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Indonesia's New Populist Order and Diffused Progressives in Comparative Perspective

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OLLE TÖRNQUIST

ABSTRACT

Neoliberal oriented growth and elitist democratization has bred in Indonesia a new populist order, with former local businessperson, mayor, governor, and now president Joko Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, in the forefront. In this context, perhaps partly as in the Philippines, there has been some space for progressives, but also for right-wingers. What are the prospects for popular politics?

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In my comparative studies, I focus in particular on the problems of democratization from the point of view of pro-democrats in the widest sense. What I thought I should do now is to begin by talking about the past and then turn to one of the major contemporary puzzles. In 1998, similar things happened in Indonesia as what had happened in EDSA in 1986. In Indonesia, a lot of people came out to the streets, rallying against the dictator Suharto and in favor of democracy. During the next few years, however, the democracy groups became increasingly fragmented and were politically marginalized in the process of elite-dominated democratization. A number of oligarchs came back and adjusted themselves to the new system.

Around 2005, however, things began to change in Indonesia. The electoral system was partially altered. In addition to the proportional system of electing party representatives to central and local parliaments, local political executives, and later the president too, were now elected directly. This was combined with radical decentralization and significant devolution of funds. One of the effects was more emphasis on welfare-oriented policies, especially in the aftermath of the Asian economic crisis. Another was the rise of moderately-reformist local leaders. One of them is now the president of the country, Joko Widodo—better known as Jokowi.

Some of these new politicians may certainly be analyzed in terms of local strongmen, who are at times backed by pro-democrats. However, there is also a shift from the old elitist democratization to populism, at least in terms of methods. Whether one can also talk about populist projects is a slightly different issue. We shall come back to definitions later.

Now on to the main puzzle. While the new populist politics seemed to create an opening for pro-democrats, this was altered again, already by 2016, as there were again huge numbers of people in the streets of Jakarta—almost like in the protests against Suharto. This time, however, it was not to celebrate or fight for democracy, but to remove the governor of Jakarta, who you could label as liberal-democratic Singaporean-inspired manager-cum-developmentalist—who also happened to be Chinese and Christian—Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, or Ahok for short. But the people in the streets wanted to weaken President Jokowi too. It is true that they also acted to defend 'Muslim values,' but essentially, they were backed by Indonesia's Trump, ex-general and tycoon Prabowo Subianto. Moreover, I think what happened then and what might happen in the forthcoming local and presidential elections in Indonesia in 2018 and 2019 may be compared with the rise of your President, Rodrigo Duterte.

So how did we go from reformist and fairly liberal populism under

Jokowi and Ahok—and partly Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino—to right-wing populism? And what should be done? These are the questions that I would like to talk about.

We may begin by summarizing the developments in Indonesia between 1998 and 2016. As already mentioned, the fragmented pro-democrats who tipped the balance in the struggle against Suharto were soon even more politically marginalized in the context of elitist liberal democratization than the radical democrats who had fought Marcos. In Indonesia, from 2005, however, the issue of welfare reforms became crucial, especially in the context of the local direct elections, decentralization, and devolution of resources. Indeed, many local strongmen flourished, but I am not sure as to what extent we can compare them to the bosses that John Sidel identified in the Philippines. In Indonesia, there were also examples of local leaders who managed to gain broad popularity and thus also attracted support from mainstream elites and businesses. Therefore, in several cases, there were openings for progressives who could unite behind reformist leaders and gain some favors in return.

Now what do we mean by populism? This is of course a contested concept, but while leftists as well as rightists refer to this as a very thin ideology in terms of the will of the people, I think we need to focus on the methods, not on the more or less leftist or rightist projects. Hence, I think populism refers to, firstly, the method of boosting harsh critique of 'the established elite' (including experts). Secondly, this is combined with critique of representation and the favoring instead of supposedly direct linkages between the leader and 'the people.' Thirdly, there is no definition of 'the people' and no qualified analyses of various interests. The populist leaders stand up against 'the establishment,' embodying what they claim to be 'ordinary peoples' feelings and cultures. Then of course, such methods can be applied by leftists as well as rightists. And various forms of identity politics can be involved too. In these respects, I think populism is fairly universal.

Now let us turn to Indonesia in more detail and start in 2010. At that point, a modest local businessman with the name of Joko Widodo—Jokowi—was re-elected as mayor in a small rural town in Central Java called Solo or Surakarta. Originally, he had been elected in 2005, but not with many votes. But now he gained 90% of the votes without cheating. He was supported by former President Megawati's party, PDI-P (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*/Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle). But most interestingly, his remarkable victory rested on a kind of social contract between business, middle classes, and the poor.

In 2012, Jokowi was elected governor of Jakarta. As in Solo, his general idea was to combine less inequality with growth and development. In addition, we need to mention his deputy governor Ahok, who was more inspired by Singapore. In the 2012 Jakarta elections, Ahok was actually not backed by the same party as Jokowi—Megawati's PDI-P—but by ex-general and oligarch Prabowo. Yet Ahok distanced himself from Prabowo, and Jokowi and Ahok became a team, almost like the bad and the good cop. Ahok was a forceful business-oriented manager who hit hard against inefficient bureaucrats, while Jokowi was softer, talking to common people and promising to support them. Jokowi is not a master in rhetoric but he communicates well with people. Moreover, in 2014, Jokowi even managed to be elected president in a very close and dirty race against Prabowo.

So the main question now is how were these advancements possible in the first place? It is true that the pro-democrats were marginalized and fragmented, and they had failed to unify politically. As you will realize, there are many similarities with the Philippines. However, many diverse activists were able to rally behind in reformist populist leaders like Jokowi and related parties. Meanwhile, the reformists and their focus on welfare policies also gained support among workers, farmers, and middle classes. Finally, businessmen became interested too, given that they keep looking for the best possible vote-getters whom they can sponsor in return for favorable policies.

In addition to these developments, the new direct elections with single majorities of political officials are important. The political elite could no longer rely on the proportional elections and their clientelist vote banks only. In the direct first-past-the-post elections, they needed popular vote getters in order not to lose.

One implication is that all mainstream political operators must go beyond horse-trading inside the parliaments when trying to get access to the executive positions. In addition, they must fish around for votes and proposals outside parliament. This applies to all politicians, reactionary as well as reformist. All of them must even approach a number of progressive activists with some following and good public reputation. Hence, the most well-known activists delegate responsibility for the daily operations in 'their' organizations to younger colleagues and give priority instead to cooperation with various mainstream politicians. Hence, they gain some strength and in some cases, like in Solo, they were able to negotiate social contracts.

In Solo, actually, Jokowi wanted to evict quite a number of poor people from various areas, from the pedestrian lanes and along the river banks. This is a classic conflict in the Global South. Poor people come to the city centers and try to survive, while businesses and upper middle classes and their politicians want to build malls and make the cities more modern and pleasant for themselves. However, Jokowi could not get away with bulldozing the poor people. He had cooperated with many of their associations in the elections, and they had now become a bit stronger. So the poor people and their organizations said that they would refuse to move. Jokowi answered with hesitation. In order not to lose face, he negotiated with the poor people's groups for a month. Finally, there was a compromise which both parties could agree to. This became very important for Jokowi. He became known as a politician who did not use people but talked to them. It was some kind of victory for the urban poor too. Of course, it was not a revolution, but it was a fair compromise. At least, these people got a new lease on life. They got decent places to live and decent

marketplaces to earn a living.

However, the social contracts were indeed populist by not being institutionalized and democratic. Rather, they were informal and negotiated between individual CSO leaders and the politicians. Figures like Jokowi negotiated with one leader at a time. So you talk to one CSO leader today, and another tomorrow. And then, separately, you talk to the businessmen. To what extent the CSO leaders (and certainly the businessmen too) are democratically appointed from below and accountable to members and/or followers is an open question. Top-level politicians like Jokowi can almost act as a little king who plays his subjects against each other. And again, nothing is democratically institutionalized. So when Jokowi later left Solo for Jakarta, and his deputy mayor—with the interesting name of Rudy—took over, the practices and contracts deteriorated.

Furthermore, it was very difficult to scale up practices that had developed in rather small communities in a city of about half a million people, to a city like Jakarta, with at least 12 million people. If the shortage of good democratic representation among the urban poor and in negotiations with the mayor was a problem in Solo, it was much worse in Jakarta. Moreover, civil society and poor people's organizations in Jakarta tend to be even weaker and more fragmented.

Finally, of course, it was even more difficult to scale up the model of informal local social contracts nationally in face of the presidential election and thereafter under his government. This would have called for democratic linkages between the local organizations and national representatives, but there was almost nothing like that. Also, it was hard to combine this idea of social contracts with the existing anti-corruption movement in Indonesia. There is a strong anti-corruption movement, but it is focused on big business and major political scams. You can report it in media. You can disclose a scam. You can make big sensational news out of it. That is what is given priority. The focus is *not* on the huge corruption in apex bodies related to everyday life

issues like the provision of electricity, or garbage collection, or water management, etc. (This, in turn, is nourishing local level corruption too, but the latter cannot be tackled head on.) The implication is that ordinary people are not very interested in the predominant anti-corruption campaigns.

There is a perfect illustration from New Delhi in India of the potential if there is more focus on corruption of social delivery that matters to ordinary people. In the elections of 2013 and 2015, a new 'Common Man's Party' initiated by anti-corruption activists focused on the corruption of the provision of the everyday needs of people such as water, sanitation, health, and electricity and was immensely successful. Very little of this kind happened in Jakarta. The national commission on corruption in particular, but also the anti-corruption movement at large, did not focus on these issues.

So when the idea of social contracts was brought up to Jakarta and at the national level, the efforts backslided. The civil society organizations and poor people's organizations, returned to their fragmented forms of activism, where they go individually to the leaders they know, to the politicians they know personally, and gain access and then horse-trade for the best possible agreements. This is what my colleagues and I call *transactional populism*. Transactional politics is nothing new within mainstream politics. The interesting thing is that it has also infected the pro-democratic activists who engage in populist projects. I think you could, perhaps, associate some of this to the way in which some of the supposedly leftist Philippine groups have supported Duterte.

Parallel to these efforts at social contracts in Indonesia, more class-oriented organizations developed among laboring people. Laborers, just like the pro-democrats, are of course, very divided in Indonesia as in the Philippines. Structurally, this rests on uneven development that generates very different conflicts and interests. It is far from the more comprehensive industrial revolution in the

North, which generated comparatively common demands and unified organizations, especially in Europe.

In this regard, however, there have been increasing struggles in Indonesia against the more neoliberal employment conditions after the Asian crisis and demands for public welfare reforms.

What I am talking about is especially the increasing flexibility in terms of economic conditions, which affects not just workers, but also the middle classes. This is flourishing in Indonesia. In this context, interestingly, permanent workers realized that they needed wider alliances and political influence to contain competition based on cheaper costs of labor by way of subcontracting and casual forms of employment. They could not fight it on their own. They had to link up with others as well. Hence, as permanent labor, you would like to talk to cheap labor, and try to form some kind of united action.

Contract labor, outsourced labor, as well as self-employed and even the middle class freelancers, also needed to engage in politics because that is the only way for them to gain welfare measures, better social rights, and employment conditions. Many of these people do not even have a permanent employer to fight and negotiate with. Hence, they have to engage in politics and address the government and ask for these services.

In addition, the politicians themselves realized that they had to do something. People were getting angry and the politicians needed to get more votes. Hence, there were some concessions and regulation on subcontracting and efforts at welfare reforms became most important as a basis for broad alliances. During the period when Megawati was president (2001–2004), she introduced a universal public health reform. However, the reform was never implemented by the next president, the former general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, or SBY. As compared to many of his predecessors, SBY was a rather efficient president. You could compare him to Fidel Ramos. But in this respect, he failed miserably.

During the reign of SBY, there were therefore a number of politicians in the opposition who were interested in giving it to him, not least Megawati who lost in the presidential race and felt personally betrayed by her former minister. Firstly, you have thus a number of politicians in the opposition inside the parliament who wanted to implement the reform. Secondly and equally important, you have a growing alliance in favor of an improved reform proposal in the streets, in the working class areas, and among huge numbers of people who needed welfare reforms and must address social rights issues. This fostered a broad alliance of progressive politicians, unions and related movements, and civil society organizations among the urban poor and informal labor. There was a campaign between 2010 and 2012 initiated by labor-oriented civil society activists. And the campaign was remarkably successful. Huge numbers of people were outside the parliament, some progressive politicians were inside, and the media reported. The outcome was a unique universal public health reform, which works better than expected.

However, in this case there too were a number of problems. The main obstacle was that there was no long-term strategy. After the beautiful victory, activists cheered, said 'very good,' decided to monitor the outcome, and then went home. There was no plan on how to advance by way of transformative politics and policies, of which the main characteristic is that you begin by fighting for a reform that creates the foundations for a more advanced follow-up reform, and then you turn to the next in a series. On the contrary, the alliance said that its mission was completed, period.

Equally important, there were also no demands—neither from below, nor from the reformist populist center—to institutionalize channels of influence to continue discussions between the alliance partners and the politicians. How are we going to really implement this now? How are we going to continue to talk about this kind of welfare reforms? Hence, there is still no system of institutionalized interest-based representation.

So just like the poor citizens who fought for local social contract and were unable to scale up their actions because of the lack of representation, the various class-based groups fighting for laws against informal labor relations and for welfare reforms were short of democratic forms of representation in negotiations with the state and government.

The implication was that in this case too, the broad alliance disintegrated and was backsliding to populist transactional politics. It means that one organization after the other and one leader after the other come to what they deem to be the least bad politicians to negotiate individual grievances and gain favors. Even the best organized metal workers' union thus came out in support of Indonesia's Trump, the tycoon and ex-general Prabowo, in the presidential elections because he offered them small benefits and promised that their leader would be minister of labor. This is now being repeated in the face of the 2019 elections.

The consequences were that the elected President, Jokowi, became dependent on horse-trading with the established parties and elites because the popular organizations and civil society organizations were weakened. They do not have a broad alliance anymore. They are just acting individually. They could not offer any alternative backing to the slightly-reformist government. The government backslided into quite conservative transactions with the mainstream parties, the oligarchs, and the military leaders.

In addition, there were very little initiatives from either the progressives or anyone else to develop transformative democratic forces. With this, I mean that if you sit in power in the presidential palace or the governor's office, or belong to the close advisers, you may develop policies that foster better conditions for further actions. There are some progressive people in the parliament and in the president's West Wing. These people had little backing from below and they are very constrained by day-to-day problems. They have largely failed to

initiate transformative policies, through which you could facilitate better organizing and better conditions for people on the ground. So these advisers are there with their hopes, but fail to really make the best out of it, thus becoming co-opted or dropped out. I cannot help comparing them with some of our good friends who were associated with the Aquino government in the Philippines, who also tried to do a lot of good things, but perhaps, were not able to really live up to expectations.

Yet, absolutely the worst was that Ahok, the Singaporean-oriented leader who replaced Jokowi as governor of Jakarta, abandoned the idea of social populist contracts. Ahok wanted to make advances based on being a skilled, quick, managerial, active, and efficient person. And this was of course appreciated by many businessmen, and the affluent local middle classes, who voted to beautify their cities, and get less traffic jams, more parking places, and new connective means of transportation. But it also generated frustration among the poor, who were evicted because there were no more social contracts. So they felt left behind. And when land is now being reclaimed in north Jakarta, and other development projects are intensified, many poor people in Jakarta were evicted and not taken proper care of. In addition, many businesspeople and professionals are worried because they do not really feel that they are able to take advantage of the rapid and supposedly smart and globalized urban development that was going on.

The worried poor, and those feeling neglected by the 'smart ones,' were easy to capture for Jokowi's and Ahok's political rivals, who were thus able to build mass support. So they promised that they would cater to the worried, and that if they come to power, there would be no unfair evictions; which of course may be doubted. In addition, they said to the worried businessmen and middle classes that they would contemplate *pribumi* politics (i.e. favor the indigenous, in particular, over the ethnic Chinese businessmen). Also, they would defend supposedly threatened Muslim values. To heat this up, they financed

various extremist groups, including those among extremist Muslims and right-wing people.

This is the background of the big demonstrations in late 2016 in Jakarta. On the surface, it is a reaction from the Muslim community; but in reality, it was engineered by powerful people, including ex-general tycoon Prabowo, who is going to return as a contender or as kingmaker in the 2019 election. However, this engineering was possible because of the weak quality of the reformist-oriented leaders in the governor's office and the presidential palace. These leaders, as we know, had given up on comprehensive follow-up welfare reforms, populist social contracts, and democratic interest-based representation. Popular-based groups were backsliding.

So Ahok's popularity fell from 70% to something like 30% in a few weeks. It picked up a little bit, but he lost in the elections in 2017. He was even put in jail for two years because he had spoken up against the abuse of Islam in politics, which was interpreted as humiliating Islam or the Quran. Similar tactics may be used in the direct elections in 2018. Everybody in the opposition is looking at Jakarta, saying that what will happen there is a great opportunity, so they have to try religious identity-based populism. Of course, the same thing may be applied in the presidential and general elections in 2019.

This is not very good news and a lot of people are really worried. I am less worried of this country turning into another Iran because comparatively speaking, mainstream Islam in Indonesia is remarkably plural. Rather, I am worried that not very Muslim but very rich leaders will instigate Muslim groups and apply Narendra Modi's Indian version of religious identity politics combined with state-directed liberal economic reforms. Clearly, this may be possible because of the weaknesses in the welfare and social rights policies and the poor chances for ordinary people to further develop and use democracy to foster their interests. That is what happened in the United States with Trump, and this is possibly what happened here as well with

Duterte—even though he came from the local field—while Prabowo is the son of a very well-noted economist, the ex-son-in-law of Suharto, ex-general and tycoon. They are very different in that sense, but their methods are similar. And we see similar things happening in Europe, as well with identity politics spreading around the world. How can we stand up against it?

Well, the conclusions that I can suggest are based on the studies on Indonesia and India, where I have been involved. As you might know, India is dominated by Hindu-chauvinist identity politics under the BJP (*Bharatiya Janata Party*/Indian People's Party). Its leader, Narendra Modi, came to power in 2014 against the centrist Congress Party that had been supported by the left movement and had been in power for two periods. The center-left government had fostered economic liberalization but also introduced a cluster of welfare reforms. Yet, these were top-down, not very much production-oriented, and rarely caught the imagination of the middle classes.

My first general conclusion, then, is that it has to be acknowledged that very few attempts in building unified progressive mass politics from below and led by fragmented democracy-oriented movements, unions, and CSOs have been successful. There have been so many different attempts, and all of them have been very well-intended, but not successful. The various groups are fine, but poor at working together, and they are fine at local work, but not at scaling up.

I have already mentioned that the structural causes for this is the uneven character of capitalist and globalized development, which generates many different interests and makes the struggle for unifying demands in broad organizations difficult. Yet I would also argue that there is poor leadership. Moreover, we have seen that many groups can come together and gain strength behind certain kinds of comprehensive policy proposals. These reform proposals include the social contracts on urban planning and development and the welfare-oriented reforms on increasing social rights. Also, from

New Delhi, we know of the broad alliances for less corrupt and more democratic social provisioning. Similar experiences were reported from other countries as well. If that is correct, comprehensive policy proposals and social contracts of this kind may serve as a unifying umbrella—only if supplemented by democratic rather than populist forms of representation by citizen groups and interest organizations as a supplement to the idea of liberal electoral democracy, which, at present, is being hijacked by the elite. Well, I am speculating, of course, but this is what I think of the implications.

So what should be done? First thing is giving priority to such broad alliances in favor of social rights, work rights, and welfare. What does it mean? It means that we have to give more importance to these broad alliances rather than single movements. The implication is, first, that if I am sitting as an adviser of a committed donor, and is interested in supporting, for instance, trade union groups, I would opt against support to trade unions who are not engaged in broader social alliances. Second, I would facilitate the latter by supporting attempts by reformist leaders at transformative politics and production-oriented welfare reforms.

What does production-oriented welfare mean? It means that you do not support welfare by handouts. You shall not just help people and support demand in the market. The type of support shall also foster transformation. For instance, you do not give support to families with children, so that fathers can engage with work, while the mother is doing domestic work, and then take care of their kids. You build kindergartens because it will empower women to get out of the household, and get them decent employment, and the kids will greet each other. You can foster them, and promote their education. If you have to give family support, you give it to the woman, and not to the head of the household, because the men may buy beer. Similarly, I am skeptical of the idea of unconditional basic income; rather, I would support the right to unemployment insurances and meaningful jobs for a decent pay, including within public services and

welfare. We should not reduce the low wages, but the highest. Decent and more compressed wages will help close down factories that are unproductive and increase investments in the more competitive ones. In the process of adjustment, those who are badly affected must be supported and assisted in getting new jobs, including through education and through meaningful public sector work.

This is the type of production-oriented and welfare-based policies that were developed in Scandinavia many decades ago and which of course cannot be exported in a turnkey fashion. But they can serve as sources of inspiration. Take South Korea for instance. How did they manage to uncrown the Swedish shipyards? Well, one was that they paid the education of their engineers through the state budget, so that their engineers could not demand high wages to compensate for any private investment in their education. Hence, the education was great, and wages were modest, and the new the shipyards could be internationally competitive. That is transformative and productive-oriented welfare policy. But of course it should be done by more democratic means than in South Korea.

Secondly, I think we have to include anti-corruption measures in social welfare policies. Otherwise, the middle classes will not be interested because they might say, "why do we have to pay taxes for welfare policies that others abuse?" Hence, we have to build various ways of controlling and improving public services. There is nothing wrong with disclosing big frauds in Makati and so on. It has to be done. But the anti-corruption movement must be rooted in the interest of ordinary people. So farmers may be interested in fighting land grabbing by corrupted politicians in tandem with businesses. And the urban poor, as well as the middle classes, are furious about the corruption of public services. Thus, anti-corruption efforts will be more politically important. You have to build broad alliances. You have to have these reforms, inclusive of institutionalized, democratic, and interest-specific participation, so that people can control what is happening, influence it, and also be stimulated to organize.

Finally, of course, we need to have study groups and commissions to collect information about previous experiences in this regard. Plus work closely with concerned politicians and activists. Thank you.

OPEN FORUM

Erwin R. Puhawan (Freedom from Debt Coalition) asked about the conditions regarding the 2019 elections, particularly the idea of Jokowi trying to run again for the presidency, and its implications for Jokowi's strategy, because it was observed that his optimistic populism did not work. Given this particular case, he further asked if Jokowi is going to change his politics, considering that the presidential elections is approaching.

Professor Törnquist responded that he is not sure with regard to Jokowi's plans. Regarding the populist plans that were proposed during the earlier stages of the Jokowi administration, he posited that these proposals have also been discussed within the president's office. However, the people in charge are really badly constrained by the identity politics that was coming up. What he proposes is an introduction of policies that will expand the new welfare reforms. Moreover, officials should introduce a corollary concept to the welfare policies that have been introduced. This should be done to overtake the fixation with identity politics in public discourse.

Professor Törnquist believes that welfare-oriented policies are the only way to overtake identity politics. This was seen in Britain, where even politicians like Jeremy Corbyn in mainstream parties like Labour have been able to get some wider support to introduce specific policies, such as building of roads, or suggesting the reduction of tuition fees in universities. This has also reduced some of the xenophobia and support for Brexit. We have to return to this left-right sort of dimension in politics.

With regard to the second question, Professor Törnquist argued

that some of Jokowi's advisers are attracted to this, but the question is: can they do it? They are constrained at this time by the needs within the coalition government. Some coalition parties may not be interested in welfare-oriented reforms. And the government may need to please the military to prevent them from supporting the right-wing opposition and their identity politics. Professor Törnquist mentioned that the chances that something will happen are 50-50. Some people say that Jokowi will not take any risks with more radical policies, as he might be reelected in 2019 anyway. He just has to remain in the saddle. But as the elections are coming nearer, Prabowo is currently intensifying early campaigns by extending promises and handing out money to organize supportive groups, including to religious activists and trade unions. Alternatively, with or without Prabowo's support, the new governor of Jakarta, Anies Baswedan, who came to power with the support of Prabowo and of Muslim identity politics in 2016, in tandem with Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, the son of former president General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, may be the strong competitor of Jokowi. Professor Törnquist does not think that Jokowi's lead in the polls is secured, and he thinks that the political field is potentially unstable in Indonesia.

Dr. Marivic R. Raquiza (UP National College of Public Administration and Governance and Social Watch Philippines) asked about the ascension to power of populist leaders. While some of the rationale for this are partly explained, she nevertheless wants to hear more about that because of the assumption that the rise of populist leaders to power largely has to do with the failure of the liberal democratic project. Dr. Raquiza pointed out the need for that point to be more articulated.

She further explained that the promise of the liberal democratic project ended up not being done, not only because of massive cases of corruption, but also through the corporate capture of many development projects. Because of these failures, poverty and inequality increased in many places, which, in turn, has also led to the

rise of populist leaders. She nevertheless agreed to Professor Törnquist in saying that populism can either be negative or positive. While populist leaderships can be negative, she also agrees that alliances with populists could be built around common issues, particularly universal and transformative social policies.

Furthermore, Dr. Raquiza wanted to talk about the anti-corruption projects. In the past, she mentioned that these have been used to further the highly partisan political agendas of politicians and of the political elites. She regarded the situation of 'the pot calling the kettle black', as those who are pushing for anti-corruption programs are just as corrupt, if not more. She has observed these kinds of developments in many places, and it is exhausting for her to see how many civil society groups have been mobilized to further these highly elitist and partisan agendas in the process.

Her last question is on transactional politics, particularly with the concerns of it being legitimate, and as to when transactional politics becomes opportunistic. She pointed out that being transactional is neither bad nor good, but will depend on the forms of struggles people choose to be in.

Professor Törnquist responded that the rise of populism is related to the failure of the liberal project. At the same time, particularly in Indonesia, he thought that it was also something that had been made possible by institutional changes. He recommended the writings of James Manor, an expert on India, who has pointed out what he calls as 'post-clientelism.' Old-style clientelism is not anymore sufficient to win elections, especially not in first-past-the-post systems and when so many people are being uprooted in the process of uneven development and urbanization; hence, the increasingly frequent use of populist methods. Of course, some leaders can also turn to authoritarian means, such as in Cambodia. But populism with some authoritarian elements seems to be the most preferred option. One dangerous example of using populist methods is the case where a

politician tries to bash the experts and the traditional elites, and hit hard against the poor who take drugs, as in Duterte in the Philippines. Duterte seems to have argued something like "these bastards, tycoons, the trap falls; I'm the fresh guy from Mindanao. I knew how to handle these things." He also added that the Philippines and the Indian state of Tamil Nadu are pioneers when it comes to introducing popular film stars and athletes in politics.

He further discussed that with this kind of electoral politics, the Left hesitates to participate in politics. In Indonesia, some in the civil society movement refuse to get involved in the dirty game, while others try to work behind progressive candidates, to thus get majorities. Yet an argument is that if the Left wants a more stable alternative politics, it should advocate for a reform of the party system. But how does one gain a majority for such reforms?

With regard to the anti-corruption activities, he acknowledged that the movements can certainly be abused. In the case of Indonesia, there are examples of anti-corruption activists that have gone out with a little bit of information to the mayor's office, saying that they have serious information about the abuse of power. This is a kind of blackmail, but then, they would not package it as such. They would instead say that they are only presenting an alternative to the mayor in terms of support for the activists, directly or by providing favorable assignments, etc.

At the same time, Professor Törnquist felt that most activists remain genuine and that the problem is how the anti-corruption issues are related to politics. For example, he mentioned the India Against Corruption movement which tried to use extra-parliamentary struggle to enforce a strong anti-corruption agency. Temporarily, this was also supported by the BJP, which was in the opposition. Moreover, many intellectuals argued that it was not very democratic to force an elected parliament to make a certain decision. Yet others said that it is not enough to do away with certain 'dirty politicians' as equally bad

guys will replace them. Because of this, there was a lot of hesitation within the anti-corruption movement. So in the end, a portion of the movement transformed themselves into a party (Common Man's Party, AAP) which focused on grassroots democracy and anti-corruption campaigns related to public services. In early 2013, even as a very fresh party in New Delhi, AAP almost won a landslide. And after some negotiations, they tried to run the city. They failed in this, however. But having admitted a number of mistakes, they came back and won a spectacular landslide in early 2015. Thereafter, the party became divided, ironically because of poor internal democracy, and have thus turned into a conventional populist party with a leader at the helm. Also, AAP has had so many other problems of insufficient programs and strategies, in addition to being confronted and sabotaged by the union government. But in essence, the AAP proved what is possible in terms of broadening anti-corruption politics.

As for transactional politics, Professor Törnquist said that he perfectly understands the work of urban poor organizations in the north of Jakarta who negotiated a political contract with the candidate who opposed Ahok, given that their constituents were threatened by evictions and the other candidate promised to let them stay. This was their only alternative; otherwise, they would have been evicted from their homes.

Professor Törnquist added that it may thus be next to impossible for individual movements to break out of transactional politics by themselves. That is why there is a need for broader political action and a breakthrough. He emphasized that, for example, the social groups did not introduce the public health reform proposal. That was actually done by reasonably progressive politicians. Thereafter, though, the groups could get together and push for the proposal plus scale up the work. Hence, he said, there must also be leadership, to draw up these proposals and develop long-term perspectives and visions.

Student (unidentified): One of the participants in the RTD has

pointed out that the populist type of leadership leads to a divided and fragmented civil society and political organizations and other interest groups, and he then asked about the political center in Indonesia that these progressive groups can lean on so that they would have a unifying policy framework—a framework that will support the alliance, knowing that these groups are surrounded by the elitist and divisive forces of the populist leader.

Professor Törnquist answered that he cannot say which of the groups can serve as the center in Indonesia. He further remarked that in Indonesia, one would have to stop focusing on one major candidate like Jokowi. Emphasis needs to be built around broad fronts and broader alliances. If you can arrive at a broad alliance on a number of crucial issues, you can begin to negotiate on political governance with the existing political leaders. After some time, you can also develop your own party. He does not see any political leader or party in Indonesia that could be a catalyst for it.

Audience member (unidentified): One the members of the audience raised two questions. First, he wonders how social contracts are used by populists and as to what extent it is useful. The participants in the social contract, particularly the grassroots groups, notice that these contracts easily evaporate. He also asked how should social contracts with conservative agenda be dealt with.

The second question is the rise of populism within these grassroots groups. He thinks that within the grassroots movement—and in connection with Dr. Raquiza's point earlier—the structural argument makes sense because all state institutions have failed in these communities, which disillusioned them. What are the essential things to be discussed? He also wonders about the existing electoral system that deters participation from these groups, such as the case of the Philippines. What can be done to improve this situation?

Professor Törnquist mentioned that these questions or comments are extremely good and important. However, he also stated that he is

not quite sure as to how he will react to them. First of all, Professor Törnquist said that he has to discuss the issue of political contracts. As he had pointed out, following his presentation, he mentioned the contract as a way in which slightly alternative politics had first appeared in Indonesia. Afterwards, he focused on the efforts at broader alliances. Based on his conclusions, Professor Törnquist stated that he is primarily drawing lessons from the second point, or the efforts at border alliances. He is not primarily developing proposals on the basis of the local social contracts, aside from the need to institutionalize them by way of proper democratic representation and finding ways of scaling these up. In spite of his skepticism with regard to the informal social contracts, he thinks that on the ground, among the local leftist groups, there may be possibilities of working to improve the contracts. These could possibly democratized. As mentioned, these could be institutionalized, so that these would not be dependent on individual connections only. And these could later seek citizen participation and control. He also thinks that these could be useful if they are of a reasonably broad character. But the unresolved problem is that of scaling up citizen participation; hence, the prime need for interest-based representation. And interest-based representation is better developed in the process of broader alliances, such as that for public health reform.

Professor Törnquist cites the example of participatory budgeting in Brazil. It was extremely difficult to scale it up to the regional level, and it was even more difficult in national politics. There had been reasonable governments on the local level where participatory budgeting was strong, but the situation was different in the capital, Brasilia. There were corruption scandals and there were also very weak linkages between the center and the local. He does not think that these linkages cannot be created based on locally-negotiated social contracts.

One can dream about local councils being scaled up to regional councils and at the national level, but he does not see that kind of

thing happening and he does not think it is possible. His realistic suggestion in the works of interest-based representation, which must be scaled up from the local to the national and developed around broad linkages, relates rather to what he called 'the boring Scandinavian social corporatism.' Hence, he thinks that scaling up is more compatible with the idea of building alliances.

Professor Eduardo C. Tadem (UP CIDS Program on Alternative Development) asked if populism is a result of a flawed electoral system and structure of the government.

Professor Törnquist answered on the affirmative. But that is because most of the problems actually boil down to the problems of representation. We have to accept that direct democracy is not a recipe, except in the very local context. Whenever you have attempts at direct democracy, there are elements of representation in them—de facto representation. There are NGOs and there are leaders who claim representation, but they are not based on democratic representation.

Professor Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem (Executive Director, UP CIDS) raised the question on the geographical divide of populism in Indonesia. She further added that these experiences were observed in Thailand (Thaksin's Northern Thailand versus the Bangkok's Yellow Movement and Royalists) and in the Philippines, wherein Mindanao fully went for Duterte. Professor Encarnacion Tadem further added that the voting population included all the elites, the left movement, ordinary person, and the Visayas, because they were apparently left behind by Metro Manila. Given these examples, she asked if such a thing is also happening in Indonesia, where populism is stronger.

Professor Törnquist responded that Professor Encarnacion Tadem's proposition is very interesting. He recognized that he was not able to look at that particular dynamic but what he can say is that so much that most well-developed populist policies in Indonesia have been centered around Java and to a certain extent, Sumatra. This suggests, perhaps, that it is related to massive economic transformation, so that

when you are uprooted from your constituency, and shift from a place where clientelism is still applicable—as a way of buying votes, as a way of gaming your constituencies—it is primarily when that has been undermined that you have the real need to use populist methods.

There is an interesting partial exception, which is Aceh, at the northern tip of Sumatra. Professor Törnquist discussed that in Aceh, a tsunami occurred and the GAM (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*/Free Aceh Movement) was fighting, back then, for independence in Aceh. Because of these events, he mentioned that a negotiation in Helsinki occurred in 2005, in the context of which it was possible to get the people back on the scene. In many respects it was possible to resolve these issues by way of local democracy and by introducing local political parties. He further added that Aceh is the only place in Indonesia where you have local political parties. This initially worked in Aceh until around 2007. But then the democratic path to peace and reconstruction in Aceh began to be thoroughly undermined by patronage clientelism, corruption, and local leaders' alliances with leaders in Jakarta. Hence, many people inside the old GAM, like the NPA (New People's Army) in the Philippines, turned to private business-making in their local areas. So they were into construction, buying, and selling. Meanwhile, the attempts by CSOs with no firm social roots to form local parties were unsuccessful.

Recently, there was a reelection of governor. The first governor, Irwandi Yusuf, came back. He used to be the head of intelligence in the GAM, but he is a strange character. He is not a 'traditional leader' and definitely not a warlord. He wants to build what he calls 'modern oriented governance, with equal chances for all'. It is true that he is also developing his own popularity. He is a very self-confident person, to say the least, and he is very conscious of his looks. But at the same time, he is developing a kind of technocratic governance, combined with his own 'strong leadership.' So he has disposed his old friends, and instead nourished contacts with national leaders in Jakarta and brought in young students whom he gave scholarships during

his first term as governor. Hence, there are now very few who can keep Irwandi accountable any more. His new staff are not political activists, but technocrats. They had served in the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and in the BRR (*Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi*/Agency for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias), which were in charge of rebuilding Aceh, but they did not know much about politics. I have talked to some of them, including their peers. Irwandi is now surrounding himself with these people, combining a sort of populist method of increasing his own popularity with technocratic governance. Irwandi has done many good things, including fostering public health and education, thus also reducing the influence of religious schools, and trying to curb some of the clientelistic corruption. But no democratic leader or organization can really keep him accountable.

(Just before the publication of this text, Professor Törnquist adds that Irwandi, as well as his young head of staff, were arrested in early July by the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*, KPK), most specifically for trying to use (perhaps temporarily, but anyway) special funds for the autonomous province to sponsor an athletic-cum-commercial event advised by a young close female friend of his. Irwandi's efforts at cleaner governance in the regular administration did not obviously apply to his own affairs, neither public nor private. Worst, this is now used, including by Jakarta, to belittle all progressive efforts at democratic local governance in Aceh.)

Professor Törnquist feels bad about all the people who stood up for reforming Aceh, particularly the intellectuals who were decisive in introducing democratization in Aceh as a solution during the negotiations in Helsinki. He believes that they do not deserve to be disposed of and that they should be more important. Yet, they have no strong social base anymore. Hence, they may give priority to reconciling old GAM leaders rather than developing popular-based social democratic politics, for which they say that they do not have

sufficient capacity to do so at this point of time. So far, Aceh is an exception in Indonesia. But attempts such as those by Irwandi can happen elsewhere, too. Even in the poorest areas, in the Eastern Indonesia, in Moluccas, or in parts of Sulawesi, sufficiently popular and enlightened leaders might associate themselves with technocrats.

Olle Törnquist *is Professor of Political Science and Development Research, University of Oslo. He has focused since the early 1970s on the problems and options of popular organisations and democratisation, especially in Indonesia and India, with some references to the Philippines. He has also co-directed Indonesian democracy studies programmes with committed scholars, activists, and journalists since the mid-1990s. His recent books include "Assessing Dynamics of Democratisation," with L. Djani et al., "Dynamics of Populist Transnationalism," and the co-edited volumes "Democratisation in in the Global South, Reclaiming the State: Overcoming Problems of democratisation in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," and "Reinventing Social Democratic Development: Insights from Indian and Scandinavian Comparisons."*

(Photo by Maria Nikka U. Garriga)

Group photo from Professor Olle Törnquist's lecture,
"Indonesia's New Populist Order and Diffused Progressives in Comparative Perspective,"
delivered at the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS), 16 November 2017

Seated, front row *(from left to right):*
Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem, Ph.D. (Executive Director, UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies); Professor Olle Törnquist, Ph.D. (University of Oslo); Eduardo C. Tadem, Ph.D. (Convenor, UP CIDS Program on Alternative Development); Maria Ela L. Atienza, Ph.D. (UP Department of Political Science and Co-convenor, UP CIDS Program on Social and Political Change); Jean Paul L. Zialcita, Ph.D. (UP Department of Political Science)

Also present in the event are Assistant Professor Marivic R. Raquiza, Ph.D. (UP National College of Public Administration and Governance and Social Watch Philippines, Mr. Ric Reyes (Partido Lakas ng Masa), and students from the Pamantasang Lungsod ng Muntinlupa and UP Asian Center.

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