is "a representative of representative" (Tong 2007, IB:1139). "Human being is the representative of God for the nature", Tong says, "and conscience is a representative of God to govern human being, who is a representative of God". Conscience is "a thousand witnesses" (Calvin 1960, III.xix.15), like "a divine oracle" to teach us what God wants us to do and to rebuke us concerning what God does not want us to do (CG1, 191). Conscience is "an expression or activity of our *consciousness*...[which is] compelled to be engaged *with ourselves*, to reflect on our moral situation, our thoughts, our words, our deeds, our omissions and commissions, and reflect on them with a measure of evaluation and choice" (CG1, 191). Conscience is the source for our words and deeds in the public sphere. Thus, for Kuyper, freedom or sovereignty of conscience is the root of all freedoms and marks a boundary that the state may never cross (OP, 69). Sovereignty of the conscience is the root of all freedom such as freedom of expression, the liberty of speech, freedom of belief and liberty of worship (OP, 69; LC, 108). Hence, power in Arendt's political theory, as

rising up whenever human beings gather together to act and to speak in concert, is rooted in the human conscience.

Though never articulating it systematically, Arendt gives some explanations on conscience, as we might see from her Heidelberg dissertation on Augustine. She says, “Conscience is ‘of God’ and has the function of pointing to the Creator rather than to the creature” (LSA, 84). Arendt believes that conscience is “the voice of the Creator”, thus bringing human beings into the presence of God who is “the only possible judge of good and evil” (LSA, 84). Conscience functions to direct human beings “away from habituation” (LSA, 84), which means away from the Augustinian “bondage to habitual sin” (Scott & Stark 1996, 130). Conscience also speaks against an “alien tongue” coming from an independent human world that is not of God (LSA, 84). In her last work, *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt states, “Conscience, as we understand it in moral or legal matters, is supposedly always present within us...supposed to tell us what to do and what to repent” (LM, I:190). Arendt thus shifts conscience from being “the voice of God” through *lumen naturale* or Kant’s practical reason to becoming finally the Socratic model of conscience. She says, “The conscience, unlike the voice of God within us or the *lumen naturale*, gives no positive prescriptions (even the Socratic *daimon*, his divine voice, only tells him what *not* to do); in Shakespeare’s words ‘it fills a man full of obstacles’” (LM, I:190; her emphasis). What Arendt is emphasizing in speaking of the Socratic model of conscience is “its sheer negativity, its posing a *not*...instead of issuing positive prescriptions in the sense of telling us what to do” (Vetlesen 2001, 25). Conscience is used to shake all “established criteria, values, measurements for good and evil” (TMC, 424, quoted in Vetlesen 2001, 25). Conscience is used “to question all established certainties” (Vetlesen 2001, 25). Arendt concludes, “[C]onscience did not judge; it told you, as the divine voice of either God or reason, what to do, what not to do, and what to repent of. Whatever the voice of conscience may be, it cannot be said to be ‘silent’, and its validity depends entirely upon an authority that is above and beyond all merely human laws and rules” (LM, I:215). Conscience in Arendt’s mind works with its counterpart, namely, judgment. If conscience as a by-product of thinking deals with the invisible, judging as “the by-product of the liberating effect of thinking”, realizes thinking and makes it manifest in the world of appearances (LM, I:193). “Thus, if conscience represents the inner check by which we evaluate our actions”, D’Entrèves concludes, “judgment represents the outer manifestation of our capacity to think critically...[W]hile conscience directs our attention to the self, judgment directs attention to the world” (D’Entrèves 1994, 12). Judgment, thus, makes possible “the manifestation of the wind of thought” in the space of appearance (LM, I:193). In other words, conscience through judgment results in action and speech in the public sphere, which Arendt calls power.

The problem with the Socratic model of conscience, which is also well anticipated by Arendt, is its over-negative view of the role of conscience. Conscience does not function to give positive prescriptions. Instead, it is intended to give negative prescriptions of what we do not do. This model of conscience that brought Socrates to refuse to escape from prison makes Arendt infer that “conscience is unpolitical” (CR, 60). Moreover, for Arendt, as mentioned above, conscience is concerned with the self. Thus, Socrates’ statement that “it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong”, meaning that it was better for Socrates to suffer (CR, 62), shows how conscience is deeply concentrated in oneself. Conscience is unpolitical since it is concerned with the self or private interest, rather than the “political stance of actively caring for the affairs of the political community” (D’Entréves 1994, 151). This difficulty can be overcome by encouraging conscience, not only focusing on private integrity but on the integrity and goodness of society, and through judging, to speak or act even by civil disobedience. This is shown through Arendt’s witness to Rosa Luxemburg. Arendt says, “Rosa Luxemburg was very *much* concerned with the world and not at *all* concerned with herself. If she had been concerned with herself, she would have stayed on in Zurich after her dissertation and would have pursued certain specific intellectual interests. But she couldn’t stand the injustice *within the world*” (TWB, 451). Luxemburg’s protest and disobedience would finally end with her body being dumped in a canal in Berlin.

For Kuyper, the sovereignty of conscience must be publicly manifested. The sovereignty of conscience as the root of freedom of belief and freedom of worship, for instance, must have a public manifestation. This manifestation might secure the integrity of the human being. Kuyper says, “You cannot be a human of one piece, a person of character and intelligence, and still allow yourself to be tempted to split your conscience in two, professing your God in one half and in the other half bowing before laws that have nothing to do with him. That does not comport with reason, nor does it square with your conscience” (OP, 31). In short, the sovereignty of conscience as taught by Kuyper’s principle of sphere sovereignty is the root of power – which can only be actualized in the public sphere – in Arendt’s political scheme.

Now we move on to the interpretation of Habermas’ notion of power from the Kuyperian principle. First, from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, Habermas’ significant modification of Arendt’s notion of power serves the agenda of the principle of structural pluralism. What is important in Kuyper’s principle is not only that Habermas emphasizes “the cognitive aspect” of communicative power while Arendt only stresses “collective action” (Iser 2018, 598), but more significantly that Habermas makes some differentiations. While Arendt reductively recognizes only a single sense of power, Habermas distinguishes between communicative power, administrative power, and social power. Communicative power springs

up in the informal public sphere whenever basic rights are guaranteed and wherever “sluices” (BFN, 354, 358) are provided to filter public opinions, which will be passed to formal public spheres such as parliaments. Those institutions hold an administrative power which might possibly use strategic action to implement the laws. Social power is connected to the premodern social institutions held by prestigious personalities such as priests, members of privileged families or clans, royal personalities, and so forth, backed by religious worldviews and magical practices (BFN, 138, 141). In his critique of Arendt’s notion of power, Habermas mentions her inability to discern between strategic action and instrumental action. In her critique of labor and work, Arendt is actually criticizing instrumental action – action connected to the non-social realm of instruments – but unfortunately her conflation of both actions makes her dismiss strategic action altogether from the realm of politics. Indeed, according to Habermas, strategic action related to the social realm of human beings is unavoidable for any modern society, and is even institutionalized in political competition and opposition. The differentiations provided by Habermas serve the agenda of structural pluralism, which treats the complexity of modern society fairly. According to the principle of sphere sovereignty, each social institution has its own authority given by God, but it does not mean that the model and the implementation of authority, sovereignty or power are the same. As each social institution or association has its own unique model of power in the public sphere, communicative power coming from communicative action is to be preferred.

Second, while Habermas considers popular sovereignty to be the source of communicative power, Kuyper rather criticizes it. This quasi-dispute can be easily resolved if we follow carefully how the two thinkers understand the notion in their works. Habermas does not understand popular sovereignty in terms of Rousseau’s notion of general will or the liberal aggregation of anonymous preferences, which are recused by Kuyper and also by Arendt. Habermas interprets the idea of popular sovereignty intersubjectively in terms of the emphasis on the democratic process in which communicative action is used for the formation of the will and opinions that will be channeled into parliamentary bodies. Kuyper also criticizes Rousseau’s model of popular sovereignty, both for its atheistic nature and its consequence of triggering the tyranny of the majority. While Habermas criticizes its lack of discursive democratic procedures, Kuyper accuses the excess of its atheistic nature and the tyranny of the majority. Habermas interprets the idea of popular sovereignty intersubjectively, but retreats into democratic procedures towards “a communicatively generated power” which springs “from the interactions among legally institutionalized will-formation and culturally mobilized publics” (BFN, 301). In short, for Habermas, popular sovereignty is shown through democratic procedures, which ensure the deliberative discourse of communicative action in the public sphere in order to form the will and

opinions that will be channeled into the formal public sphere. Thus, both Habermas and Kuyper criticize Rousseau's model of popular sovereignty. Habermas criticizes its lack of intersubjective discourses; Kuyper accuses its atheistic nature and the impact of the tyranny of the majority.

These lines of argument have several implications for public theology. First, one of the most important items on the agenda of public theology is to resist the excessive exercise of power by the state, the market or other megastructures. Public theology is not called to endorse a tyrannical regime or social injustice. Instead, public theology is called to resist and criticize them. In this sense, it is essential to mention Kuyper's partial responsibility for the apartheid policy in South Africa (Bartholomew 2017, 152-157). In Bartholomew's analysis, Kuyper's critique of British arrogance and imperialism is valid but his defense of the Boers' refusal of equal rights to black Africans while considering them an inferior race cannot be accepted. Bartholomew also sees that Kuyper is inconsistent in that on one side he endorses the racial discrimination in South Africa but on the other side he celebrates mixed blood in America, as shown in his *Lectures on Calvinism*. Second, since power or sovereignty is polycentric, public theology is also called to engage with local/ regional issues. Public theology then is differentiated from public religion in that the latter is more focused on national issues (see Breitenberg, Jr., 2010, 14). Third, public theology must be sensitive to the voices of conscience especially the oppressed, victims and minorities. Public theology might capture those voices of conscience and bring them into the public sphere with theological language and reasons.

8.8 Structural pluralism, the public sphere and deliberative democracy

The public sphere is a space where citizens come to discuss public issues based on the principles of equality, freedom, inclusivity and plurality, in which the authority of better arguments is exposed, public opinions are formed and from there channeled into the political system. From the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, the discursive setting of the public sphere is to be much appreciated. Firstly, there must be a space for citizens to engage in public political matters especially in that the government must be overseen and helped by citizens. The government needs citizens' support since it is made up of limited and sinful officials. God also delegates sovereignty to citizens, namely, the sovereignty of conscience, that can be expressed verbally to help, endorse and hold the government to account. God also delegates sovereignty to various social spheres to allow human life to flourish. Whenever those associations or institutions properly function, they contribute to the common good through deliberative discourses in the public sphere.

While the discursive setting of the public sphere is to be appreciated, if we look through the lens of Kuyper's principle, the reconciliation between the discursive and the dramatic setting, as explored in detail in Chapter 6, must be more highly valued from the perspective of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. The dramatic setting can contribute a commitment to individuality, which is in accordance with Kuyperian sovereignty of individual conscience. It can also contribute a commitment to plurality as being congruous with Kuyper's principle. The dramatic can supply heroic/ extraordinary politics to foster courage and initiative which is important in every kind of society. The principle of sphere sovereignty is articulated precisely to foster courage and initiative, which can come from public participants nurtured in various social spheres. The dramatic setting opens the public sphere to such kinds of participation. Moreover, leaning on Arendt's notion and Young's criticism of Habermas, the dramatic setting can contribute the storytelling and rhetoric which are important to develop Habermasian communicative action. Rhetoric, for instance, combined with courage and initiative, is needed by public participants from various social spheres to call the state to refrain, whenever it is tempted to an excessive exercise of its authority, going beyond its sovereign sphere to invade other social spheres.

The existence of a democratic public sphere is endorsed by the principle of sphere sovereignty since it is articulated to put the government back into its own sovereign sphere, as a sphere with relatively limited power. Thus, since Calvin's day, Calvinism has largely preferred democracy over monarchy as a form of government. The presuppositions behind the principle of sphere sovereignty are not only sovereignty of God but also the sinfulness of human beings. The principle of structural pluralism is articulated because Kuyper is aware of the sinfulness of magistrates, which shows up in the octopus-like character of Bismarckian state sovereignty. What Kuyper faced would later also be faced by Arendt, in a more terrible form, namely, totalitarian government. Regarding the excessive exercise of political power, Habermas faced the colonization of the lifeworld by political power.

Long before Kuyper, Calvin emphasized the primacy of democracy. Calvin says, "For if the three forms of government which the philosophers discuss be considered in themselves, I will not deny that aristocracy, or a system compounded of aristocracy and democracy, far excels all others: not indeed of itself, but because it is very rare for kings so to control themselves that their will never disagrees with what is just and right; or for them to have been endowed with such great keenness and prudence, that each knows how much is enough. Therefore, men's fault or failing causes it to be safer and more bearable for a number to exercise government, so that they may help one another, teach and admonish one another; and, if one asserts himself unfairly, there may

be a number of censors and masters to restrain his wilfulness” (Calvin 1960, I.xx.8). Calvin uses several verbs that might indicate the need for the participation of many: “control”, “help”, “teach and admonish”, “restrain”. Thus, public involvement in the public sphere is necessary, based on the principles of the delegation of sovereignty by God and on the fact of sin. Kuyper later takes up Calvin’s thought when he says, “Calvin considered a co-operation of many persons under mutual control, i.e., *a republic*, desirable, now that a mechanical institution of government is necessitated by reason of sin” (LC, 83). From above, God delegates sovereignty both to individuals and to institutions. From below, human sinfulness requires the control of the public over megastructures, mainly the state. Hence, a free, open and fair public sphere is necessary for becoming a space for citizens to control the excessive exercise of governmental power.

The public sphere is necessary, not only for democracy in general, but principally for deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy asks for a democratic procedure for forming public opinions through rational deliberative discourses. Deliberative democracy differentiates itself from liberal democracy in that the latter consults public opinion by counting individual preferences. Deliberative democracy differentiates itself from republican democracy mainly the Rousseauist model in that the latter consults public opinion by finding a general will. One of the unique aspects of Habermas’ concept of deliberative democracy is his two-track model which he identifies the informal public sphere as the context of discovery before going on to the context of justification in the formal public sphere, namely, the representative bodies. In the later period of his intellectual journey, Habermas sees the cognitive potential of religion that could make a contribution in the informal public sphere. Here, on the one side, Habermas’ two-track deliberative democracy is good news for public theology since he invites public theologians to speak freely in the context of discovery. The cognitive potential of religions as found by Habermas is certainly not free from criticism. I will explore this later.

According to Wolterstorff’s distinctive and interesting exegesis, Kuyper tends to choose deliberative democracy. Wolterstorff maintains that Kuyper’s conviction of the all-embracing and public nature of religion and faith, along with his principle of confessional pluralism, is contradictory to the liberal’s “independent basis” thesis. Modern political liberalism believes – in Wolterstorff’s own words – that “Citizens must be prepared to conduct their public debates concerning the scheme of constitutional and legal rights, and to make their decisions concerning that scheme, on the basis of the deliverances of some source of relevant principle which is not only independent of all the comprehensive religious and philosophical perspectives to be found in society, but is one to which all normal adult citizens...can rightly be required to appeal for this purpose” (Wolterstorff 1999, 191). Kuyper certainly disagrees with the liberal thesis that the

human mind can operate independently of comprehensive religious and philosophical beliefs. For Kuyper, human science presupposes “faith in the correctness of the laws of thought” and in “the principles” (LC, 131). Kuyper asserts that “the mind cannot free itself” from faith (WW, 71; Kaemingk 2018, 95). In short, “all knowledge proceeds from faith of whatever kind” (SS, 486). Based on these disagreements with political liberalism, Wolterstorff categorizes Kuyper’s model of democracy as being similar to the deliberative model. Wolterstorff says, “Kuyper is never...fully explicit about the model of democracy with which he is working. But I submit that if one assembles the things he does say, and extrapolates a bit, it becomes clear that this deliberative model is what he had in mind” (Wolterstorff 1999, 201). For Wolterstorff, deliberative democracy can vary and may in some points resemble political liberalism. However, thinkers who discuss deliberative democracy, according to Wolterstorff, commonly agree on two things, first the *differentia specifica*, namely, that citizens are free to offer any reasons in deliberative discourses, and second that public deliberation is intended to create a just society, rather than maximizing individual liberty (Wolterstorff 1999, 200). In Wolterstorff’s own words, “[I]n these [deliberative] assemblies, people are free to offer whatever reasons they wish for and against the policies under consideration” (Wolterstorff 1999, 200). James J. S Foster concludes Wolterstorff’s attempt by saying “although it is anachronistic to attribute it to him, using the modern deliberative model is useful when considering what public discourse looks like in a Kuyperian state” (Foster 2010, 112). Deliberative democracy, whatever the case may be, certainly requires an open and free public sphere. Wolterstorff, in defining what kind of deliberative democracy indicates this requirement, says, “the heart of self-governance [of deliberative democracy] is deliberative assemblies of a variety of different sorts and at a variety of different levels and venues, open to people and to their fairly-chosen representatives” (Wolterstorff 1999, 200).

The potential of deliberative democracy in Kuyper’s thinking, in my opinion, is found not only in the commitment to the pluralism of voices and the commitment to create a just society but also in Kuyper’s critique of the Rousseauist general will and the prioritization of persuasion in inter-religions communication. Deliberative democracy exchanges Rousseauist general will for public opinion resulting from rational discourses. In defense of the freedom of conscience, Kuyper emphasizes, “we must employ *persuasion* to the exclusion of all *coercion* in all spiritual matters” (MN, 219-220; his emphasis). Kuyper does not allow the church or the state to impose a conviction on personal belief (LC, 107-108).

Deliberative democracy brings democracy in its radical sense, namely, the sovereignty of the people, not only in general elections but also and principally in forming public opinion for

contributing to the law-making processes. Could the radical sense of democracy, as seen in deliberative democracy, fit the principle of sphere sovereignty? In the principle of sphere sovereignty, Kuyper criticizes popular sovereignty - mainly as produced in the French Revolution – on several points: its antitheistic nature, the curse of uniformity and the tyranny of the majority. Deliberative democracy, especially, as conceived of by Habermas, would also criticize popular sovereignty as decried by Kuyper. Though Habermas uses the postmetaphysical approach in the later period of his intellectual journey, Habermas sees the great potential for religions taking part in the public sphere and making a positive contribution to society. Deliberative democracy precisely wants to solve the problem of uniformity and the tyranny of the majority. Deliberative democracy opens up space for various religious and philosophical voices to speak in the public sphere. It also opens the public sphere to minorities to become involved in the formation of will and opinion, especially when they might propose the better arguments. By opening it to the voices of the minority, the commitment to plurality is clearly shown.

8.9 The plurality of the participants in the public sphere

Arendt clearly emphasizes the plurality of the participants in the public sphere. She understands plurality as consisting of two main parts, namely, equality and distinction. Equality provides the possibility for action and speech in the public sphere. Distinction provides the necessity for action and speech in the public sphere. Distinction for Arendt is not an otherness which can be found in lower objects but only can be shown by human beings. Political actors show their own distinction through speech and action. In short, political actors show a plurality that comes from the capacity of freedom, including initiating something unpredictable and new, out of existing choices.

Habermas emphasizes the plurality of political actors when he puts stress on the principle of the inclusivity of participants in the bourgeois public sphere. Habermas goes farther than Arendt in emphasizing not only the plurality of individual participants but also in coming to acknowledge the plurality of voluntary associations in civil society. Habermas opens the public sphere for various families, informal groups and voluntary associations with their own forms of life. Habermas endorses the plurality of autonomous associations and groups through the requirement of basic rights such as freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom of speech.

The principle of sphere sovereignty endorses two kinds of plurality, namely, the plurality of social structures and the plurality of confessional groups. It does not mean that the Kuyperian principle does not open the public sphere to plural individual participants becoming involved since

the principle of sphere sovereignty very much acknowledges the sovereignty of individual conscience. For me, the Kuyperian principle in particular and Calvinist theology in general could give more fundamental legitimation to Arendtian plurality of individual actors by basing it on the doctrine of the image of God. For instance, while Arendt appreciates distinction as being distinctive for human beings, Tong appreciates creativity as distinctive for human beings as a reflection of God the Creator (Tong 2007, IA:155). What I am saying by correlating the Arendtian distinction and the human being's sense of creativity is that the uniqueness shown by political actors in the public sphere is a result of the sense of creativity put by God into human beings as the image of God.

The principle of sphere sovereignty gives more space for the plurality of social structures and confessional groups. We can see a complementary relation between Habermas and Kuyper in that the former asks for a constitutional guarantee for the plurality of civil society and for the plurality of participants in the public sphere, the latter asks for ontological discretion for the plurality of civil society. Ontological discretion could give fundamental legitimation to the constitutional guarantee. God created the human being as the image of God with various capacities: these require various social spheres as containers for human beings to develop their capabilities. Those social spheres will provide participants of the public sphere with various capabilities. God tolerates human beings have various confessions before the second coming of Christ. Thus, those confessional groups will develop various social structures that will provide participants with various comprehensive doctrines to speak in the public sphere. In the later period of his thinking, Habermas opens the informal public sphere to various confessional groups to get involved and contribute with their own language and reason. I will engage with this in the section below.

These lines of argument designate the public sphere as the “space of tolerance” (Lacorne 2019, 174). While access to the public sphere, as emphasized by Habermas elsewhere, is open in principle to all citizens from various backgrounds, it becomes “a space of tolerance”, “a space of freedom”, of course with certain rules (cf. Adut 2018, 1; Lacorne 2019, 174). Traffic lights and park rules in the topographical public sphere are a few examples of those regulations. Those regulations must not be discriminative nor prohibit religious citizens speaking with their own language and reasons, but rather support the rules provided to secure the common good of society.

In this sense, we can mention Os Guinness' vision of “a civil public square”. In the American context, which can be applicable to various societies, Guinness defines it as a space in which “everyone – people of all faiths, whether religious or naturalistic – are equally free to enter and engage public life on the basis of their faiths, as a matter of ‘free exercise’ and as dictated by

their own reason and conscience; but always within the double framework, first, of the Constitution, and the second, of a freely and mutually agreed covenant, or common vision for the common good, of what each person understands to be just and free for everyone else, and therefore of the duties involved in living with the deep differences of others” (Guinness 2008, 135). Guinness’ vision is a consistent implication of the genius vision of the country’s founders and the challenge of the contemporary multicultural world, which is a wise way of avoiding the choice of neither “the sacred public square” nor “the naked public square”. For the first, he says, “In a society as religiously diverse as America today, for the state or federal government to continue to give any one faith a preferred or privileged position is neither just nor workable” (Guinness 2008, 89). For the second, he says that his criticism of the sacred public square is “even more true of the naked public square” (Guinness 2008, 116). Guinness elaborates, “The great majority of Americans are adherents of one faith or another, so by rigorously excluding all religious expressions from public life, legal secularists severely curtail the free exercise of faith and whether wittingly or unwittingly, give preference and privilege to the philosophy of secularism – hence the aptness of the term ‘legal secularism’” (Guinness 2008, 117).

Guinness’ vision not only concerns the American context, but can also be applicable to the Indonesian context, for instance. As explored in detail by Intan, the *Pancasila*-based state of Indonesia is neither a secular nor a religious country (Intan 2006, Intan 2019). The first principle of *Pancasila*, the national ideology and the 29th chapter of *UUD 1945*, the national constitution, encourages the public role of religion. This is why Intan proposes a thesis that “In this case, the idea of confessional pluralism [as thought by Kuyper] may flourish in a *Pancasila*-based state” (Intan 2019, 72). The national ideology and constitution also endorse a separation between religion and the state. Indonesia is a nontheocratic state, which implies the rejection of the control of religion by the state and the rejection of the prioritization of one religion. The separation between religion and the state obviously indicates that “*Pancasila* appreciates the idea of structural pluralism” (Intan 2019, 72).

Based on the doctrine of common grace, Christian public theology should engage and acknowledge the distinctive contribution of various social associations/ institutions and confessional groups in the public sphere. In the framework of the rejection of relativism and of the promotion of pluralism, which among others includes the encouragement to be faithful to tradition, public theologians should be willing to see the positive contributions made by social and confessional groups thereby enriching society. It does not necessarily mean that public theology should accept all convictions, especially those who violate public theology’s transcendent aspect and universal democratic values and human rights. Public theologians, finally,

must be prepared to face difficult conversations, challenging opinions and potential disagreements since various institutional elites and religious players are invited to be involved and speak in the public sphere.

8.10 The role of religion in the public sphere

In this section, I will mostly engage with Habermas' thought since Arendt hardly speaks about the role of religion in the public sphere, except to mention the anti-public character of Christianity. The exclusion of the theme of religion from Arendt's philosophy is based on her conviction that there is a loss of religion in the modern condition (BPF, 94). The loss of religion in the modern age is caused by the "radical criticism of religious beliefs" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Doubting religious truths thus has become a characteristic of the modern age. In Arendt's analysis, since Pascal and more so Kierkegaard, "doubt has carried into belief" and Christianity "is ridden by paradoxes and absurdity". While Arendt bemoans of the loss of religion in modern society, Habermas, however, celebrates the emergence of religion in post-secular society. Habermas shows a meaningful development regarding his attitude toward religion. Compared to liberals such as Rawls and Audi, Habermas has a more inclusive approach towards the role of religion. Compared to his earlier position, when he was influenced by Marxist philosophy and viewed religion as an "alienating reality" (see Portier 2011, 426), Habermas now finds religion has much more to contribute to modern society. All the progress and achievements in Habermas' later thinking is to be appreciated.

From the perspective of the principle of confessional pluralism, Habermas' explanation of the role of religion in the public sphere should be highly valued. Habermas' statement that "genuine faith" may become "a source of energy", meaning an existential driving force for the life of a devout person, is in accordance with Kuyper's principle of the public nature of faith. Thus, both Habermas and Kuyper encourage the integrity of a devout religious person, whose private conviction must be publicly made manifest. Here, neither Habermas nor Kuyper agree with the liberal thesis of the privatization of religion. Therefore, attempts to force religious citizens to translate their particular language and reason while speaking in the public sphere do not only trigger "an unreasonable mental and psychological burden", as noted by Habermas, but also create what I call an anthropological inconsistency if we view it from Kuyper's perspective. In short, both Kuyper's principle of confessional pluralism and Habermas' notion of postsecularism demand that the liberal and secular public provide an opening for religion in general and theology in particular to speak with their own particular language and reason in the public sphere. Public theology therefore is greatly defended and supported by Kuyper and Habermas.

There is at least one more radical principle conceived of by Kuyper. Habermas seems not to be as radical as Kuyper with regard to this principle. This principle is that each human being is by nature “incurably religious”. Habermas positively believes that religious traditions might “convincingly articulate moral sensitiveness and solidaristic intuitions”, in particular regarding “vulnerable forms of communal life”, that “the cognitive contents” might give “innovative impulses” for philosophy and human learning and provide “the normative truth contents” for democracy. Here, public theology is almost indirectly invited by Habermas to bring these positive contributions for the common good of society through speaking in the public sphere. Here, Habermas’ conviction affirms Stackhouse’s belief that public theology in particular and religion in general could provide “a moral and spiritual inner architecture to the emerging, complex civilization”. Habermas’ positive view of religious traditions as explained above, however, does not give us enough clues to conclude that he accepts a more fundamental conception of the religious nature of human being.

Kuyper goes on to a more radical stage in accepting that each human being is “incurably religious”, as Spykman say. In this conviction Kuyper was preceded by Calvin, who says, “There is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity. This we take to be beyond controversy. To prevent anyone from taking refuge in the pretense of ignorance, God himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of his divine majesty” (Calvin 1960, I.iii.1). This “awareness of divinity” would generate human perceived understanding of the presence of God and the role of God as the creator of the human being. Thus, Calvin believes that we find even in the primitive tribes that are the most remote from civilization, “a deep-seated conviction that there is a God” and “some seed of religion”. In brief, there is no tribe too brutal, too barbaric or too backward that it does not have a seed of religion or awareness of divinity. “A sense of deity”, Calvin writes, “inscribed in the hearts of all”. We will not here distinguish between the terms used by Calvin. We will follow what Calvinists such as John McNeill say, that those terms “refer generally to a numinous awareness of God” and thus are synonymous (see Oliphint 2008, 27).

In his commentary on Romans 1:18 Calvin indicates that this sense of divine is implanted in the human being as the image of God. Calvin says, “The structure of the world and the most beautiful arrangement of the elements ought to have induced man to glorify God, yet no one discharged his proper duty” (Calvin 2009, XIX:67). K. Scott Oliphint states, “There can be a little doubt that what Paul is describing here is an essential part of what it means to be the image of God” (Oliphint 2008, 23-24). Douglas Vickers also affirms this understanding. He says, “There exists in the soul, we have said, a *semen religionis*, a seed of religion. That means that by reason

of his createdness as the image of God, man is necessarily a religious creature. He was made to worship God” (Vickers 2011, 14). Stephen Tong asks, “Why religion arise only in the realm of human being?” (Tong 2007, II:23). The sense of religion has never appeared in the realm of animals. Tong thus answers, “The sense of religion has been placed by God in human being since he was created. Human being is created as a religious creature”.

Calvin believes that the human fall into sin does not remove this seed of religion from human beings as the image of God, though they are damaged by it. He says, “And they who in other aspects of life seem least to differ from brutes still continue to retain some seed of religion” (Calvin 1960, I.iii.1). In his commentary on Romans 2:15, in which Paul emphasizes the inscription of God’s law in human hearts, Calvin affirms, “it is enough to know, that [the Gentiles] thought there is a God and that honour and worship are due to him”, no matter “what sort of God they imagined him to be, or how many gods they devised” (Calvin 2009, XIX:99). Louis Berkhof says, “The Bible informs us that man was created in the image of God. When he fell in sin, he did not entirely cease to be the image-bearer of the Most- High. The seed of religion is still present in all men, though their sinful nature constantly reacts against it” (Berkhof 1938, I.1). In brief, the human fall into sin does not deprive men of the sense of deity but damaged it and turned them away from worshipping the true God.

Therefore, for me, religion is inherent in the human being as the image of God. Religiosity is unavoidable for human life even after the human fall into sin. Since religion is deeply seated in the human heart (Berkhof 1996, Introductory:108) and affects all aspects of human life, we are invited to have not only an eschatological tolerance as thought by Spykman in response to Kuyper’s principle of confessional pluralism but also to have what I call anthropological tolerance. We have to tolerate the existence of the various convictions held by our fellow human beings because of the biblical fact that they also are created as the image of God and have a sense of deity or the seed of religion implanted inside them. The notions of tolerance, both anthropological and eschatological, however, do not necessarily imply a celebration of relativism. I will not here explore this principle as it is outside the scope of this research.

In this sense, Kuyper’s principle of confessional pluralism is more radical than Habermas’ notion of religion in the public sphere; in a more complementary paradigm, the former has a more fundamental view of the latter’s positive finding of religions as entities which convincingly provide “moral sensitiveness”, “solidaristic intuitions”, “cognitive contents” that trigger “innovative impulses”, and “the normative truth contents” for human society.

Some implications can be drawn from the above lines of argument. First, a theology of the public sphere which consists of the interpretation of Habermas’ notion from the perspective of

Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty encourages public theology to bring its particular contributions into the public sphere for the common good of society. Based on anthropological and eschatological tolerance and the demand for public consciousness and complementary learning processes on the side of the secular, public theology should dare to speak in the public sphere with its own particular language and reason. Second, though Kuyper's principle appreciates Habermas' notion, Kuyper's principle encourages a richer public participation of religion and does not want to restrict it to only the cognitive contents. Here, David Tracy's suggestions are valuable (Tracy 2014, 330-334). The dogmatic structure is only "rational enquiry", which is "dialectical argument". In the simplest form, rational enquiry means providing reasons for claims, providing evidence, warrants and so forth. Here, reasonableness is related to logicity as fulfilling the non-contradiction law. Tracy, however, goes beyond rational enquiry to ask the public to learn from religions through the second aspect, namely, the "dialogue with classics". The conversation with classics consists of the hermeneutics of texts, music, symbols, stories, images, events and so forth. The conversation with classics not only focuses on intelligibility, truth, and rightness, as in the first aspect, but also unearths "visions of the good, including the good life of an individual and a society". The last aspect of religion that can be a blessing for the public sphere is what Tracy calls "meditative thinking". Grounded in the desire for the good, meditative thinking includes the public language of prayer, the contemplative thinking of wisdom and prophetic-meditative reflection. The dialectic of justice and love is a concrete example.

8.11 Conclusion

The theology of the public sphere is an interpretation of the philosophy of the public sphere according to Arendt and Habermas from the perspective of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. This interpretation involves understanding and appreciations, criticisms and corrections; it is followed up by several theological reflections and ends with several implications for public theology.

From Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty, there are criticisms and corrections. In the view of Kuyper's principle, Arendt's notions of the private sphere and civil society are less precise and less well developed. From the same point of view, Habermas' notions of the private sphere and civil society are less radical and less prioritized. The private sphere should flourish in itself before contributing to the public sphere. Civil society should be empowered by various associations and institutions that receive their sovereignty from God, while civil society is vital as the prominent player in the public sphere. The doctrines of the perichoretic relationship of the

Triune God, the image of God and common grace can be used to strengthen the private sphere and civil society. The empowerment of civil society by the principle of sphere sovereignty serves the agenda of public theology itself in differentiation from political theology.

Besides criticisms and corrections, there are understanding and appreciations. Arendt's and Habermas' revitalization of the public sphere should be highly valued, if we view them from Kuyper's principle, in that they empower a mediating structure which can be used on the one hand to keep the state in its own sovereign sphere, and on the other hand, to keep other social spheres from the tendency to invade other spheres. Here, we found a significant contribution of the philosophy of the public sphere as conceived of by Arendt and Habermas. While the principle of sphere sovereignty presupposes the vital importance of the public sphere, Kuyper never actually articulated it. I show in this chapter that from both the principle of structural pluralism and confessional pluralism, the public sphere is vital.

The public sphere can only work through the lifeworld as the context for human communication. The lifeworld as conceived of by Habermas and as concretized by Arendt in the common world has, theologically speaking, its ontological root in the common knowledge of the Triune God. The lifeworld provides the possibility for communicative action. From Kuyper's principle, communicative action can be valued as the specific model of communication not only in the public sphere but among various social spheres. Certainly, if we view it from Kuyper's perspective, the capacity to act, to have political action and communicative action is rooted in the fact of the human being as the image of God, and is supported by common grace.

On the concept of power, both Arendt and Kuyper prefer the polycentric notion of power. Arendt's notion of power is backed up by Kuyper's principle of the sovereignty of the conscience. More importantly, Habermas' significant modification of Arendt's notion of power serves the agenda of the principle of structural pluralism. Communicative power as conceived of by Arendt, cannot, according to Habermas, be applied to all conditions. The differentiation of the models of power is precisely what Kuyper wants to achieve by his principle. Public theology thus is called to exercise communicative power and not to endorse a tyrannical regime or social injustice blindly. Kuyper's partial responsibility for apartheid policy is criticized here. Nevertheless, Kuyper's significant contributions are much appreciated. One of them is his preference for deliberative democracy.

Kuyper's tendency to choose deliberative democracy is not only in accordance with Arendt's and more importantly with Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere but is also backed up by the Calvinist theology of democracy, including the commitment to plurality. Here, Kuyper's commitment to plurality not only pays its respects to Arendt and Habermas's commitments, but

more significantly gives them radical legitimacy and a theological foundation. This theological back-up for pluralism is important since theological commitment is usually a serious challenge to pluralism itself. Here, I recall Guinness' vision of a civil public square/ sphere which is neither sacred nor naked. Such a kind of vision is not only applicable to the western/ American context but also to the Indonesian context as well. This vision invites all religious citizens to speak in the public sphere.

This vision is in line with Habermas' positive recognition of public role of religions in the context of postsecular societies. Habermas' attempt to reopen the public sphere to religious voices is endorsed not only by Kuyperian eschatological tolerance but also by my reconstruction of anthropological tolerance. Anthropological tolerance is based on Kuyper's radical religiosity of the human being, which he took from Calvin's notion of the sense of deity or the seed of religion. The implication for public theology is clear. Public theology receives an injection of fresh blood from those theoretical schemes. The implications of this theology of the public sphere is not limited to public theology in general but also applies to Indonesia's public sphere and public theology in particular. These implications are explored in the coming chapter.

Chapter 9

THE IMPLICATION OF THE THEOLOGY OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE IN THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT

9.1 Introduction

The theology of the public sphere, in my reconstruction, has several implications not only for public theology but also for the Indonesian context, namely, Indonesia's public sphere and public theology. This chapter is dedicated to exploring those implications. The method of this chapter is that I mostly engage with the issues mentioned in Chapter 3 and propose solutions by drawing implications from the theoretical research. We start from the empowerment of the family.

9.2 The empowerment of the family for facing conjugal terrorism

The vital importance of the private sphere, i.e. the family, for the public sphere is highlighted by the principle of sphere sovereignty. Here, we cannot accept Arendt's total rejection of the private sphere for political scheme or Habermas' instrumental paradigm of the family as only a place for preparing participants to be involved in the public sphere. The principle of the sphere sovereignty indicates that if the private sphere, i.e. the family, functions properly in itself, then its members will finally come forward to make a contribution in the public sphere.

The way the French Revolution used the family as a mere instrument for political purposes is, in some senses, taken up by Muslim radicals who use the family to brainwash its members. It is no wonder that the family members then appear in the public sphere as religious citizens cast in a negative role, instead of them bringing positive contributions for the common good of society. On 10 October 2019, Wiranto, the former Coordinating Minister for Politics, Legal, and Security Affairs, was stabbed by a terrorist, whose wife supported him in his actions. Here, the function of the family is reduced to being an agent for the spreading of terrorist propaganda. This crisis of the involvement of the family for terrorist purposes is politically and publicly relevant for discussion in the public sphere. Arendt's total rejection of private issues being circulated in the public sphere cannot be accepted.

In this case of conjugal terrorism, the family has failed to flourish in itself. There must be the restoration of the family, according to the principle of sphere sovereignty. The family must be restored and become a place for "intimate and familiar companionship, mutual love, fidelity, patience, mutual service, communication of all goods and right" (Althusius). The large number of cases of violence in families in Indonesia led me to write an article on "Violence and the

Resacralization of the Family”, which appeared in *Surya*, the eastern Java newspaper, on 21 November 2007. One of the important points I make is that the family should be restored as a place where love and intimacy flourish, not a place where deviant attitudes of violence are generated in children. Then the family would be a place for nurturing mutual love to others, not a place for fostering hatred and conjugal terrorism towards others.

A properly functioning family as envisioned by Althusius includes the teaching of universal humanitarian and democratic values. In the Indonesian context in general, these values are contained in *Pancasila*, the national ideology. Those values, as will be explained below, are not contrary to the Christian faith in particular. In his explanation on the acculturation of *Pancasila*, one of the most prominent scholars of Indonesia’s national ideology, Yudi Latif, argues that some social problems are caused by the failure of the family (Latif 2018, 229). He therefore suggests that we have to rebuild the family as the basis of morality. The family might play a vital role for the development of “civic intelligence” (*kecerdasan kewargaan*) (Latif 2018, 234). This kind of intelligence is important since the main weakness of the intelligence of Indonesia is in the public self, rather than the private self. Some good Indonesian individuals do not necessarily become good citizens or good public authorities. In the case of conjugal terrorism, radical families try to teach their members to become “good religious people” (according to their interpretation) without becoming good citizens. Latif says, “The citizens of the city-state show a sense of belonging and love the city and the republic ... Actively involved, moving, and mingling with all the diversity in the public sphere - not lazy and isolated in their respective bunkers” (Latif 2018, 235). Most of the terrorists who attack public places in Indonesia are known to be closed individuals. For example, the religious teacher who very much influenced a terrorist who attacked a police office in Medan, Sumatera on 13 November 2019 was known by his neighbours as being closed and not associating with other residents (cnnindonesia.com, 15 November 2019).

One important way of building civic intelligence is the acculturation of democratic values contained in *Pancasila*, especially in facing the fact of conjugal terrorism. Latif writes, “When *Pancasila* is ignored, the public sphere is celebrated by the spread of exclusivism and sectarian sentiments and the fading of social solidarity and social trust” (Latif 2018, 242). We find the truth of this statement in the case of conjugal terrorism when radical religious values in the family are thought to replace the democratic values of *Pancasila*. The public sphere then is filled with the negative presentation of religious claims, including terrorist attacks and radical discrimination against other religious believers.

Meanwhile, Latif reminds us, “*Pancasila’s* values are the genius heritage of the founding fathers who digging public ethical values from inside Indonesia itself, but with a universal

relevancy that can be ethical back rest to face the era of globalization” (Latif 2018, 246). Benyamin F. Intan, who wrote a dissertation on public religion and *Pancasila*, found that Christian thinkers, both the Catholics and Protestants he discusses, argued that while *Pancasila* was grounded in “the culture and values of the Indonesian people”, it was at the same time “compatible with Christianity” (Intan 2006, 174). In short, Intan found that there is not even one value or principle in *Pancasila* that contradicts the Christian faith. In particular, referring to Eric Louw, Intan found that *Pancasila* was shaped by Kuyperian pluralism especially in enforcing religious pluralism and avoiding majoritarianism (Intan 2019, 62).

Here, we see in brief the democratic values of *Pancasila* as they can be applied in the family. Soekarno, who articulated *Pancasila*, says, “The respect of human being as God’s creature is the core of the first principle of *Pancasila*, The One and Only Lordship” (Latif 2014, 35). Latif then develops the notion of a compassionate and tolerant divine thinking. When this value is applied in Indonesian families, it will avoid conjugal terrorism. While the close relation between the first principle (Lordship) and the second (humanitarianism) was apparent in Soekarno’s statement, Latif emphasizes one aspect of the implementation of the third principle (nationalism) in relation to the first principle, namely, loving the country by maintaining unity in diversity (Latif 2014, 277). When this value is taught in the Indonesian families, the family members are asked to learn to accept those who have different convictions. Terrorist attacks on the sites of other religions are incompatible with this value. The fourth value, democracy, for Latif, is by nature, “a way to love fellow human beings by respecting each citizen as a sovereign subject, not an object of oppression by coercive force or the power of capital” (Latif 2014, 472). In other words, democratic values require every Indonesian to respect others as sovereign subjects and refrain from using violence to force convictions and spread opinions over the plural others. Terrorist attacks by radicals are an example of such violence. The fifth principle emphasizes the vision of “a just and prosperous society” which has been the dream of happiness of Indonesians for hundreds of years (Latif 2014, 487). The dream of happiness is also owned by the different others. The state is required to guarantee social justice for all citizens while at the same time this value can be taught in the family as a cultural approach to social justice. The persuasive teaching of the civic values of *Pancasila* in Indonesian families can be the best way to avoid conjugal terrorism. The restriction and avoidance of conjugal terrorism must be followed up by the empowerment of the public role of religion, hence, by religious citizens coming into the public sphere with their positive presentations.

9.3 The empowerment of the public role of religion to face the violation of religious freedom and the quasi-plural public sphere

There are two problems highlighted in Chapter 3, namely, the violation of religious freedom and the quasi-plural public sphere that can be solved by the empowerment of the public role of religion. In this section, I engage in depth with these issues.

9.3.1 The violation of religious freedom

One of the main problems of civil society in Indonesia is the violation of religious freedom and the lack of a constitutional guarantee for minority groups. *Imparsial*, an organization that function as the Indonesian human rights' monitor, found that there were 31 cases of violation of religious freedom in 2019 (kompas.com, 17 November 2019). Most of the violations, according to *Imparsial's* report, are carried out by state personnel, which is very unfortunate. The violations are certainly carried out towards minority groups. Robin Bush highlights that the minority groups commonly experiencing repeated attacks are Ahmadiyya's, Shi'as and Christians (Bush 2015, 239). The violation of religious freedom and the lack of the fulfilment of the rights of minorities mark the stagnation and decline of Indonesia's democracy (Mietzner 2014, 161). The problem continued during Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency in 2004-2014. In 2013 Human Rights Watch reported, "President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has been inconsistent at best in defending the right to religious freedom. The absence of leadership has emboldened groups willing to use violence against religious minorities and the local and national officials who cater to them" (Bush 2015, 239).

The main sources of the violation of the rights of minority groups are the lack of state responsibility for constitutional guarantees for religious freedom as seen in Yudhoyono's presidency and the aggressive attitude of state personnel as seen in *Imparsial's* report above. Yudhoyono's attitude was that he commonly "took a safe, middle-of-the-road position" (Bush 2015, 243). As highlighted by Bush, on one side there was a condemnation of violence and a call for the rule of law but on the other side, he failed to "reprimand any of his ministers for their inflammatory statements, nor did he respond publicly to the threats of revolution issued by a number of Islamist groups should such a ban not be forthcoming" (Bush 2015, 243). Hendardi, the chief of the *Setara Institute*, one of the most important human rights' watch organizations in Indonesia, sets out three problems for religious freedom in Indonesia (Hendardi 2014, 146-150). First, at state level there is no comprehensive constitutional guarantee of religious freedom as is seen in the discriminatory laws such as the law on the Ahmadiyya and the law on the establishment of religious place. Second, on the level of society, radicalism has grown in strength and tolerance

has been weakened. Third, on the level of the victims, the most serious problem is the lack of any constitutional guarantee for the victims of religious violation. The government even considers the victims as those who do not want to obey governmental laws.

From the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, the violation of religion freedom is not only at discordance with the principle of confessional pluralism, but it also contradicts the principle of structural pluralism. The principle of confessional pluralism believes that every human being is incurably religious so has the intrinsic right to hold convictions and manifest them in public action. The principle of structural pluralism believes that each social sphere should have the freedom to flourish so that human beings might express the capacities as the image of God, including religious associations and institutions. The state as the sphere of spheres is required to protect the weaker parties in a society. In other words, the state is asked to provide public justice. In his more recent research, Intan has written a long and detailed analysis of the implementation of the principle of sphere sovereignty in the case of religious freedom in Indonesia (Intan 2019). I am not going to engage further with such kinds of work. Rather, I want to show how the doctrine of the image of God and the doctrine of common grace which empower civil society can also be implemented theoretically to strengthen religious freedom in Indonesia.

The faculties of the image of God, such as the sense of spirituality, the seed of religion, the sense of deity, the sense of rationality, the sense of morality and the relation with God and fellow human beings, are the fundamental reasons for the establishment of religious associations and institutions. Thus, the violation of religious freedom is a violation of human rights since human beings cannot live without having a conviction and without affiliating with others of like mind in a religious association or institution. It is vital to advocate religious freedom on the basis of particular theological arguments since otherwise it may become an impediment to liberty instead.

The theological back-up for religious freedom does not only come from the doctrine of the image of God but also from the doctrine of common grace. The doctrine of common grace empowers civil society as the realm outside the church which includes religious associations and institutions and becomes a partial and temporary remedy for human sin. Religious structures, for instance, encourage social order and righteousness, generate civic virtue, natural love, integrity, mutual loyalty, and foster intellectual knowledge and capability through religious studies. Religious communities also generate public opinion, which is an instrument of common grace as a social control for impeding the corruptive attitudes of society.

The theological support for religious freedom provides a fundamental reason to understand and justify the suggestions proposed by a leader of the human rights' watch organization regarding

episodes of religious violence in Indonesia. Hendaradi gives seven suggestions (Hendaradi 2014, 149-150). First, there must be strict law enforcement through the promulgation of laws guaranteeing religious freedom. Second, there must be serious law enforcement by eliminating the impunity that has been enjoyed by hardliners who often resort to violence. Third, there must be a constitutional guarantee for citizens to exercise freedom of religion. Fourth, local governments should not issue discriminatory local regulations and should not criminalize citizens in the name of enforcing these discriminatory rules. Sixth, there must be a deradicalization program for radical mass organizations. Sixth, the National Police Headquarters needs to establish an early warning system for social conflict to prevent violence between religious communities. Seventh, there must be an increase in the capacity of the police and the provision of a special budget to overcome the practice of violence in the name of religion.

Constitutional guarantees for minority groups would be an obvious sign of the fertility of democracy in Indonesia because minority groups, which have little social and political power, need to be protected in the name of ontological reasons and of human rights. With an increase in the protection of minority groups, civil society can be expected to develop, thereby bringing a number of contributions into the public sphere for the common good of society. This theoretical empowerment of minority groups in Indonesia is significant for maintaining democratization in the country, especially since the archipelago has been famously recognized as “the world’s largest electoral democracy in a Muslim-majority population” (cf. Philpott 2019, 139). According to the well-known recognition, this achievement owes a great deal to two of the largest Muslim mass organizations, *Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)* with around 30-50 million people, and *Muhammadiyah*, with around 29 million members (Philpott 2019, 139). The theoretical empowerment in this research can indirectly strengthen civil society including big organizations of this kind, but encourages the implementation of the national ideology and constitution which prefer religious freedom. This theoretical encouragement would also place high respect on the intellectual and activist legacy of the late Abdurrahman Wahid, who was a “civil Islam” – borrowing Robert Hefner’s term – who “strongly defended religious freedom as a universal human right with a foundation in both Islamic theology and human nature” (Philpott 2019, 139-140). Wahid indeed dreamed of a quite-plural public sphere, not a quasi-plural one.

9.3.2 The quasi-plural public sphere

As indicated in Chapter 3, Indonesia’s public sphere is not a quite-plural public sphere. Rather, it is a quasi-plural public sphere. The public sphere of Indonesia is open to participants from various religious and racial backgrounds. Nevertheless, as can obviously be seen, the

country's public sphere is dominated by the religion of the majority, especially the radicals. The immediate solution, given above, is the attempt to end conjugal terrorism. Kuyper believes that the development of democracy should start from the family. Thus, the deradicalization of terrorists should start from the persuasive teaching of *Pancasila*'s democratic values in Indonesian families as exhibited above.

Moving from the private sphere, there are some implications of the theoretical frameworks in this project. From Habermas' conception of postsecularism, some implications can be drawn. One of the most important points of postsecularism as conceived of by Habermas is the demand for religions to make an epistemic adjustment to the presence of other comprehensive doctrines and worldviews and to the secular knowledge of modern scientific experts; this could bring in the cognitive contents of religions, which prioritize the reasonableness of faith. This epistemic adjustment does not necessarily mean that religions have to translate or to compromise their faith, which for Habermas would be an asymmetrical mental and psychological burden; it would also contradict the freedom of religion and the freedom of expression. Public theology in Indonesia can still speak with its own particular language and reasons, which means being faithful in its transcendent aspect and at the same time serving the needs of society by engaging with the public issues that shape its subjects and approaches. The Protestants in Indonesia, for example, might bring in the doctrine of the image of God to oppose the violence towards migrant workers. In 2016, there were 7 million Indonesians working as migrant workers (Hidayah 2018, 225). They face huge difficulties, especially women, including "human trafficking, organ trafficking, rape, torture, fraud, state-administered punishments that range from deportation to the death penalty, and violations of their basic rights as workers, such as unpaid salaries, excessive working hours, no days off and no right to organise" (Hidayah 2018, 227). This epistemic adjustment indicates a complementary learning process that must also be required of secular citizens as well. The notion of postsecularism also emphasizes a change of public consciousness in secular people to make them fully aware of the existence of religious citizens and their religions. The complementary learning process on both sides and the change of public consciousness in secular countries exhibit on a presuppositional level that there is a dialectical relation between religion and secularity. This dialectic relation can be seen in *Pancasila* itself. Hardiman explains that *Pancasila* in its blueprint is postsecular since there is a dialogue between the first principle (Lordship) and aspects of civilization such as humanitarianism, nationalism, democracy, and social justice (Hardiman 2018, 193). Here, religions could come into the public sphere under the awareness of the 'dialogue' between Indonesian religions in general and Protestants in particular, which is deeply related to the first principle of *Pancasila*, and the rest of the principles. In his research, Intan has shown this

dialogue, not only for Protestants but also for Catholics (Intan 2006). Several examples can be quoted from his conclusion on the analysis of Christian thinking. Regarding civil society, Intan found that the Christian scholars under his discussion believe that the *Pancasila*-based state of Indonesia is neither secular nor religious, and should not be confused with a religious state (Intan 2006, 178). On the second principle, quoting TB Simatupang, Intan states that based on the doctrine of the image of God, “human beings have rights which are inviolable and inalienable” (Intan 2006, 185). On the third principle, the Christian intellectuals researched by Intan would never tolerate any religio-political absolutism, including the establishment of a Christian state for any reason (Intan 2006, 189). On the fourth principle, the dialogue between the doctrine of the sovereignty of God and popular sovereignty results in the conviction that the sovereignty of the people and the sovereignty of the state must not supersede the sovereignty of God (Intan 2006, 193-194). Of course, the religious scholars inspected by Intan do believe that democracy and the Christian faith are in accordance with each other. On the last principle, regarding the idea of development, the Christian intellectuals researched by Intan believe that it should be an integrated system in that the material aspect and the spiritual aspect of human life are inseparable (Intan 2006, 200).

Kuyper makes further contributions to the implications of a theology of the public sphere that I have included in my constructed analysis. In order to create a quite-plural public sphere in Indonesia, the principles of both structural pluralism and confessional pluralism must be implemented. The implementation of the principle of structural pluralism is in the empowerment of civil society by encouraging each social association and organization to function properly according to its own essential nature. For instance, there must be some attempts to decommercialize schools, universities, hospitals, even religions or churches so that they might flourish and get involved in and contribute to the public sphere. The over-commercialization of education in Indonesia has entered a critical stage since many schools and universities have become industries prioritizing financial profit (cf. “Komersialisasi Pendidikan Merajalela”, Kompas.com, 25 April 2010). For Intan, the implementation of the principle of structural pluralism is in the declaration that Indonesia is a nontheocratic state in that “there is neither a subordination of religion to the state nor a subordination of the state to religion” (Intan 2019, 72). The implication is obvious. “The state [does] not only preserves religious life”, Intan claims, “but also encourages its growth, thereby confirming that no religious hegemony exists in Indonesia” (Intan 2006, 72).

The principle of confessional pluralism believes three fundamental positions on religion: that every human being is incurably religious, that religion or faith affects all aspects of human life,

and that there is a strong tendency for faith or religion to speak and to manifest itself publicly. Since Indonesia's government officially acknowledges several religions, there must be the possibility for religious citizens to speak with their own language and reason in the public sphere. Indonesia, as a non-secular state, has to promote the idea of religious freedom (Intan 2019, 73). Moreover, religions have proven their vital contributions when fighting for the nations' independence (Intan 2019, 72). Several Protestant politicians have made considerable contributions to Indonesian society. J. Leimena, T.B Simatupang, Yap Thiam Hien are several examples. Leimena (1905-1977) is the longest-serving minister ever in Indonesia, having been a minister for over twenty years in eighteen different cabinets (tirto.id, 6 March 2019). Leimena is the only non-Muslim ever elected to be the acting president of Indonesia seven times 1961-1965 (Sirait et.al 2007, 281-282). T. B Simatupang (1920-1990) was a vital Protestant leader in the socio-political history of Indonesia. He was the leader of the Indonesian Army as well as the leader of the council of churches in Indonesia, in Asia and in the world. M. Panggabean, a former Indonesian minister of defence, describes three characteristics of Simatupang, namely, that he was a devout Christian, a science-minded person and a dedicated lover of his nation (Pardede, ed. 1990, 25-26). Yap Thiam Hien (1913-1989) was a lawyer who fought for the defence of human rights and was also a church elder. He was "a model advocate who was brave and selfless, always at the forefront of defending the oppressed people, against racial, political and religious discriminations without being selective. Yap [was]... not only human rights and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* defender, but also the humanitarian fighter in Indonesia and the world" (Widyatmadja 2013, 5). As a devout Christian, Yap was involved in many church activities, on the local, national and also international levels.

While the principle of confessional pluralism suggests eschatological tolerance, I have proposed the notion of an anthropological tolerance. These conceptions can be used to strengthen Protestant churches, seminaries and leaders to strive for a quite-plural public sphere, especially in Christian-dominated area such as Tana Toraja, Minahasa, Tapanuli, Nias island, Timor island, Maluku, Papua, and so forth, as well as in the rest of Indonesia. According to data I quote in Chapter 3, there is a Protestant population of 6,95% in the whole archipelago. While the Christian-dominated area can be an example for the exhibition of a quite-plural public sphere, it will invite fellow Indonesians in Muslim-dominated areas to achieve the same thing from a different perspective. Our vision is to build a quite-plural public sphere. Such kinds of empowerment of the public sphere must be followed up by the empowerment of civil society to face other problems such as the media conglomerate and the crisis of digital freedom.

9.4 The empowerment of civil society and the public sphere to face the media conglomerate and state pressure over digital freedom

As indicated in chapter 3, the contemporary Indonesian public sphere faces two main problems, among many others, namely, the media conglomerate and state pressure over digital freedom. Ross Tapsell, in his more recent research, indicates that there is the formation of digital conglomerates, some of them developments from the conventional media conglomerates (Tapsell 2017, 25-52). This section is dedicated to engaging with these problems by setting out the implications of previous chapters.

Hardiman found that the colonization of various aspects of society by the market has been taking place since the Reformation Order (1998) (Hardiman 2014, 660-661). He describes the shift from the colonization by bureaucracy in the New Order (1966-1998) to the colonization by the market in the Reformation Order, in which money, rather than solidarity, has become the code ruling social relations. A dozen years after the 1998 Reformation, the power of money and political power began to monopolize the public sphere. Political power also uses money to control the public sphere. Hardiman considers this to be a betrayal of the democratic vision (Hardiman 2014, 666). For example, the media as a public sphere operates checks and balances on civil society in particular and the public in general as a counterbalance to the political system; it loses its essential function when it is monopolized by investors from business and political elites, as it makes the media into a space for furthering private interests. Here, in my opinion, Arendt's criticism of the expansion of private interests into the public sphere in the modern condition is relevant for the Indonesian context. Indonesia's public sphere then becomes what Benhabib calls "a pseudospace of interaction". Arendt's total rejection of the private sphere in her political scheme and her criticism of the science of economics cannot be accepted because they are incompatible with modern society; however, her notion of the rise of the social and criticism of the invasion of the private sphere into the public sphere, which induces the loss of freedom, is relevant not only for modern society but in particular for the Indonesian context. When the public sphere becomes a space for achieving private interests, there is inevitably a loss of freedom in the media. For instance, under these conditions, journalists are not allowed by their editors or media owners to share transparent information which does not generate profits or which harms the interests of investors, even though it is actually needed by the public. Haryanto gives several obvious examples of this (Haryanto 2014, 688-699). There are several media groups such as *Kompas Gramedia*, *Lippo/ Berita Satu*, *Jawa Pos Group*, *MNC*, *Bakrie Group*, and so forth. The owners or the editors of the media in those groups often force their journalists to use their publications for business profit for their own group although it may harm the business interests of

other groups. Groups whose leaders are politicians will use their media to promote the political ambitions of the owners and help secure office for them. Arendt's criticism of the invasion of the private sphere into the public sphere is needed in this context.

Hardiman presupposes Habermas' earlier conception of the public sphere, especially his criticism of the refeudalization of the public sphere in the Indonesian context (Hardiman 2014, 666-667). Under refeudalization, the public sphere is coopted by the state and the market, hence true political communication has been systematically distorted and the public is deceived rather than empowered. While the thesis of the refeudalization of the public sphere is a historical analysis, in the case of Indonesia, Hardiman suggests the empowerment of civil society as a normative thesis, which is lacking in Habermas' earlier analysis (Hardiman 2014, 669). "The empowerment of civil society", Hardiman writes, "will widen the capacity of the political public sphere in curtailing the imperatives of the state and capitalistic market". Hardiman's suggestion is important not only to complete Habermas' historical analysis of the refeudalization of the public sphere but also to make up for the lack of a mature and systematic, well-developed conception of civil society in Arendt's political scheme; this is of vital importance for facing the expansion of private interest. Though Habermas proposes civil society in his later conception of the public sphere, his less radical empowerment of it can be supported and complemented by Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. Here, Kuyper's principle of structural pluralism is theologically backed up by the doctrine of the image of God and the doctrine of common grace; these are of great value to *Pancasila* (Intan 2019, 72) and relevant to the Indonesian context. Kuyper encourages each social association or institution to flourish and function properly according to their essential nature so that they might contribute by resisting the imperatives of political power and the power of money.

In addition to these, Hardiman also endorses the revitalization of the public sphere in terms of multiplying public forums so they can act as critical and even antithetical options for controlling the state (Hardiman 2014, 662). These forums can be used to examine laws and policies that will affect society. Those who are affected by those laws and policies must be involved in the public examination before they are finally established by the political system. Hardiman also suggests that these public forums can be used to develop political candidates as nominees for election. This would generate "a thick legitimation" – a Geertzian-modified term used by Hardiman – for political leadership. These public forums, in my view, could be initiated by local government, as in the case of Solo-mayor Jokowi, but also by members of parliament, activists, and also by the public itself. There must be a constitutional obligation for the political system to consider and take into account all the opinions formed and channeled through public forums in the public sphere.

This constitutional obligation is not something strange since *Pancasila*, as the national ideology implicitly endorses Habermasian two-track deliberative democracy.

The implication of the ideas expressed in this research concerns not only public forums but also the empowerment of internet and social media as the new media of the public sphere. The internet and social media have wider possibilities for non-coercive communication, rather than the real-world media such as printed and electronic media (Hardiman 2014, 670). From the perspective of Arendt's dramatic setting of public sphere, the internet and social media provide a wider opportunity to deliver memorable words. They will be used to share publicly the great deeds performed in public spaces through videos or pictures and to share the doings of political actors easily. Hardiman proposes two challenges for the virtual world in becoming a political public sphere, namely, civic orientation and public effects (Hardiman 2014, 671). Civic orientation means an attitude of the public in behaving carefully and speaking responsibly as citizens to prioritize public interests rather than private interests. Not only that, he questions whether the virtual world might have an impact on the real world. In addition to these challenges, I think that the internet and social media must rest on the authority of better argument. The change in public culture requires that the political system mitigate legal pressure over digital freedom.

The great potential of the internet and social media has been shown in recent times. For instance, since 2012 digital democracy in Indonesia has been flourishing. It is understood as "the usage of information and communication technology to involve citizens, to support the democratic decision-making processes, to empower representative democracy, and to expand the participatory politics" (Hamid 2014, 736). Hamid's study demonstrates that during the campaign for the governor's succession, digital society in Jakarta used social media to channel their political aspirations in order to produce "a pro-people and pro-public leader" (Hamid 2014, 737). This election saw Jokowi elected as governor of Jakarta. Jokowi, "a clean grassroots candidate" (Postill & Saputro 2017, 134), would also win the presidential election, having run against the former army general Prabowo Subianto in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

Postill and Saputro give another example how social media is working powerfully in Indonesia to generate social pressure (Postill & Saputro 2017, 130-132). In the case of Prita Mulyasari, a housewife who was sued for a private email complaining about how she was mistreated at the Omni International Hospital in Jakarta, social media was used to collect the money to pay the fine of Rp. 204 million (around USD 14,500). Immediately after the *Coins for Prita* movement was launched, in only a couple of months the organisers had gathered some USD 90,000, far more money than the fine. Merlyna Lim writes, "Once the Facebook support page was setup with the idea of contributing 500 rupiahs (~ US 5 cents) to the fine – the 'Coins for Prita' –

the movement took off and many more Facebook pages emerged. Posters were created and disseminated online and many Facebookers made the poster their profile picture. Some YouTube videos showcasing sentimental ballads for Prita also emerged” (Lim 2013, 641; quoted in Postill & Saputro 2017, 130). The movement thus quickly reached several hundred thousand supporters (McCoy 2019, 145). This case did not only show the power of the Indonesian social media to generate social pressure but also confirmed “ordinary Indonesians’ support for freedom of speech and their antipathy to laws protecting the powerful culminated in a digital cause célèbre” (McCoy 2019, 145).

Chapter 10

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This dissertation consists of three main parts. In the first part, I have shown the need for a theology of the public sphere by demonstrating the importance of the philosophy of Arendt and Habermas and of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. The problems of translation and compromise in public theology in general and the problems of media conglomerates, state pressure on digital freedom and the quasi-plural public sphere in the Indonesian context in particular make necessary the articulation of a theology of the public sphere. This is preceded by an exploration of the philosophy of the public sphere according to Arendt and Habermas. This exploration becomes the main focus of the second part.

I have first explored Arendt's notion of the public sphere. Arendt has two dialectical notions of the public sphere, namely, the dramatic and the discursive. By the first, which she explores in depth, the public sphere becomes a space for delivering memorable words and performing great deeds, exhibiting courage as part of the freedom to act and to initiate something new. In this model of the public sphere, what is most important is self-disclosure in front of an audience. In this dramatic notion, the public sphere also becomes the locus for politics and power, which can both be released or happen only in the public sphere. While exploring Arendt's dramatic model of the public sphere, I found her warning against several crises such as the rise of the social, totalitarianism, the loss of spontaneity and world alienation. These crises were happening mainly under the modern condition. In Arendt's work, we can also discern a second notion of the public sphere, the discursive interpretation, although this strand remained underdeveloped compared to the other one. In this line, Arendt believes that citizens in a *polis* decide public matters through persuasion. Under the influence of the 1956 Hungarian revolution she develops this discursive model of the public sphere, the principle of councils leading her to have an increased trust in the public's capacity to act. It is this Arendt's underdeveloped notion of the discursive model would be basic for Habermas' construction of the public sphere.

Habermas develops his notion of the discursive model with his first major book, which contained a historical sketch of the bourgeois public sphere. Though this is part of a unique development in history, Habermas' sketch contains several normative insights which cannot only be taken directly but would also be maintained and developed further by Habermas himself in his later works. The principles of inclusivity, equality and freedom equip this kind of public sphere, making it a counterbalance to the state. Moreover, the public use of reason through rational discourses on subjects of common concern will be Habermas' theme throughout his intellectual

career. Habermas develops a more mature and systematic notion of the public sphere in his work on law and democracy. Here, the political public sphere becomes a space for forming public opinion in noncoercive communication. Civil society partially plays an important role in this public sphere, which is actually polycentric. Civil society, as the prominent player, speaks in the public sphere using communicative action with reciprocally raised validity claims contained in speech acts in the context of the lifeworld in order to reach agreement or consensus. Habermas then develops a unique two-track deliberative democracy. In the informal public sphere, Habermas invites religious citizens to speak with their own particular language and reasons in postsecular societies. While exploring Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere, I also emphasized his warnings against several crises such as representative publicness, the refeudalization of the public sphere, and the colonization of the lifeworld.

Although there are some similarities between Arendt and Habermas in their philosophies of the public sphere, there are also differences because they philosophize from different contexts, with different creativity and different points of view. I explore these differences at the end of the second part. On the private sphere, Habermas is not only different from Arendt but more importantly he revises Arendt's deficient notion. Arendt's total rejection of the private sphere seems incompatible with modern societies. Habermas, rather, uses it as a place for nurture before entry into the public sphere. While Arendt is less precise in her notion of the private sphere and her notion of civil society is less developed. Habermas develops a more systematic notion of civil society.

Arendt's notion of the common world and Habermas' idea of the lifeworld have the same root in the Husserlian lifeworld. While Habermas maintains its quasi-transcendental character, Arendt makes it immanent by using the merit of *homo faber* to construct the common world. Both the Arendtian common world and the Habermasian lifeworld are the context for communication in the public sphere. While the notion of the common world and the lifeworld come from the same root, political action and communicative action are derived from different roots. While Habermas modifies Weber's theory of action, Arendt takes over the Aristotelian notions of *praxis* and *poiesis*. Though coming from different roots, Benhabib's study obviously proves Arendt's influence on Habermas. Moreover, in my analysis, there are some similarities between political action and communicative action, such as the emphasis on non-egocentric-based interest and the freedom to take initiative.

Following this exploration, I come to the concept of power. Though some elements are deficient, Habermas' criticism and modification of Arendt's notion of power is very important, especially in the context of the construction of a theology of the public sphere. Habermas' notion

of communicative power is a modification of Arendt's notion of power. This modification emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the discursive setting of the public sphere. The discursive setting is different from the dramatic setting. Nevertheless, I propose several ways out of this dilemma using several theoretical schemes. For instance, I use Young's criticism of Habermas to emphasize the significant notion of storytelling in Arendt's dramatic model to provide a context for communicative action. Though these differences can be interwoven, several aspects of their philosophy of the public sphere need other theoretical frameworks, especially Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. I then come to the last part of this research.

The third part starts with a historical and systematic exploration of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. Kuyper's articulation of the principle started with his struggle with the liberals, the French revolution, and German state sovereignty. In short, Kuyper struggled with uniformity and people or state sovereignty when they invaded other social spheres. Digging inspiration from Calvin and Groen in particular, Kuyper defended the diversity and sovereignty of social spheres by articulating the principle of sphere sovereignty. The conviction that Christ is king has several implications. Christ delivers sovereignty to various social spheres. The principle of structural pluralism then has its ontological root in Christ's sovereignty. Moreover, Christ's prerogative of bringing uniformity in his second coming generates an eschatological tolerance toward various religious convictions. The principle of confessional pluralism then has its ontological root in Christ's sovereignty. While Kuyper curtails state sovereignty in relation to Christ's authority, he designates the state as the sphere of spheres with a number of functions such as maintaining each social sphere in its own sovereign domain. In the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, the public sphere as conceived of by Arendt and Habermas is a sovereign sphere since it has its own authority and laws of life which are not derived from the state, the market or the church. The interpretative identification of the public sphere as a sovereign sphere opens the opportunity for a broader and deeper interpretation of more elements of the public sphere. This interpretation is called the theology of the public sphere.

The theology of the public sphere is an interpretation of the philosophy of the public sphere according to Arendt and Habermas from the perspective of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. This interpretation involves understanding and appreciation, criticism and corrections. This interpretation is followed up by several theological reflections and finishes with several implications for public theology.

From Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty, there are criticisms and corrections to the philosophy of the public sphere. In view of Kuyper's principle, Arendt's notions of the private sphere and civil society are less precise and less well developed. From the same point of view,

Habermas' notions of the private sphere and civil society are less radical and less prominent. The private sphere should flourish in itself before contributing to the public sphere. Civil society should be empowered for various associations and institutions that receive their sovereignty from God, while civil society is vital as the prominent player in the public sphere. The doctrines of the perichoretic relationship of the Triune God, the image of God and common grace can be used to strengthen the private sphere and civil society. The empowerment of civil society by the principle of sphere sovereignty serves the agenda of public theology itself in differentiation from political theology.

Besides criticisms and corrections, there are things to understand and appreciate. Arendt's and Habermas' revitalization of the public sphere would be highly valued if viewed through the lens of Kuyper's principle in that they empower a mediating structure which can be used on the one hand to keep the state in its own sovereign sphere, and on the other hand to keep social spheres from invading other spheres. Here, we found a significant contribution to the philosophy of the public sphere as conceived of by Arendt and Habermas. While the principle of sphere sovereignty presupposes the vital importance of the public sphere, Kuyper never articulated a more mature or a more systematic conception of it. I show in this chapter that from the principles of both structural pluralism and confessional pluralism, the public sphere is vital.

Communication in the public sphere can work only through the lifeworld as the context for human discourse. The lifeworld as conceived of by Habermas and as concretized by Arendt in the common world has its ontological root in the common knowledge of the Triune God. The lifeworld provides the possibility for communicative action. According to Kuyper's principle, communicative action can be valued as the specific model of communication not only in the public sphere but among various social spheres. Certainly, if we view it from Kuyper's perspective, the capacity to act, to have political action and communicative action is rooted in the fact of the human being is created as the image of God, and is supported by common grace.

On the concept of power, both Arendt and Kuyper prefer the polycentric notion of power. Arendt's notion of power is backed up by Kuyper's principle of the sovereignty of conscience. More importantly, Habermas' significant modification of Arendt's notion of power serves the agenda of the principle of structural pluralism. Communicative power as conceived of by Arendt, cannot, according to Habermas, be applied to all conditions. The differentiation of the models of power is precisely what Kuyper wants by his principle. Public theology thus is called to exercise communicative power and not to endorse tyrannical regimes or social injustice blindly. Kuyper's partial responsibility for apartheid policy is criticized here. Nevertheless, Kuyper's significant contributions are much appreciated. One of them is his preference for deliberative democracy.

Kuyper's tendency to choose deliberative democracy is not only in accordance with the philosophy of the public sphere as conceived of by both Arendt and, more importantly, by Habermas, but is also backed up by the Calvinist theology of democracy, including a commitment to plurality. Here, Kuyper's commitment to plurality not only respects Arendt and Habermas' commitments, but more significantly gives them radical legitimacy and a theological foundation. This theological back-up for pluralism is important since theological commitment usually becomes a serious challenge to pluralism itself. Here, I recall Guinness' vision of a civil public square/ sphere, which is neither a sacred nor a naked public square. Such a kind of vision is not only applicable to the western and/or American context but also the Indonesian context as well. This vision invites all religious citizens to speak in the public sphere.

This vision is in line with Habermas' positive recognition of the public role of religions in the context of postsecular societies. Habermas' attempt to reopen the public sphere to religious voices is endorsed not only by Kuyperian eschatological tolerance but also by my reconstruction of anthropological tolerance. Anthropological tolerance is constructed on the basis of Kuyper's radical religiosity of human being which he took from Calvin's notion of the sense of deity or the seed of religion. The implications for public theology are clear. Public theology receives an injection of fresh blood from these theoretical schemes. The implications of this theology of the public sphere pose limits not only for public theology in general but for the Indonesian public sphere and public theology in particular. This theology of the public sphere can have implications for facing several problems in the Indonesian public sphere, such as the problems of the media conglomerates, state pressure on digital freedom, and the quasi-plural public sphere. The problems of the media conglomerates and state pressure on digital freedom can be solved theoretically through the empowerment of civil society which gets its theological support from the doctrine of the image of God, the doctrine of common grace and the principle of sphere sovereignty itself. The problem of a quasi-plural public sphere can be theoretically solved through the public role of religion which gets its theological support from anthropological and eschatological tolerance and the philosophy of the postsecular public sphere.

SUMMARY

This dissertation consists of three parts. The first part is on the context of the research. The second part is on the philosophy of the public sphere. The third part is on the theology of the public sphere. We start from the first. There are two contexts for constructing a theology of the public sphere, namely, public theology in general as the theoretical context and Indonesia's public sphere and public theology in particular as the practical context. Public theology is a theology that penetrates the public sphere. Although public theology has departed from a certain religious heritage, it is often pressed and seduced into either translating or compromising its particular voices or messages, due to the multicultural nature of the contemporary public sphere. The tendency to translate and to compromise involves several problems such as the ontological problems of public theology and of pluralism. By translating or compromising its message, public theology might forsake its distinctive contributions and its specific reason for entering the public sphere. By doing this, public theology might also undermine pluralism itself. To settle this quandary, there must be two reinforcements, both in the public sphere itself and in public theology. A theology of the public sphere emerges to provide these reinforcements.

In addition to the theoretical context, Indonesia's public sphere and public theology are the practical context for constructing a theology of the public sphere. Indonesia's political situation in general and the public sphere in particular have been thriving since the 1998 political turmoil with the overturning of the New Order regime of the late President Soeharto (1921-2008), in power 1967-1998. In short, as acknowledged by scholars, Indonesian society has been developing as a democratic and open society under the Presidencies of B.J Habibie (1936-2019; in power 1998-1999) and Abdurrahman Wahid (1940-2009; in power 1999-2001) who tried to show an appreciation of plurality. There has been a reinforcement of Indonesian democracy since 1998 through certain efforts such as the increasing freedom of the press, the removal of restrictions on the formation of political parties, the systemic empowerment of civil society, and so forth. The strengthening of democracy in general and the public sphere in particular, however, are not without problems. The problem of media conglomerate and the government's pressure on digital freedom threaten Indonesian democracy and the public sphere. These problems become a serious impediment to democratic progress. A theology of the public sphere is called to obviate this impediment.

The new situation of Indonesian democracy has opened up the public sphere in the country so religious citizens have a say, including the Protestant minority. Though Protestants might speak in the public sphere, it does not mean that the country's public sphere is a quite-plural one. Rather,

it is a quasi-plural public sphere, since it is dominated by the religion of the majority, especially the radicals. The theoretical contribution for the establishment of the quite-plural public sphere and the theologico-philosophical justification of Protestant public theology can be done through a theology of the public sphere.

The theology of the public sphere is an interpretation of the philosophy of the public sphere as articulated by American-German philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) and German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1929-) from the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty of Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), a Dutch prime minister, theologian, and activist. This interpretation must be started from the explanation of the philosophy of the public sphere, as conceived by Arendt and Habermas. This is the second part. This part is ended by the dialogue between those philosophers especially on the differences on their thinking.

Arendt has two dialectical notions of the public sphere, namely, the dramatic and the discursive settings. By the first, which she explores in depth, the public sphere becomes a space for delivering memorable words and performing great deeds, exhibiting courage as part of the freedom to act and to initiate something new. In this model of the public sphere, what is more important is self-disclosure in front of an audience. In this related sense, the public sphere also becomes the locus for politics and power, which can both be released or happen only in the public sphere. While exploring Arendt's dramatic model of the public sphere, I found her warning against several crises such as the rise of the social, totalitarianism, the loss of spontaneity and world alienation. These crises were happening mainly under the modern condition. By the second, that is, the discursive setting, Arendt has also an underdeveloped notion of the discursive public sphere. Arendt believes that citizens in the *polis* decide public matters through persuasion. Moreover, under the influence of the 1956 Hungarian revolution she develops the discursive model of the public sphere, the principle of councils leading her to have an increased trust in the public's capacity to act. This underdeveloped notion of the discursive model would be well constructed by Habermas.

Habermas develops his notion of the discursive model with his first major book, a historical sketch of the bourgeois public sphere. Though this is part of a unique development in history, Habermas' sketch contains several normative insights which cannot only be taken directly but would also be maintained and developed by Habermas himself in his later works. The principles of inclusivity, equality and freedom equip this kind of public sphere, making it a counterbalance to the state. Moreover, the public use of reason through rational discourses on subjects of common concern will be Habermas' theme throughout his intellectual career. Habermas develops a more mature and systematic notion of the public sphere in his work on law and democracy. Here, the

political public sphere becomes a space for forming public opinion in noncoercive communication. Civil society partially plays an important role in this public sphere, which is actually polycentric. Civil society, as the prominent player, speaks in the public sphere using communicative action with reciprocally raised validity claims contained in speech acts in the context of the lifeworld in order to reach agreement or consensus. Habermas then develops a unique two-track deliberative democracy, namely, the informal and the formal public sphere, especially parliamentary bodies. In the informal public sphere, Habermas invites religious citizens to speak with their own particular language and reasons in postsecular societies. While exploring Habermas' philosophy of the public sphere, I also mention his warning of several crises such as representative publicness, the refeudalization of the public sphere, and the colonization of the lifeworld.

Although there are some similarities between Arendt and Habermas in their philosophies of the public sphere, there are also differences because they philosophize from different contexts, with different creativity and different points of view. I explore these differences at the end of the second part. On the private sphere, Habermas is not only different from Arendt but more importantly he revises Arendt's deficient notion. Arendt's total rejection of the private sphere seems incompatible with modern societies. Habermas, rather, uses it as a place for nurture before entry into the public sphere. While Arendt is less precise in her notion of the private sphere and her notion of civil society is less developed. Habermas develops a more systematic notion of civil society.

Arendt's notion of the common world and Habermas' idea of the lifeworld have the same root in the Husserlian lifeworld. While Habermas maintains its quasi-transcendental character, Arendt makes it immanent by using the merit of *homo faber* to construct the common world. Both the Arendtian common world and the Habermasian lifeworld are the context for communication in the public sphere. While the notion of the common world and the lifeworld come from the same root, political action and communicative action are derived from different roots. While Habermas modifies Weber's theory of action, Arendt takes over the Aristotelian notions of *praxis* and *poiesis*. Though coming from these different roots, Benhabib's study obviously proves Arendt's influence on Habermas. Moreover, in my analysis, there are some similarities of political action and communicative action such as the emphasis on non-egocentric-based interest and the freedom to take initiative.

Following this exploration, I come to the concept of power. Though some elements are deficient, Habermas' criticism and modification of Arendt's notion of power is very important, especially in the context of the construction of a theology of the public sphere. Habermas' notion

of communicative power is a modification of Arendt's notion of power. This modification emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the discursive setting of the public sphere. The discursive setting is different from the dramatic setting. Nevertheless, I propose several ways out of this dilemma using several theoretical schemes. For instance, I use Young's criticism of Habermas to emphasize the significant notion of storytelling in Arendt's dramatic model to provide a context for communicative action. Though these differences can be interwoven, several aspects of their philosophy of the public sphere need another theoretical framework, namely, Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. I then come to the last part of this research.

The third part starts with a historical and systematic exploration of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. Kuyper's articulation of the principle started with his struggle with the liberals, the French revolution, and German state sovereignty. In short, Kuyper struggled with uniformity and people or state sovereignty when they invaded other social spheres. Digging inspiration from Calvin and Groen in particular, Kuyper defended the diversity and sovereignty of social spheres by articulating the principle of sphere sovereignty. The conviction that Christ is king has several implications. Christ delivers sovereignty to various social spheres. The principle of structural pluralism then has its ontological root in Christ's sovereignty. Moreover, Christ's prerogative of bringing uniformity in his second coming generates an eschatological tolerance toward various religious convictions. The principle of confessional pluralism then has its ontological root in Christ's sovereignty. While Kuyper curtails state sovereignty in relation to Christ's authority, he designates the state as the sphere of spheres with a number of functions such as maintaining each social sphere in its own sovereign domain. In the perspective of the principle of sphere sovereignty, the public sphere as conceived of by Arendt and Habermas is a sovereign sphere since it has its own authority and laws of life which are not derived from the state, the market or the church. The interpretative identification of the public sphere as a sovereign sphere opens the opportunity for a broader and deeper interpretation of more elements of the public sphere. This interpretation is called the theology of the public sphere.

The theology of the public sphere is an interpretation of the philosophy of the public sphere according to Arendt and Habermas from the perspective of Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty. This interpretation involves understanding and appreciation, criticism and corrections. This interpretation is followed up by several theological reflections and finishes with several implications for public theology.

From Kuyper's principle of sphere sovereignty, there are criticisms and corrections to the philosophy of the public sphere. In view of Kuyper's principle, Arendt's notions of the private sphere and civil society are less precise and less well developed. From the same point of view,

Habermas' notions of the private sphere and civil society are less radical and less prominent. The private sphere should flourish in itself before contributing to the public sphere. Civil society should be empowered for various associations and institutions that receive their sovereignty from God, while civil society is vital as the prominent player in the public sphere. The doctrines of the perichoretic relationship of the Triune God, the image of God and common grace can be used to strengthen the private sphere and civil society. The empowerment of civil society by the principle of sphere sovereignty serves the agenda of public theology itself in differentiation from political theology.

Besides criticisms and corrections, there are things to understand and appreciate. Arendt's and Habermas' revitalization of the public sphere would be highly valued if viewed through Kuyper's principle in that they empower a mediating structure which can be used on the one hand to keep the state in its own sovereign sphere, and on the other hand to keep social spheres from invading other spheres. Here, we found a significant contribution to the philosophy of the public sphere as conceived of by Arendt and Habermas. While the principle of sphere sovereignty presupposes the vital importance of the public sphere, Kuyper never articulated a more mature or a more systematic conception of it. I show in this chapter that from the principles of both structural pluralism and confessional pluralism, the public sphere is vital.

Communication in the public sphere can work only through the lifeworld as the context for human discourse. The lifeworld as conceived of by Habermas and as concretized by Arendt in the common world has its ontological root in the common knowledge of the Triune God. The lifeworld provides the possibility for communicative action. According to Kuyper's principle, communicative action can be valued as the specific model of communication not only in the public sphere but among various social spheres. Certainly, if we view it from Kuyper's perspective, the capacity to act, to have political action and communicative action is rooted in the fact of the human being is created as the image of God, and is supported by common grace.

On the concept of power, both Arendt and Kuyper prefer the polycentric notion of power. Arendt's notion of power is backed up by Kuyper's principle of the sovereignty of conscience. More importantly, Habermas' significant modification of Arendt's notion of power serves the agenda of the principle of structural pluralism. Communicative power as conceived of by Arendt, cannot, according to Habermas, be applied to all conditions. The differentiation of the models of power is precisely what Kuyper wants by his principle. Public theology thus is called to exercise communicative power and not to endorse tyrannical regimes or social injustice blindly. Kuyper's partial responsibility for apartheid policy is criticized here. Nevertheless, Kuyper's significant contributions are much appreciated. One of them is his preference for deliberative democracy.

Kuyper's tendency to choose deliberative democracy is not only in accordance with the philosophy of the public sphere as conceived of by both Arendt and, more importantly, by Habermas, but is also backed up by the Calvinist theology of democracy, including a commitment to plurality. Here, Kuyper's commitment to plurality not only respects Arendt and Habermas' commitments, but more significantly gives them radical legitimacy and a theological foundation. This theological back-up for pluralism is important since theological commitment usually becomes a serious challenge to pluralism itself. Here, I recall Guinness' vision of a civil public square/ sphere, which is neither a sacred nor a naked public square. Such a kind of vision is not only applicable to the western and/or American context but also the Indonesian context as well. This vision invites all religious citizens to speak in the public sphere.

This vision is in line with Habermas' positive recognition of the public role of religions in the context of postsecular societies. Habermas' attempt to reopen the public sphere to religious voices is endorsed not only by Kuyperian eschatological tolerance but also by my reconstruction of anthropological tolerance. Anthropological tolerance is constructed on the basis of Kuyper's insights regarding the radical religiosity of human being which he took from Calvin's notion of the sense of deity or the seed of religion. The implications for public theology are clear. Public theology receives an injection of fresh blood from these theoretical schemes. The implications of this theology of the public sphere pose limits not only for public theology in general but for the Indonesian public sphere and public theology in particular. This theology of the public sphere can have implications for facing several problems in the Indonesian public sphere, such as the problems of the media conglomerates, state pressure on digital freedom, and the quasi-plural public sphere. The problems of the media conglomerates and state pressure on digital freedom can be solved theoretically through the empowerment of civil society which gets its theological support from the doctrine of the image of God, the doctrine of common grace and the principle of sphere sovereignty itself. The problem of a quasi-plural public sphere can be theoretically solved through the public role of religion which gets its theological support from anthropological and eschatological tolerance and the philosophy of the postsecular public sphere.

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