POPULAR DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

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Case Studies with Rural Dimensions in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Kerala

Olle Törnquist

Department of Political Science and
the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM),
University of Oslo

Törnquist, O. (2002): *Popular Development and Democracy: Case Studies with Rural Dimensions in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Kerala.* Occasional Paper from SUM, No. 3, viii+150 pp.

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Chapter 1.   Development and Democracy

1.1   Introduction

This essay, dated early 2002, is primarily written for fellow students, reflective activists, and concerned practitioners with an interest in one or more of three major themes. The first theme is about problems of democratisation; the second is on the importance of democracy in efforts to overcome obstacles to development suffered by marginalised people; the third is about the dynamics of politics and society in Indonesia, the Philippines and the Indian state of Kerala.[1]

  For about two decades now, democratisation in the third world has been at the top of the agenda. While development, earlier, was often assumed to come first, many then said that the two could (and should) come together. The problems, however, have been mounting. Much of the mainstream crafting of democracy is in crisis. This is a study of the dynamics of these difficulties. But it is also, and primarily, an essay about the challenges and options for exciting popular efforts to promote more substantial democracy in order to further their attempts to combat problems of development. Part one is a discussion of these fundamental issues. Part two brings the central arguments to empirical test through case studies over a period of some ten years in the different contexts of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Kerala. Part three summarises the results and the policy implications.[2]

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[1] Hence, these themes also reflect the difficult but necessary combination of discipline-based political science, interdisciplinary development research, and contextual area studies.

[2] This is an empirical study, but in contrast to many of the conventional political studies of problems of development, its point of departure is that a fruitful discussion presupposes three partly normative assumptions—two on what development and one on what kind of politics one should focus upon.

  The first assumption is that significant antagonisms between different groups and classes in society render it impossible to discern any self-evident common interest in development issues (in relation to which special interests can then be defined). Despite this, there are various ways of promoting development. One can invest, certainly, in the social groups who are already strong. One can count on the likelihood, certainly, that if these people are granted higher profits and a better business climate, some of them will also increase their investments. One could assert, certainly, that this would improve the conditions of the common people in the end. We agree, however, with those who argue that the result, in terms of development, would be at least as good—and of greater benefit to the majority besides—if investments were made, instead, to have the greatest possible dynamic effect on redistribution of resources. This means investing more in the popular majority—whose aspirations and capacity for hard and innovative labour are not fully utilised under prevailing conditions—than in the minority who are already strong.

  The second assumption (which follows from the first) is that since capitalism in the third world does not just imply industrialisation and 'modern' services but also marginalisation and the fact that so many people (especially in Asia and Africa) still live in or depend on rural areas, the politics of developmental redeployment must also include these people. One classical case is

The essay (produced between July 2001 and April 2002) is the first attempt to bring together my analyses produced within a project that since the late 80s has focused on the mainstream crafting of democracy and (especially) the potential of alternative popular efforts. What follows below are brief summaries of major and still tentative conclusions. An unfortunate consequence is that full references have been impossible to include. A book will follow, but meanwhile readers with particular queries are welcome to contact the author (olle.tornquist@stv.uio.no).[3] Comments are most welcome!

1.2   Poor people, poor democracy?

There are four main theories that claim to be universally valid about how democratisation may come about and be promoted in late developing countries. The first thesis, by Lipset (1959) and so many others, is that capitalist market-based socio-economic modernisation also promotes human rights based democratisation. This implies, for instance, that marginalised and 'informal' and often rural sectors prevent democratisation.

The second thesis is that it is not popular masses—particularly not in rural areas and particularly not when under radical influence—but rather the urban bourgeoisie and associated middle classes, with the support of the West, that tend to oppose state or private authoritarianism, thus promoting the rule of law, liberalism, and democracy. In his *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Barrington Moore

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the redistribution of land from feudal-like landlords to industrious and independent peasants, in order thereby to increase production, reduce poverty, prepare the way for industrialisation, and create preconditions for democracy. Another example is decentralisation of politics and resources to balance the central powers and build linkages and alliances on an equal basis between rural and urban areas and people—ideally without enabling local bosses to monopolise the resources. A third illustration is efforts at going beyond conflicts between plantation labourers and displaced peasant farmers by increasing and organising their production in such a way that both can agree and benefit.

The third assumption is that even if enlightened authoritarian rule might generate development which is more fruitful in the short run for those included, pro-people development is in the long run best served by consistent efforts at promoting, and applying democratic principles, rights and mechanisms in essential sectors of society.

In other words, then: what are the problems and options of popular development and *democracy* with not just urban but also *rural* dimensions?

Jr. concludes that peasants only contribute to democratisation when they are already independent and market-oriented, as in North America, or when they are transformed into this type of farmer by a strong urban bourgeoisie with a greater or lesser degree of revolutionary participation, as in France and Britain respectively. Otherwise, Moore argues, the rural poor tended either to be subordinated to commercial landed interests and fascism, or to revolt against economically less dynamic landlords. The latter, however, only occurred when the masses were cohesive as a class or a group and offered efficient external leadership, such as by the communists in China and Russia. So the conclusion reached is: "No bourgeois, no democracy" (Moore 1969).

Thirdly, Rueschemeyer and the Stephens, on the other hand, contend in *Capitalist Development and Democracy* that it is the working class, (within the framework of capitalist expansion) who are the only consistent pro-democratic force (Rueschemeyer et.al. 1992). Moore's bourgeoisie is instead reluctant, especially when dependent on state support. The middle classes vacillate, especially when afraid of the labourers. With regard to rural dynamics, however, Rueschemeyer et al. do not only agree with Moore on the anti-democratic character of the landed elites' interests, they also arrive at a similar conclusion concerning the democratic position of the rural poor: it rests with their cohesiveness, their ability to organise and with their relation to other classes.

The fourth and current thesis in vogue, then, (at least before11[th] of September) is simply to avoid discussions about various preconditions and to contend instead that poor foundations may be compensated for by foreign support and skilful institution building—crafting of democracy—on the level of the political elite and civil[4] associations. This can be achieved through the promotion of human rights, 'good' governance, privatisation, decentralisation, civil society, and political pacts among the elite. The original basis for the arguments is the transition from authoritarian rule in Latin America and Southern Europe since the mid-70s, which gained new prominence with the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 (O'Donnell & Schmitter 1986). In conjunction with economic adjustment policies, similar ideas also spread to Africa and parts of Asia, for example in the Philippines in 1986 and Indonesia in 1998.

Of course there is much to all this. One has to look into the issues of unity and strength and institution building. And the rural dynamics can not be studied in

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[4] A distinction could be made between the wider concept of 'civil' and the more narrow of 'civic' (relating more to theories and expectations on citizens/citizenship). That will not be done in this summary essay.

isolation. But the absolute primacy of the bourgeoisie or workers or an enlightened political elite, and the dubious democratic potential of the rural poor and the radical Left, may partly be disputed. This is not so much in relation to the European and Latin American empirical cases, which most of the prevailing theses are based on, as with regard to the Asian contexts that we have some knowledge of, such as in parts of India, the Philippines and Indonesia. Here, we shall argue, neither the pro-democratic bourgeoisie plus the middle-classes nor the unified working classes have been equally important. Here authoritarianism has nevertheless been fought and democracy has made advances. This, we shall argue, is not just due to attempts at crafting democracy. Actually, as we shall see, these initiatives have often proved shallow and insufficient. On the contrary, broad support from poor and labouring people in general, including in rural frameworks, still appears to be indispensable. And renewed Leftist movements are in the forefront. Our major challenge is, therefore, to assess the key problems and options that are involved in their pro-democracy efforts.

1.3   The logic of the essay

In this essay, I begin by expanding on the mainstream arguments that are sceptical of popular efforts at development (with rural dimensions) and democracy. By contrast, I shall show that demands among the rural poor for land reform were a prerequisite for the initially rather influential pro-democratic tendency within the national revolutions. This democratic character was undermined later on, not just by Communists' and other nationalists' top-down politics of modernisation but by the West and their local 'liberal' allies as well.

In the second and major empirical part of the essay we shall even argue (by drawing on case studies from India, Indonesia and the Philippines) that repressive political promotion of primitive capitalist accumulation has generated renewed left-oriented, instrumental, and partly rural based demands for pro-democratic popular politics. These are reminiscent of the earlier struggles against the landed elite and colonial masters.

This line of argument contrasts with older theses that posited Leftist movements, which had both urban and rural backing, as irrelevant and undemocratic. It also argues against many of the recent elitist and international attempts at not just 'getting the prices right' but also the political and societal institutions, with slogans such as crafting 'free and fair elections', 'decentralisation', 'good governance', 'civil society' and 'social capital'. Those efforts have often produced superficial forms of democratisation that do not make sense for common people, remain unstable, and open up, instead, for the return of old emperors in new clothes.[5]

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[5] This has become even more obvious after the 11th of September, as the West has become much more preoccupied with its own security and thus with linking up with anyone, democratic or not, that can back up the US-led coalition against real or imagined terrorists.

The main (and huge) remaining problems for popular efforts, then, are their social and political fragmentation, and their inability to transform extra-parliamentary action into institutionalised political alternatives for popular democratic governance of society as a whole. Consequently, the essay also critically analyses popular politics of democratisation (again on the basis of cases from India, Indonesia, and the Philippines). The predominant recommendations are questioned, including the call for political 'realism', local 'civil societies', issue-based action-groups, and militant networking. Rather there is a need to focus on the missing links: the deficient aggregation of single issues and specific interests, and the inadequate connections between central and local levels as well as civil and political societies.

In the final part of the essay, these conclusions are also related to the questions of what could (and should) be done.

Chapter 2.   The Mainstream Arguments

2.1   The background: important advances—and major set-backs

The nation-state projects in most developing countries are in crisis. Many radical political short cuts to a better standard of living—including land reforms as a basis for rural development—have not brought the desired results. In these countries, more people than anywhere else in the world remain powerless and poor. It is perhaps unsurprising, in view of this, that for almost two decades now the neo-liberal calls have rung out for globalisation, deregulation and privatisation. It is important, however, to keep a sense of historical proportion here. Not so long ago, for instance, we all paid homage to the French Revolution. Commentators noted, certainly, that the revolution derailed and ended in terror. Yet it was the historical significance of this event that was stressed: citizenship; liberty; equality and fraternity; the break-through of the Enlightenment and of rationalism. Some of the better sides, in other words, of a modernism which has now lost its way. So let us not fall victim to the fashionable tendency to ignore (or to emphasise solely what 'went wrong' with) the French Revolution's counterpart in our own time—the modern national revolutions of the Third World. A good part of them sought to combine positive elements from their own traditions with valid insights and experiences of Western modernism (including bourgeois revolutions and socialist orientations), so that ordinary people could become independent citizens in their own countries; so that they could control and develop their own resources; and so that they could improve their own living conditions. Accordingly, the struggle for democracy and human rights in the Third World is neither new nor an exclusively Western innovation.

Yet, as we know, the outcome of this first generation of popular and often rural based efforts at democratic development were also ridden with severe problems. The Chinese land reform allowed for dictatorship and famine. The national liberation of Vietnam did not generate democratic development. The democratic changes in South Korea and Taiwan were belated and limited. In 1985–86 the peasant-based Philippine revolutionaries stopped short of linking up with the broader democracy movement that it had helped to generate, thus becoming irrelevant and deteriorating (Törnquist 1990). In Indonesia the world's third largest communist party, which had promoted and gained importance through democratisation, linked up instead with president Sukarno's army-backed 'guided democracy'. The party failed to trust or channel the resources of the growing popular movements, instead allowing several leaders to become involved in adventurous elitist intrigue. It thus missed out and was eliminated (Törnquist 1984). A few years later, the Indian state-modernisers lost much of their patron-client based rural following, tried to make use of state of emergency plus populism (with some Communist support) but failed, gave up structural changes such as land reform and began turning instead to market based transformation (e.g. Corbridge and Harriss 2000). Within this limited space, the Left Front governments and movements in Kerala and West Bengal still managed to implement fairly consist-

ent land reforms. However, in Kerala these were not followed up and therefore did not generate much economic growth, whilst in West Bengal, alternative forms of patronage were employed which contributed to unbalanced growth. (cf. e.g. Törnquist 1991a and Rogaly et.al. 1999).

2.2   The conventional counter arguments

Indeed, one may even doubt that this tradition of radical popular efforts at development with rural dimensions and democracy remains endowed with any dynamics, credibility and or potential to provide alternatives. The two major arguments are as follows:

First, radical left wing projects breed dictatorships since they mobilise and manipulate the uneducated and dependent rural masses through top-led parties and state apparatuses. Democracy in these contexts is never considered important or prioritised and is only tactically respected under pressure from the Western orientated bourgeoisie and middle classes.

Second, commerce and capitalism have made agricultural prices and industrial labour more important than land and the rural poor. What is more: uneven capitalist development generates fragmented socio-economic structures, divisive interests and scattered new social movements that have less room for class loyalties and Left-oriented politics in general than for ethnic, religious and other identities.[6]

2.3   The conventional recipes

What should be done instead? Two broad propositions dominate the discourse:

Starting with the classical determinist prescriptions, these stress necessary structural preconditions related to modernisation: no shortcuts to democracy. Certain modern social and economic prerequisites are necessary to begin with. Within that modern capitalist framework, then, progressive and propelling forces will emerge. There are 'liberal' as well as Marxist variations to this. According to the classical 'liberal' thesis (forcefully synthesised by Huntington (1991)) there is a need for capitalist modernisation so that the bourgeois and middle classes can build a civil society and culture (especially embraced by scholars like Diamond (1992, 1999) and, thereby, liberal political democracy. The more Marxist oriented version, (e.g. represented by the already mentioned Rueschemeyer et.al.) would then add the working class. Despite those differences, however, activist scholars (like the followers of Huntington and Lenin) often agreed, in an almost touching way, that socio-economic modernisation and the rise of progressive classes was not enough. It was also necessary to add

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[6] Similar arguments come from within concerned social movement and labour studies as well, but I will not discuss their recommendations at this point.

elitist political intervention to shape conducive institutions and provide leadership. Finally, the similarly deterministic dependency perspective was critical of most of this mainstream modernisation-thinking—arguing that the problem was not too few but too many of its recommendations—and thus gave special importance instead to the resistance against imperialism (or the current more positive term 'globalisation').

Secondly comes the virtually contrary idealistic proposition. For some time now the determinist theories that modernisation is insufficient, or international dependency too extensive, have been out of fashion. The third wave of democracy has reached several parts of the developing world anyway. Show-case efforts at rapid modernisation (as in Indonesia or Singapore), and extreme independence (as in Cambodia), often produced authoritarianism. Many of the openings for democracy were due to the crisis not the development of modernisation. Voluntaristic political negotiations, institution-building, and international pressure seemed to be enough for democracy to emerge.

This more exciting and optimistic perspective, as we know, gained ground after the 1975 defeat of fascism in Portugal, the transitions from authoritarian rule in Latin America, and especially with the 1989 fall of the Berlin wall. By then, the idealistic post cold war notion that it was possible to craft democracies instantly, no matter what the conditions, had been accepted as truth. International pressure and influence would substitute for insufficient domestic circumstances. Thus, there would be enough liberal political space for the striking of deals among moderate incumbents and dissidents on the protection of private business interests in exchange for the introduction of 'correct' democratic practices and institutions. These would include human rights, the rule of law, 'free and fair' elections, clean and decentralised governance, and an extensive and (in comparison with the state) strong civil society.

One group of scholars and practitioners tends to focus on the central political system and administration, including pioneers such as O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), and Lintz and Stepan (1996). Others, from supporters of neo-liberalism to new social movements that are advocates of 'participation and empowerment', extend the decentralisation-argument and stress the crafting of 'good' civil institutions in the society at large, including support for the 'deepening' of civil society and the promotion of so-called social capital. We shall return to and expand on these propositions some sections ahead.

Chapter 3. Alternative Propositions

The conventional theses above will now be disputed and alternative propositions outlined. There are nine alternative propositions: one that the democratic potential of the leftists and the poor (including rural) masses has been considerable, compared to the bourgeoisie and the middle classes in an historical perspective; another that the problems of the radical projects are not intrinsic to their theoretical underpinning but may be improved upon; a third that resistance against the expansive primitive accumulation of capital may open up space for democracy; a fourth that fragmented and uneven development requires unifying opposition; a fifth that the 'actually existing' but repressive capitalist development undermines different Left-authoritarian short-cuts to progress and calls for human-rights based democracy as such; a sixth that politics and actors are of primary importance; a seventh and eighth that there is a need to go beyond the crafting of elitist and civil-society democracy respectively; a ninth and final proposition that there is a third way to democracy. Thereafter, in the major empirical sections of the essay, all the relevant arguments will be 'put to the test'.

3.1   The historical importance of leftists and the poor (vs. bourgeoisie and middle classes)

It is an understatement, of course, that several radical efforts at popular development with rural dimensions have backfired. We shall return to that. But to begin with, the major attempts at democracy in South and East Asia were, in fact, due to massive involvement of the 'uneducated' rural poor and to the leadership of radical nationalists, often communists. The Chinese land reform against rural overlords was a precondition even for the present local economic advances. Land reforms in South Korea and Taiwan were the backbone of their developmental success stories. It is a widely accepted but increasingly forgotten fact, that it took peasants and rurally rooted Vietnamese communists to put an end to one of the world's worst crimes against humanity—the war and repression of the Vietnamese carried out by 'democratic' France and the United States, and their 'liberal' local collaborators. During the Marcos era and until 1985, the lack of Philippine land reforms meant that even peasant-based Maoist guerrilla movements were intrinsic to the democracy efforts. In Indonesia, less widely known, the reformist communists addressed the interests of the rural poor in particular and built the country's first (and still only) example of a modern mass-party (secular, democratic, ideology- and interest based) with trade unions and front-organisations (such as those of peasant farmers, women, and youth). The party made substantial gains in the 1955 first parliamentary elections, won the 1957 local elections, and was expected to dominate the then suspended general elections in 1959 (Törnquist 1984).

  In India, the project of the radical nationalist elite was modernisation from above, including removing the 'remnants of feudalism', but with the support of the rural

masses. The latter, however, were mobilised through patron-client relations. In the only exceptions, the Indian states of Kerala and West Bengal, the most consistent efforts at agrarian reform on the sub-continent were primarily owed to democratically-elected communist-led governments, and continuous campaigns run by broad popular organisations, especially among peasant farmers and rural labourers. It may well be that the comparatively well-established minimum democratic Indian institutions have contained potential anti-democratic communist tendencies. But the most consistent defenders and extenders of these institutions, then, have actually been reform oriented, yet 'unreliable communists'. Meanwhile liberal oriented middle classes and other organisations have often played dubious roles, including introducing emergency rule, nourishing clientelism and exploiting communalism (cf. e.g. Drèze and Sen (1996) and Kohli (1987, 1990).

In many other Asian countries, the middle-classes and social democrats, along with intellectuals and labour leaders, were less capable than their Indian counterparts of mobilising the broad and predominantly rural masses and stand out in even sharper contrast. They backed US-led western interventions and at times so-called middle-class coups (such as the Indonesian massacres and Suharto's New Order), arguing that capitalist growth, with stronger bourgeois, middle and working classes, is a precondition for democracy (e.g. Törnquist 1984).

Moreover, few of the early pro-democratic efforts derailed entirely on their own. In Indonesia for instance, much of Sukarno's authoritarian nationalism in the late-1950s, was due to the Dutch refusal to give up colonial interests; because the CIA supported separatist movements; and because the West wanted to prevent the communists and their unique modern interest-based mass movements from winning liberal democratic elections (c.f. Kahin 1995). The Western powers even paved the way for the military take-over and the massacres of 1965–66. The logic involved was that their own favourite so-called liberal and social democratic administrators did not have a strong enough social and economic base to make a difference, wherefore the United States, in particular, turned to the army instead. According to the conventional cold war wisdom of the West (and professor Huntington's then forthcoming "politics of order" theory), the army would serve in policing and containing the masses, thereby allowing liberal middle class experts to run the country.

But as we know, once the Left had been massacred, and many others jailed, harassed and domesticated, it was the army generals who took over instead—with the middle-class experts as their servants. And yet, the repression, corruption and nepotism that followed were also sustained by political and economic support from the West, including loans issued on the basis of political guarantees rather than on well-founded economic evaluations. Also, it was the US which approved Indonesia's occupation of East Timor in 1975, and Australia which recognised its annexation, while both nations sponsored Jakarta's special military forces. Sweden and Norway (among others) also gave top priority to business dealings with Suharto's Indonesia.

Finally it is nothing but ideological hypocrisy to state that the birth of the world's third largest democracy in Indonesia came about because economic and political liberalisation had undermined Suharto's corrupt despotism.[7] In fact it had been quite

possible to combine corrupt despotism and rapid modernisation for decades. Political and economic 'liberals' based their activities and profits on bribing and backing the autocrats. For some thirty years after the 'West's best news for years in Asia'[8]—the massacres of 1965–66 and the coming to power of military—the rapidly increasing bourgeoisie and middle classes did very little to challenge Suharto's 'New Order and to promote liberal democratisation. The only exception was the tiny middle class intellectual groups amongst whom were students, scholars, lawyers, social and cultural workers, and journalists. (Aside from some marginal foreign support for them, it was not until the fall of Suharto that the West really began to back some form of democratisation.) The West-backed authoritarian modernisation project only derailed when despotic liberalism (the combination of old 'stabilising' oligarchs and new 'dynamic' privatisation and deregulation) made it increasingly difficult to govern the economy. From the mid-80s, domestic and international strongmen had been able to take advantage of increasingly privatised companies and deregulated markets. Neither the IMF&Partners nor various corporate leaders had anything decisively negative to say about Suharto's Indonesia till hours before the crisis broke out in late 1997. On the contrary, Indonesia was on the World Bank's top-ten list of promising emerging economies. Only in early 1998—as the ship was about to sink—did the tone begin to change. Yet the West continued to support the establishment by derogatorily blaming the democracy activists (who faced an uphill battle after a recent crackdown and decades of repression and "floating mass" politics) for not 'having produced an alternative' (e.g. Törnquist (1984) and 2000, Schwartz (1994) Vatikiotis (1998).

   In short, therefore, the argument that democratic development rests with West-oriented bourgeois and liberal middle classes is too general and not really trustworthy, at least with regard to the two paradigmatic cases of India and Indonesia, and does not need to be further examined empirically.[9] In the major Asian contexts studied here, historical attempts at democracy have often instead been led by leftist leaders with a mass support base that included the rural poor.

3.2   The vital but superable problems of the Left

It is true, of course, that even 'the best' popular projects faced serious problems that were due to their own dynamics and shortcomings. In many ways this is a story about the similarities in weaknesses between the top-down Marxist oriented political

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[7] Nor, of course, is the other dominant explanation for the economic crisis sufficient: that it is all because of neo-liberal regulations and the massive inflow of foreign high risk capital. For why was it that neo-liberalism became untenable in East and South East Asia, and especially in Indonesia, and only after some ten years or so?

[8] *Time* Magazine, 15 July 1966, p.26.

[9] The related thesis about the importance of the working class as a result of the expansion of capitalism, however, is not affected to the same extent and remains to be studied in conjunction with the associated theory (in section 2.2) that commerce and capitalism have made prices and labour more important than land and the rural poor.

modernisation strategies and the elitist Western modernisation projects (c.f. Scott 1998). The outcome, however is different. 'Liberal' modernisation has been severely criticised, but its ideological underpinnings and recommendations have survived, presumably with the political victory of the West. Most probably for the same political reason, however, the Marxist counterpart in the third world, which has been much less well researched, has been indiscriminately refuted as inevitably unproductive and undemocratic.

My own studies of these problems, at least, indicate that this refutation of Marxist oriented political modernisation is premature (Törnquist 1984, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1994).[10] In cases as different as Indonesia, India and the Philippines up until the mid-80s, the major and common problematic factor seemed to be that politics was neglected to the benefit of narrow and 'square-shaped' analyses of material pre-conditions. However, these serious flaws were not intrinsic to Marxism and radical politics. The latter may be renewed. A fundamental point of departure for this essay is the hypothesis that these flaws and setbacks may even generate potentially vital Left oriented attempts at consistent democratisation. This would serve as a basis for popular development, including in rural areas. Let us examine these alternative propositions in somewhat more detail.

3.3   Resistance against dominating primitive accumulation of capital and opportunities for democratisation

In the three distinctly contrasting contexts, and within their different theoretical interpretations, there emerge many and varied explanations for the problems faced by the radical projects. Yet, there is a fairly clear cut pattern which all the movements had in common:[11] While their projects initially proved fruitful, the basic problem they encountered was an inability to realise the importance of new social, economic, and political forces. These had given rise to post-colonial authoritarianism and often politically facilitated the expansion of capitalism. As we shall see, even vital parts of radical strategies paved the way, unintentionally. Hence, the Leftist projects faced serious problems, gradually lost momentum and, when they failed to adapt, became almost irrelevant.

By subscribing to the traditional Marxist thesis (on "ideal" capitalist economies) that power and exploitation grow only out of productive labour in private processes of production, the radical Left disregarded the possibility that the emergence and growth of capitalism may be less ideal, more 'primitive'. It would therefore involve, to a great extent, extra-economic control of land and capital as well as a set of

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[10] Where not other works are cited in sub-sections 3.2—3.5, I am drawing on these references.

[11] What follows is, of course, only with regard to the theories made use of by the political Left that I focused on. Moreover, I'm not saying that the neglected factors that I have identified were the only ones 'missing'—but they proved to be the most important in the countries and during the periods that I studied.

preconditions to get production up and running but would not be directly linked to the farm or company itself and would often, but not always, be publicly owned.

This in turn meant that they did not take into account that political, administrative and military control of such resources and preconditions for production (often publicly owned) constituted an independent source of power. It was also a way of indirectly appropriating parts of the surplus produced, which subsequently had a very important bearing on the character of development.

Finally, the control and regulation of those preconditions for production were often (but of course not only) carried out via the organs of the state and other 'collective institutions' (such as co-operatives)—some of which were even promoted by the Left. Consequently, many of the factors that led to undemocratic forms of government were overlooked.

A few indicators may serve as examples (primarily in the Indian and Indonesian contexts): Initial political and administrative protection of 'national' businessmen and peasant farmers, which the Left was a leading advocate of, often enabled politicians and bureaucrats to make personal gains at the expense of promoting dynamic development. It also enabled businessmen to acquire particular favours and thus escape the progressive capitalist compulsion of producing ever more efficiently in order to survive on the market.

When the Left turned more statist and bet on so-called progressive nationalists and state led development policies, the importance of the resources and regulations which politicians, officers and other state administrators gained access to, was not addressed. In Indonesia most foreign-owned companies, especially plantations, were nationalised from 1957 onwards—but mainly taken over by officers, who then entered into co-operation with politicians, administrators and managers. This power and influence was further cultivated by leftist anti-imperialist policies, including through the legitimisation of emergency regulations. The new bosses received even greater privileged access to state resources, which also increased their control of labour. This was the very foundation for the later full-scale authoritarian rule of Suharto. In India, the similar victory in the late-60s of so-called progressive nationalists within the Congress party led to the deterioration of large parts of its old and more conservative clientelist base. They had no alternative popular organisation to turn to and were unable to integrate various groups and interests. This was compensated for by enlightened despotism, state of emergency, populism, and compromises with communal groups in various parts of the country. While the powers of the state formally increased, political and administrative institutions actually deteriorated and much control went into the hands of loyal ministers and executives on union and state level, nourishing contacts among, for instance, businessmen, affluent farmers, and communal leaders.

From the early-60s and seventies, in Indonesia and India respectively, the main question within the Left was how to handle the new problems. The basic argument was that the power exercised by the new state-related bosses in Indonesia was in turn based on that of imperialists and their affiliated so-called bureaucratic capitalists; and, in India, on big capitalists and semi-feudal landlords. However, there are

strong indications that the new bosses had actually also managed to gain their own independent sources of power—even by making use of and actually conquering the very regulations and the very resources, mainly within the state, which were meant for progressive development policies. In Indonesia, the new bosses were not severely affected by the harsh anti-imperialist policies of the communist party and president Sukarno. On the contrary, they could sometimes even make use of anti-imperialism to gain control of more nationalised companies and to sustain their powers within the state apparatuses. In India, the state-rulers must have relied on sources of power other than that of 'semi feudal landlords' and big businessmen, who they were only loosely related to, who often resisted them, and who nevertheless survived without their support.

Further, the struggles for land reforms also reveal the existence of other important but neglected factors besides (the still important) privately owned land. The lack of unity among peasant farmers and rural labourers, despite strong and radical organisational efforts, points to additional, neglected forms of exploitation and subordination. It was often difficult to identify and distribute 'surplus land' when only focusing on private ownership. Land was rarely as concentrated to a few landlords as had generally been assumed. Neither was it as consolidated as expected. This is not to suggest that private land was (and is) unimportant; or even less so that control (in general) of land would be a secondary issue. Moreover, the state in general, and the bureaucracy and military in particular, played a more vital role in primitive accumulation in Indonesia than in India. But many rural masters in both contexts were generally speaking capable of controlling land without necessarily owning it. Even in the cases of Java, West Bengal and Kerala, where the communists were strongest, the results indicate that regulation of private land ownership, and prohibition or regulation of feudal rents on it, did not prevent the possibility for old as well as new bosses to monopolise other assets and resources instead, including through public or co-operative organs. Those other resources included the control of political and administrative regulations of what private land should be exempted from reforms and also control of public and communal land, credits, water, other inputs, plus prices on the market. Much of this control and primitive accumulation of capital continued to cause problems even when comparatively consistent land reforms had been introduced and explains a lot of why and how explorative relations survived and new ones emerged.

Finally, we turn to the Philippine 'control case'. The Maoist Left expanded for many years but swiftly lost the initiative in 1985–86. While it insisted on its 'anti-feudal' people's war, bourgeois and middle classes gained the initiative in the struggle for liberties and democracy and did away with the Marcos dictatorship. Hence, attempts at more radical workers and poor people based democratisation were caught in between the old irrelevant Left and the new successful bourgeois liberals. This came as a total surprise for the old Left. Its own perspectives only allowed for the identification of main sources of power outside the political field. Accordingly, democracy neither made sense to them, nor did they believe that it should make sense to people in general. As far as they were concerned, liberalisation and democratisa-

tion would not help much to alter basic power relations and inequalities. A fundamental assumption was that politicians, administrators and so-called "bureaucratic capitalists" of the Marcos regime had no real power base own that could be hit at by way of political democratisation. Instead they relied on more powerful imperialists, compradors, and landlords with private sources of power—which thus had to be tackled head on by other means, including 'anti-feudal' guerrilla struggles. So according to the mainstream leftist analyses, what actually happened (in terms of successful action against Marcos through democratisation and the irrelevance of Maoism) could not happen! Many even refused to realise what had happened.

What are the general implications? In short, the Left rarely considered the special importance of authoritarian political monopolisation in the process of late primitive accumulation of capital and was often unable to fight it effectively. My argument, then, is that once experienced and realised, this politically dominated symbiosis between politics and the economy should make it necessary for the subordinate classes not only to stand up against private capitalists and landlords, but also against the monopolisation of politically controlled assets and resources.

We shall return later to a close empirical discussion of the issue, but for the moment, suffice to say that it was above all neo-liberal ideas and vested interests that captured and expressed most of the new demands for freedom and liberalisation against authoritarian political monopolisation. Yet, as neo-liberalism fails and new insights are gained, the struggle against symbiotic political and economic bosses may still give birth to a formidable combination of class struggle against exploitation and national-citizen demands for freedom and substantial democracy. This would be second only to the anti-colonial combination of class and nationalism.

3.4   Divisive uneven development requires unifying resistance against common enemies

The above hypothesis of the structural imperative for subordinate classes to fight political monopolisation, at best by way of democratisation, is not just counter to the established thesis about democratically dubious rural based radicalism. It is also partially at odds with the mainstream view that capitalist development has made agricultural prices and industrial labour more important than land and the rural poor. To contrast these categories and sectors is unfruitful. As already discussed, it is true, of course, that land is rarely the sole or the principal asset disputed, but is one of wide range of other resources including those available on the market. However, while there are few 'pure' peasants any more, that does not imply that all have become industrial labourers, or that industrial labour is the only potentially dissident class in town. Rather, one has to analyse how an increasing number of rural households and even individuals combine various jobs, roles, and activities.

This, however, is not to agree with the currently widespread view that uneven development generates such fragmented socio-economic structures, discordant interests, and scattered new social movements, that class loyalties and Left oriented

politics in general will inevitably give way to various action groups and to ethnic, religious and other identities. It may well be that third world late capitalism generates less unified subordinate classes than early European capitalism did. But it is reasonable to assume that in order to serve their followers, the increasing number of movements that emerge around the many different conflicts would instead have to give more emphasis to various forms of co-operation against common problems, such as monopolistic control of numerous 'hidden' and 'nomadic' resources. And that, in turn, may promote democratic arrangements, such as post-land reform co-operation among agricultural producers on the acquisition of various inputs, the trading of their products, the running of plantations, or unified action among common rural people against the onslaught of commercial interest on their land or state-led construction of dams.

3.5   Capitalist expansion, left-authoritarianism, and human rights-based democracy

One major problem and counter argument remain. Even if it is accepted that subordinate classes, including the rural poor and the Left, may have instrumental reasons to resist the political monopolisation that is a vital part of primitive accumulation of capital, they have historically rarely given priority to democracy as such.

Undoubtedly there is much to this. Even if we set aside the worst instances like China and only consider the 'best' cases that have some liberal democratic preconditions like the Philippines, India, and Indonesia, where rural based Leftists have often been comparatively the 'best' promoters of preconditions for democracy, that does not exclude a wide range of fundamental problems regarding democratic rights and mechanisms as such. Even towards the end of the struggle against Marcos (and many years thereafter), it was not just the Philippine Maoists, but also many other leftists who disputed the 'fruitfulness' of giving priority to human rights, electoral work, and democratic governance. The same goes for Indian Maoists and many radicals within the extra-parliamentary oriented sections of the mainstream communist movements. The more statist pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (CPI) supported the emergency rule in the early seventies and only regretted it when it did not pay off. It is true that the larger Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) has more consistently opposed authoritarianism, but mainly among its enemies and with remarkable tolerance for rough practices among allies. It is also true that it has implemented a wide range of pro-democratic conditions and institutions in West Bengal and Kerala, including agrarian reforms and democratic decentralisation. But there are problematic aspects of alternative patronage, so-called democratic centralism, and tendencies to dominate other progressive forces.

Indonesia, however, is the most obvious and tragic case. The experiences of the world's third largest communist party—from the early- till the late-50s a pioneer of democracy in the country—clearly illustrate what I would hold as the major Achilles' heel within the radical Left. Firstly, the insufficient internal democracy and centralism

in Indonesia allowed for a few of the very top leaders to engage in adventurous and dubious deals with sections of the national and military elite, thereby putting the entire party and the huge mass movement at risk. Secondly, the neglect of links and alliances with liberal intellectuals and social democrats on fundamental issues of human rights and democracy meant that there was no opposition to political violence or authoritarianism, and also isolated the movement. This enabled other groups and foreign powers to take advantage of generations of dynamic and potentially radical students and intellectuals. Thirdly, was the tendency to even give up basic rights and the democratic system in face of what were regarded as more 'basic' aims and conflicts. Soon after the first parliamentary elections of 1955, the Indonesian communists abandoned liberal democracy that had served its rapid political advances so well. This was done with reference to the primacy of the anti-imperialist struggle and in favour of what later emerged into Sukarno's army-backed 'guided democracy'. The situation was difficult, of course. When 'guided democracy' was proclaimed in 1959, the PKI had few alternatives but to stick to 'the only game in town'. But there had been alternative, though difficult, paths to choose before that. And at least to the extent that theory and strategy mattered, it is clear that the party itself gave priority to anti-imperialism instead of democracy at a rather early stage and even nourished positive assumptions as to the democratic character of their allies (cf Törnqust 1984). Actually, therefore, the Left also contributed to the emergence of more than thirty years of extreme repression and exploitation.

Fortunately, however, the tide now seems to have turned against the old practices. Firstly, there are not just instrumental reasons to fight the political monopolisation that is basic to primitive accumulation of capital. There are also instrumental reasons to promote basic rights and democratic mechanisms as such, so as to get rid of closely associated authoritarianism, repression and limited political opportunities. In other words, a lesser degree of political monopolisation (which was achieved in the Indonesian context by doing away with Suharto) is a necessary condition for subordinated peoples to improve their living conditions. It is not the only condition, however, as scattered elite monopolisation of various assets, resources and the control of labour can still continue if substantial democracy is not achieved.

Secondly, (and in addition to the disintegration of destructive cold war front lines and loyalties), 'actual', not ideal, capitalism is spreading. That, of course, is a mixed blessing. But as we shall see, it does undermine the old, rigid, and irreconcilable rationales for undemocratic strategies among communists as well as social democrats and liberals.

The background is that since the early 1920's anti-colonial Marxists, communists, and many of the enlightened radical nationalists, used to argue that there was a need for top-down political shortcuts to progress. This was because coexistence in the third world of imperialism and feudal-like structures blocked dynamic bourgeois revolutions. Hence the workers were also weak, and as such, the driving social forces would have to include the huge majority of oppressed peasant farmers and the frustrated bourgeois factions. This called for efficient centralised organisation, enlightened radical leadership, and strategies—to gain political power, to get rid off

colonial or neo-colonial masters and their partners, and to conquer the state. The latter would then be used to implement grand development strategies. Now that 'real' capitalism is spreading, however, it should be possible for radical movements within this tradition to focus more on gradual and democratic pathways from below, broad alliances between various and less unified rural and urban forces, and to abandon enlightened authoritarianism.

Similarly, there would also be less fertile ground for the earlier third world liberal- and social-democratic 'middle class coups'. These, as we know, occurred in order to resist 'threatening masses' (which the liberals and social democrats were much less capable of organising than communists and radical nationalists) in favour of elitist modification of imperialism and the use of international capitalism to promote enlightened national modernisation, including the growth of workers and middle classes. Now that 'actually existing' capitalism may produce a critical mass of middle class and 'educated workers', however, it might be easier to mobilise them in peaceful elections then the earlier 'backward masses'. Hence, western oriented socialists and centre-leftists may become more interested in political work among 'the masses', and also engage in joint projects with groups and people that previously were looked upon as communist-pariah.

3.6   The primacy of politics and actors

In short, the arguments to be followed up are: (1) that there are instrumental reasons for large sections of the population to oppose the political monopolisation that is key to the ever-prevailing primitive accumulation of capital—and that this renders possible class-based demands for democratisation in contrast to neo-liberalism; (2) that divisive uneven development should be an instrumental reason for subordinate classes to unite by way of democratic mechanisms to resist common enemies; (3) that the 'actual' expansion of capitalism as well as its repressive character are additional instrumental reasons for subordinate classes to fight for human rights and democracy as such; (4) that the 'real' development of capitalism has undermined the strategic rationales for both authoritarian shortcuts to progress and 'middle class coups'—thus also opening up for reconciliation and advances within the Left on the basis of a pro-democratic agenda.

In other words, what used to be projected as liberal-capitalist 'end of history' may rather be the beginning of renewed popular development and democratisation.

The unfolding of all these structural imperatives for democratisation, however, is far from automatic. It may prove that there are indeed instrumental reasons to promote co-operation, basic rights and democratic mechanisms as such (to unite scattered subordinated classes and to get rid of the authoritarianism, repression, and limited political space that is basic to the political monopolisation of primitive accumulation of capital). But even then: that very struggle in turn calls for 'skilled' politics on (a) what particular rights, mechanisms and capacities should be shaped, and (b) how that should be done. In short, it calls for the best possible politics of democratisation.

While there is a growing awareness of this among pro-democrats, most activists are still preoccupied with fighting evil, and increasingly global, structures in order to create appropriate general conditions for a better society. Only a few believe in stoning policemen, but discussions on if and how such improvements could be achieved instead, through strengthening of basic rights and democratisation, continue to take a back seat. Few frameworks and models have emerged.

As a point of departure, one must therefore proceed, instead, by way of a critical review of the best available established propositions. These are within the discourse of the crafting of instant liberal democracies, through international support for 'good' political, administrative, and civil institutions.

The easiest and most fashionable counter-argument to that is that such pro-democratic efforts in general are naive and almost ridiculous. The message, then, is that patrimonial culture and systems are so old and strong that they will overrule any element of democracy that is introduced (e.g. Chabal and Daloz 1999).

I do not share this view. The role and importance of patrimonialism and clientelism rarely have such deep, strong roots. The 'saffron Wave' in India, for instance, as the best recent expression of such characteristics, may instead be analysed as an essentially middle class based reaction and an attempt to channel new and scattered, but threatening, plebeian influences into the democratic system (Hansen 1999). In Indonesia, as another example, the patrimonialism and clientelism that characterised much of Suharto's regime primarily gained importance as a result of the authoritarian rule and exploitation of the late fifties and onwards. So if one focuses on these issues as basic hindrances rather than as seemingly irrevocable cultural traits—the favouring of democracy ceases to appear impossible.

The question then, is whether it is possible to develop more challenging pro-democratic policies within the mainstream framework for the institutional crafting of democracy. We shall first turn to the efforts at reforming the central political and administrative system (in terms of rights, elections, and 'good governance'), then discuss the creation of appropriate civil institutions (through decentralisation, a dynamic civil society and social capital) and finally present an alternative proposition.

3.7   Beyond the crafting of elitist democracy

As we know, many of the earlier structural and institutional approaches to the problems of third world democratisation were based on the assumption that democracy, according to established scholars, would only come about if there were more modernisation, or, as their critics retorted, if there were less international dependency. Just about the only thing they had in common, then, was that both arguments were proved wrong. The third wave of democracy (which started with the fall of the dictators in southern Europe and continued with the fall of the wall in Berlin) reached the third world despite insufficient modernisation and despite increased dependency.

The new approaches that emerged in response to these unexpected changes, then, mainly turned out to be elitist supplements. The 'liberal' scholars (including Diamond (1992, 1999), Linz & Stepan (1996) and Huntington (1991) did away with much of their outdated hard-core modernisation theories, and substituted them with discussion on a myriad of partly unrelated and empirically generalised factors. These congregated around a normative focus on the role of middle-class elites, the institutional mechanisms of liberal democracy, and the possibility of crafting such institutions. For instance, even the very best book in this tradition, by Linz and Stepan (1996), combines structure and actor approaches by looking at constraints through the prism of normatively identified and empirically localised elite-actors and 'best possible' institutions. Meanwhile, the dependency scholars simply set aside the structural dynamics—which according to their previous analyses could not generate democracy—and focused on contingent elite-manoeuvres and the engineering of institutions (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986).

This is not just on the central level. As neo-liberal deregulation and 'hollowing out' of the developmental state has been modified by the transferral of regulatory capacities to sub-and supra-national institutions, (cf Jessop 1993, 1994) and a shift from 'less government' to 'good governance' (World Bank 1997), the local state and civil society have emerged as special arenas in which a host of objectives are to be achieved. A number of institutional reforms have been introduced to get the 'formal' local institutions right in terms of the rule of law, basic rights and free and fair elections, including the mobilisation of votes on local issues and identities, in order to further development (Williams & Young 1994). To this is added different forms of decentralisation (Rondinelli et.al (1983) and World Bank (2000), including privatisation to actors in the market or semi-privatisation to NGOs and other actors in civil society, deconcentration of tasks and fiscal transfers to local units of central offices; and devolution of power to local governments. There are also proposals to initiate local partnerships between state institutions, businesses, and actors in civil society (Wolfensohn, 1988).

These neo-institutionalist approaches to new democratisation suffer from two major problems and one negative outcome: (1) the first problem concerns missing societal dynamics. The literature is unclear on, and at times fails even to mention, the broader societal dynamics (Gill 2000). Rather, these approaches contribute to the dominating idea that if international pressure and influence can compensate for the worst domestic obstacles, and if one acts swiftly during periods of crisis (when the normally powerful forces are in disorder), the major task is simply to craft alliances within the elite, and establish the rule of law, human rights, and the 'right' type of constitution and electoral system. These and other 'good' institutions are considered to be those that best serve a type of minimum liberal democracy, that the international community seems, normatively, to agree upon. In fact, most of the literature discusses and generalises such measures comparatively and on a grand scale—far removed from specific contexts with different power relations, actors and cultures; almost like the IMF and World Bank economists handle economic crises with universal recipes, or as the old Communist modernisers directed their satellites

through the Comintern.

(2) The second major problem with the predominant approaches is the a-historical fallacy. This is a the tendency to analyse democracy on the basis of definitions that build on historically static *means* of democracy in Europe and North America, rather than on the universal *ends*, the principles of democracy. Hence we are also engulfed by static and normatively based analyses of stages such as transition to and consolidation of democracy. What universally and once and for all defined democratic means are supposed to be consolidated?

Similarly out of touch with historical realities are the frequent recommendations to give priority to the 'rule of law' and 'good governance'. It is true, of course, that efficient, predictable, and fair governance are prerequisites for sustainable economic development and democracy (e.g. North (1989, 1990, 1993) World Bank 1997). The only problem is, that when constitutionalism does not precede popular sovereignty (as it did in the West) we either have to say (like the supporters of the East Asian development state did) that the time is not yet ripe for democracy—or discuss what social, economic and political forces would simultaneously be able to enforce constitutionalism *and* democracy. And this is rarely done. Most of the proponents of rule of law and good governance talk at length of what should be done but avoid the problem of who would be able to enforce and implement it (e.g. World Bank 1997).

(3) The likely negative outcome, then, of mainstream crafting of democracy are shallow and unstable democracies. Political monopolisation as part of primitive accumulation of capital render ideas about crafting 'good' political pacts and institutions difficult. The assumption is that if business is allowed to 'take care of itself', there will be space enough for cautious political changes, as in southern Europe and parts of Latin America. This is not likely to work, however, where there is a deeply rooted symbiosis between politics and economy that is largely left intact. Central political monopolies may be done away with, but if there is no drastic altering of the structure of power around them, local and sectoral bosses will survive. And since no (Mafioso-like) 'godfather' is then able to control politics and put some limits on the primitive accumulation of capital (in order not to undermine the system and also to nurture it), political violence and corruption may well increase. (c.f. Olsen 2000 and McIntyre 2000) Hence, democratisation will be shallow and unstable, vacillating between unrealistic elitist crafting of institutions with international backing and the return of old powerful forces who draw on populist nationalism within the formal framework of some rudimentary democratic institutions and populist nationalism (Törnquist 2002).

The obvious first step to get out of this three-dimensional impasse, I suggest, is to substitute the ordinary people for the elite. This is not just because the basic principles of democracy relate to the people rather than to the elite. Equally importantly, this would allow us to consider the broader societal and structural dynamics, for instance by supplementing Linz et al.'s analyses of the constraints through the prism of the elite with studies of how popular actors relate to such preconditions (cf. Rudebeck, Törnquist and Rojas 1998).

Further, one also has to separate the universal ends or principles of democracy

from the contextual means that vary over time and with the balance of power (cf. Beetham (1999) and Törnquist (1999: Ch.12). Thus it should be possible to replace the fixation with Western means, with studies of the actual dynamics of democratisation, in terms of the forces at play and their interests in being able to shape and use the democratic means to reach the democratic ends.

We shall soon return to an alternative framework (under 6.9. below), but let me first discuss the pros and cons of the second, societal aspect of the crafting of democracy approach.

3.8   Beyond idealist crafting of civil society democracy

In contrast to measures concerning the elitist and political and administrative levels, the other tendency within the discussion about building democracy is about the promotion of local and civil institutions. These are often held to be necessary preconditions for liberal democracies.

The idea is to generate a public sphere of communication and co-operation among citizens on the basis of voluntary and independent civil associations and self-management. This, all agree, is in order to reduce and counter the influence of state and local government. Some would add that 'good' civil organisation should also be separated from and act as a counter-weight to politically and economically 'partisan' organisations, such as political parties and trade unions, corporate actors in the market and/or the kind of non-citizen associations that one is more or less a member of by birth, such as families, clans, and ethnic and religious groups. The argument, then, is that this institutional civil set up—which is related to the liberal struggles against feudalism and other forms of authoritarianism—is a basic pre-condition for liberal democracy. The more dense and vibrant the civil society, the better the democracy (e.g. Cohen and Arato (1994). The proponents of social capital, finally, add that inter-personal trust, norms and networks are essential for citizens' co-operation, and their ability to promote democracy. This in turn varies with the level of civil communalism in terms of unhierarchal associational life, (including football clubs and bird watching societies)—which in turn is due to historical 'path dependence'. The original argument, for instance, is that the dense associational life in northern Italy is rooted in the late-medieval city-state culture (Putnam 1993).

What are the pros and cons of this paradigm with regard to democratisation? Civil society and social capital may be fine as normative concepts (and personally I subscribe to many of them) but with regard to democratisation they are not analytically effective. Rather we should proceed by handling five major problems.[12]

(1) Essential factors neglected: The paradigm sets aside relations of power, interests and ideas. Rather it assumes citizens to be equal and the very existence of civil

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[12] Much of what follows below in sub-section 3.8 is based on Törnquist (1998b) and (1999; Ch. 13).

associations, trust and networks to be almost enough for democracy to develop and survive. Yet most social science research indicates that conflicts over power, related for instance to class and gender, and differences, associated for instance with ideologies, ethnicity and religion, are absolutely fundamental—including in processes of democratisation. In our cases, any neglect of the importance of political monopolisation of resources as part of primitive accumulation of capital is to negate the most basic hindrance against democracy—especially on the local and rural level where the political space is usually especially tight.

(2) Ambiguous roots and bases: Hardly anyone would dispute the importance of associations and public discourse that is relatively independent from the state, and, even better, from the market, the family, and ethnic and religious organisation as well. (But why should they be independent from parties and trade unions?) But what generates it all? What shapes civil society and social capital? Most analysts involved claim that modern civil society emerged with the rise of socio-economic relations relatively independent from the family, the feudal lord, and the absolutist state. First, however, many scholars have questioned Putnam's path dependence explanation for the paradigmatic case of Italy.[13] Moreover, the approach as such does not help us to analyse the reproduction of history—to explain what survives and why—and to account for the fact that seemingly similar phenomena like associations do not necessarily have the same function (e.g. to promote social capital) under different conditions.

Further, while some scholars do modify the general agreement within the paradigm on the historical importance of anti-feudal and authoritarian capitalist modernisation by also pointing to its mixed blessing in terms of its anti-social effects, the paradigm itself offers no precise tools to analyse these dynamics. Here it is rather Marxism that is most sharp and fruitful. It stresses the atomisation of people under 'bourgeois' division of labour and a social plurality which, if not resisted politically, tends to produce bureaucratic authoritarianism rather than a political plurality (c.f. Gibbon 1998). But this is hardly even considered within the civil society paradigm. On the contrary, Cohen and Aroto (1994), for instance, even assume that the best way of fighting the negative effects of capitalism is to further deepen the same dubious civil society that capitalist modernisation is giving birth to, and to bet on 'people themselves' and their autonomy (including their special identities) as against, and

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[13] Among the convincing arguments are that Putnam has not accounted for changes over time, that the degree of civicness is much more fluctuating than stated, that vital norms are fairly similar in the regions, and that the critical differences between them were rather "mega-constraints imposed by geography, location (earthquake areas in the south), economics, and politics" (Sabetti 1996:27). For instance, according to Sidney Tarrow, "every regime that governed southern Italy from the Norman establishment of a centralised monarchy in the twelfth century to the unified government which took over there in 1861 was foreign and governed with a logic of colonial exploitation, (and) southern Italy's semi-colonial status (did not) suddenly disappear with unification" (Tarrow 1996: 392 and fn 15). The only plausible reason for why a well read scholar like Putnam could miss this, Tarrow argues, is that there is something wrong with "the model with which he turned to history (Tarrow 1996:395).

in order to influence, state and politics. [14] What is more, the entire argument is undermined if there is something to the rather widespread agreement among critical scholars that the spread of 'actually existing' capitalist relations in the third world rarely promotes the kind of politically fairly independent business and middle classes, and the relative separation between state and civil society, that this modernisation is often associated with.[15]

(3) Politics neglected: In total contrast to the paradigm, it may even be that the growth and importance of civil society is much due to political action and state and government regulation and intervention.[16] Some scholars within the paradigm differentiate between parties, parliament and governments on the one hand, and the state apparatuses on the other. But there is almost no interest in the extent to which governments are in command of their state apparatuses, and citizens are in command of their governments. For instance, there is hardly any reference[17] to the pro-democratising effects of close to a decade of north European co-operation between popular movements, democratic government and state at various levels; *parts* of which have also been labelled social corporatism and associative democracy. Or to return again to the paradigmatic Italian case: Why was it that Sicily, by 1922, had the "highest number of locally constituted and operated farmer co-operatives and the second highest number of locally established (…) rural credit institutions in Italy"? Why did the labour movement in the Capitanata region of Apulia really fight fascism and why was it "stronger and more powerful than its counterpart in Emilia Romagna"? (Sabetti 1996:32f.) Why did fascism emerge in Putnam's northern civil and therefore inherently pro-democratic communities in the first place? What of their contemporary scandals over bad governance and corruption—and of the rise of civil associations in the South? (Tarrow 1996: 392 and fn. 15) And perhaps most important of all: what of the deliberate and powerful efforts of the Italian Communists, and many Socialists and Christian Democrats too, in key areas of the North from the late nineteenth century onwards to constitute and work through civil associations? (cf. Tarrow 1996:393f.). Given the weakness of the path dependence explanation, is it not plausible that this kind of politics is of vital importance in the process of shaping civil societies and in the creating of social capital?

Moreover, outside Europe, in what came to known as the Third World, the initial shaping of citizen societies, or 'demos', was mainly directed against former colonists

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[14] The deepening of civil society in terms of stressing empowerment of individual citizens may be contrasted to the 'politicising' of the same in terms of giving priority to common ideas and collective organisation and action.

[15] For the related results and conclusions that this essay is based on, see sub-sections 3.3–3.5.

[16] Historically, incidentally, civil society signified a *politically created* society of citizens (excluding slaves, mobs, natives, immigrants … and, of course, distinguished from 'anarchy'). The Greeks explicitly talked of *politike koinonia,* political community, and the Romans distinguished *societas civilis,* society of citizens, from non-citizen societies like those based on residence or kinship.

[17] Not even in the almost 800 pages of standard work on civil society and politics by Cohen and Arato (1994).

and indigenous peoples. In countries like Japan, the externally induced modernisa-tion and subsequent steps towards democracy were mainly carried out through the state from above. The initial modernisation in the colonies was first imposed by conquerors but later turned against them by nationalists, who often added initial democratisation and always made use of state and politics (Therborn (1992) and (1995) In many parts of Africa, for instance, the early 'actually existing' civil societies were primarily in urban areas. The rest, the subjects, were under customary rule; which, however, was integrated, refined and made use of by the colonisers. Much of the nationalist struggle was about deracialising the civil societies—whereafter the world of subjects was either governed through clientelism or 'enlightened and developmental' one-party states. Democratisation among the subjects at the grass-roots level was rarely even attempted. The few real efforts are still lacking firm co-ordination with urban civil society movements. Equally isolated civil society move-ments, including many of the recent pro-democracy ones, either turn shallow and formalistic—or approach, again, the world of subjects through potentially explosive clientelist linkages based on for instance, ethnicity or religion (Mamdani (1996), cf Törnquist (1999:9–14).

Obviously one has to give much more emphasis to the importance of political action and intervention—both as a prerequisite and a hindrance for civil organisation.

(4) Ambiguous pro-democratic effects: Given their existence and strength, civil society and social capital as such are poor historical explanations of democracy. They have coexisted with very different types of regime—including fascism in Italy and Germany. Sweden's very vibrant civil society, that has deep historical roots, stands in sharp contrast to the country's comparatively late democratisation. If it can be assumed that civil societies and self-management really do promote a public sphere of communication and co-operation among citizens, and thus also the rule of law, plus human and civil rights, then of course, this is essential to democratisation. It is not, however, the same as democracy (popular control and political equality with regard to binding collective decisions), or even sufficient for democratisation. Democracy has often come about through illegal means and in spite of the lack of civil rights. And anyway, democratic struggles (within or outside liberal public/civil space) are more a question of socio-economic conflicts (such as over class) and of politics to alter the rules as well as the division of labour and resources, (at least to such an extent that both civil and political rights become universal) than of civil society associations, however important they may be, within the framework of existing rules and inequalities.[18]

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[18] Also, for instance, it is true that civil society activists who fought the totalitarian regimes in Poland and Latin America consciously limited themselves to the strengthening of civil society, and to the democratising of some of its associations, in order thus to influence and undermine the regimes—as it was impossible to conquer the state, fight the armies, and democratise the society and its institutions as a whole. But it is equally true that the very processes of transition to democracy soon called for political organisations and actors—and that many well intended and hard working grassroots activists were thus set aside.

Consequently one should also specifically question how and why social capital would translate into democratisation and efficient democratic government. In Putnam's study there are correlations but few causal chains and no agents of change. Why and how would football clubs always promote co-operation outside the clubs and in wide societal fields? What is "the causal chain between bird watching and political activism"? (Levi 1996:49) How are people capable of really standing up against non-performing governments and suggest other policies? Why would civil community demands have to be democratic? (What of democratic middle class decisions to wall residential areas? Or ethnic and religious-based social capital or community co-operation that are enforced by authoritarian rulers like Suharto?)[19] Again, how and why do Putnam and his followers exclude other plausible explanations for all this—including state and politics? In terms of far-stretched explanations, one may even equate the social capital school of the nineties with the capital logic school of the seventies.[20]

In contrast to this, our previous discussions and propositions indicate, that people's instrumental interests—for instance in relation to agrarian reforms—have been absolutely vital in the struggle for democracy. Similarly, the role of agents and ideas such as political organisations, strategies and ideologies cannot be overestimated. They must be central to a fruitful approach for critical studies of democratisation.

(5) Dubious relevance: Finally social science is also about societal relevance, beyond the curiosity of applying and testing theses. Do researchers and their analytical tools tackle real and vital societal dilemmas? Since the eighties, the civil society paradigm (later on supplemented with the theses about social capital) has been widely acclaimed. This is not the place to discuss why,[21] but the paradigm, at least, is not particularly helpful if one considers the lack of popular political organisation and representation based on interests and ideologies to be the most serious problem in current uphill attempts at democratisation.[22]

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[19] On a closer look, one actually finds that the dependent variable of the social capital analysts is neither democratisation nor democratic practice (despite the titles of books and applications for funds) but government performance—which is not part of 'normal' definitions of democracy, but rather used to be stressed by instrumental Leninists, among others. The content or outcome of democracy, of course, has some bearing on its consolidation, but as we know from fascism in Europe or the pre-crisis East and Southeast Asia, government performance is not altogether clearly related to a democratic type of regime.

[20] However, some of the initially most enthusiastic scholars now report more cautious conclusions and interesting results (Blomkvist and Swain 2001).

[21] Cf. e.g. Gibbon (1998), Beckman (1998), White (1994) and Mohan and Stokke (2000)

[22] The most serious problem for at least four reasons: (1) because the genuine efforts at democratisation which emerged in the course of the liberation struggles were undermined both by the deterioration of the movements themselves and by the rise of new authoritarian forces which repressed the movements and reduced or redirected ambitious land reforms and health and educational programmes, all initially aiming at turning subjects into citizens; (2) because the then emerging civil movements which contributed to the undermining of the authoritarian

3.9   A third way to democracy

To summarise, the series of structural imperatives (with rural dimensions) for democratisation, and partly even for democracy as such, calls for agency in terms of knowledge and politics of what rights, mechanisms and capacities should be promoted and how. A critical review of the best available mainstream propositions suggests (1) that since the approaches are elitist, a-historical, set aside vital parts of the societal dynamics, and are likely to create shallow and unstable democracies, one should substitute the ordinary people for the elite and separate the universal ends and the historically specific means of democracy; (2) that while the civil society and social capital paradigm assumes citizens to be equal, and dense civil associational institutions and co-operation to be sufficient for democratisation, one must add to this the importance of the balance of power and other interests, organisations, and ideas; (3) that as the same paradigm is ambiguous as to the historical importance of capitalist modernisation for civil associations and co-operation in the West, there is a special need for contextual analyses of the role of the often different but yet actually existing types of capitalism in the former colonies in the South; (4) that since politics tend to be seen as a dependent variable, while its role can hardly be exaggerated particularly in the South, much more emphasis must be given to its positive as well as negative significance; (5) that since the paradigm is incomplete and confusing with regard to the pro-democratic effects of the very existence of civil associations and chances to co-operate, one has to add the role of intermediate variables in general and the importance of political and ideological agency in particular; (6) that the paradigm does not address the most crucial problems of democratisation—the lack of popular political organisation and representation based on interests and ideologies—which should be given priority instead.

Consequently, a third way must be developed between the earlier dominating but authoritarian-prone determinism on the one hand, and the currently fashionable but analytically unfruitful idealism on the other.[23]

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regimes (as in Latin America and the Philippines during the eighties) were unable to generate efficient *political* organisations and representatives—wherefore the inevitable horse trading associated with most transitions to democracy was captured by the traditional political elites, their clientelism, and their (sometimes) emerging state-corporatism (this, the reader will find, is also a major conclusion in this essay regarding 'our' empirical cases); (3) because the related problems of 'consolidating' democracy may best be summarised, with Adam Przeworski et.al. (1995:57), as "something more profound (...) than institutional factors" namely "the absence of collective projects, of socially integrating ideologies, of clearly identifiable political forces, of crystallised structures of interests to be represented"; (4) because persisting authoritarian tendencies often coexist with the rise of capitalism, general modernisation, elements of civil society, and the creation of social capital—but not, necessarily, with democratisation.

[23] The following framework has grown out of the project that this essay summarises the results from, and especially from my analyses of the experiences in Indonesia since 1997 (cf Törnquist 2000, 2000c, 2002, 2001a), the joint work with Arief Budiman and the research team at ISAI (Institute for the Studies of Free Flow of Information, Jakarta) on (and with) the Indo-

This implies two steps: first the separation of democratic ends and means—which I shall return to a few paragraphs below, and second, the specification of the minimum material, social, economic and political preconditions that must be promoted in addition to the current crafting of basic rights and institutions. These are the preconditions that are necessary for ordinary people to be able to use and improve democratic rights and institutions, plus see to it that they are applied in relation to vital sectors of society (to avoid 'choice less democracies'), thus developing a substantial democracy.

By such substantial democracy we do not mean a utopia. Substantial democracy 'only' means that the conventional democratic rules of the game (which just about all political scientists would agree upon) are both fair *and* applied in vital sectors of society—so that, at least, strategic decisions are not taken in military staff rooms or in chambers of commerce, or at the IMF headquarters—and that all the players are granted political equality *and* have an actual capacity to take part and win. Accordingly, substantial democratisation implies the promotion and application of such rules of the game by methods that do not undermine them, even during the most repressive conditions. That does not mean that force must always be avoided by pro-democrats, but that it must only be used in order to practice basic democratic rights such as to organise and express an opinion.

This means a democracy and democratisation process that is likely to make sense for most people concerned. Not because its outcome is always to their advantage (for instance in terms of social safety nets and land reforms rather than neo-liberal measures). That result is an open question and another matter, as long as the democratic fundamentals are not undermined. No, a substantial democracy is likely to be meaningful (and solid) simply because the people at large (and not just the elite) has both the possibility *and* the capacity to make use of (and improve) conventional democratic principles and institutions at work, in order to handle their problems—by influencing, controlling, and participating in equal and peaceful governing and administration of vital sectors in their societies.

How is it possible, then, to start identifying such minimum preconditions that should be added to the current crafting of minimum rights and institutions in order to promote a democracy that makes sense? What are the rights and institutional mechanisms that must be both fair and applied in vital sectors of the society? And what kind of rights, institutions and popular capacities are needed for people to be both equal and capable to take part and make a difference?

This is the point when we return to the need to separate between democratic ends and means. The democratic principles of popular control and political equality with regard to collective binding decisions (among a necessarily specified 'demos', i.e. people or members) are universal in terms of the democratic aim. Their substance

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nesian democracy movement, and is now being further developed within the new—yet to be financed—project, based in Oslo, on Local Politics and Democratisation in Developing Countries (Stokke and Törnquist, 2001).

and implementation through various means, however, are not. Hence our questions should be thoroughly contextualised. But since no cultural relativism is involved and there is a lack of space, we shall stick to the general categories.

In my own writings, I have separated the contents (in terms of the results of democratic decisions) and pointed to different scope (reach, extension or the sectors in society where they are applied) and forms (civil and political rights and institutions) of democracy, as well as their preconditions in terms of other rights and institutions, balance of power, and citizen's aims, strategies and capacities (Törnquist 1999:Ch.12). To avoid unnecessary conceptual disputes, however, let us instead point to what should be covered, by drawing on the four basic criteria that have gained wide acceptance in the European discussion about 'auditing democracy' (Beetham 1999). Those criteria include the application/reach and quality of the 'conventional' means to promote democratic principles of popular control and political equality, as well as the existence of additional conditions that are necessary to enable people to make use of and improve those instruments in essential sectors of society.

These 'conventional' means to promote democracy, according to Beetham, are, firstly, what used to be called free and fair elections—to which we add their substance and scope. The second instrument is open and accountable government (politically, legally, and financially)—which also requires independent public knowledge, movement, organisation, and government responsiveness to public opinion. Let us group these two instruments under the label of institutional channels.

The third instrument to promote democracy is the conventional cluster of constitutional civil and political rights, including to what extent that they are real and useful for ordinary people. This, thus, includes thus the judicial aspect of the rule of law.

The additional fourth factor, then, is the set of extra background conditions that are needed to make the other factors viable—including democratic governance, not just of state and local governments, but also of society at large (at least civil associations). It would therefore be possible to promote a democratic culture as well as provide basic needs, social and cultural rights and education to make citizens reasonably self-confident. This may be labelled 'a democratic society'.

In addition to this, then, comes the citizen's capacity to make use of and improve the democratic means. This is not explicitly mentioned as a separate category in the writings of Beetham, but is, rather, included in the briefly mentioned background conditions that are needed to make the others viable. The need to pay special attention to the role of actors and politics, however, should be clear from our earlier discussion in this essay.

Chapter 4.   Analytical Framework

4.1   The level of substantial democracy

To examine empirically and discuss the validity of the various contrasting propositions, a map cum yardstick is needed. Within such a model, it must be possible to situate various actors and propositions.

I believe that it is most fruitful to take the most 'demanding' thesis as a point of departure. This relates, then, to the alternative proposition just presented on the need to promote the crafting of additional social, economic and political preconditions to make possible substantial democracy and democratisation.

Hence, while many scholars (and activists) may not agree with this third way in terms of additional crafting, all of us are likely to be able to agree on what substantial democracy is about. So let us begin there and define what substantial democracy and democratisation is, and then use that as a yardstick.

Given that the vital decisions in a society are actually taken within its political system (and not primarily elsewhere, such as in private 'non-political' companies), what I have labelled substantial (and therefore also sustainable) democracy (in terms of actual political equality and popular control with respect to essential sectors of a given society and demos) rests with certain equally substantial rights (civil and political), institutional mechanisms (free and fair elections plus open and accountable government), certain societal background-factors along each of these dimensions—*and* most importantly (but not specified by Beetham)—the chances and capacity of citizens to make use of (and extend and improve) these rights and mechanisms to further their interests/instrumental aims.

Similarly, substantial democratisation implies the promotion of all this by democratic means or, if that is impossible because of repressive conditions, measures that neither undermine the principles of democracy nor vital democratic instruments but instead try to uphold them in their nascent form. An attempt is made to illustrate this in Figure 1.

The figure can be read in several ways. First, it includes the main elements of substantial democracy and democratisation—given, again, that the essential decisions in a society are actually taken within its political system. The latter may be 'tested' empirically by asking if the model applies with respect to the most vital issues and interests. (For instance, whether a serious economic crisis like that in Indonesia, post-Suharto, is an actual issue in parliamentary elections or not.)

Second, the lines indicate how citizens would try to promote their instrumental aims (such as better standard of living) if democracy (including democratic struggles for democracy) makes sense to them. If so, they would make their way through the various steps in the model. If not they would rather try to bypass them and find other non-democratic or even anti-democratic avenues (e.g. violent protests, paying or bargaining for protection and influential positions and contacts within the administration, government and elite circles). Obviously, there are combinations and

deviations, but this is where empirical studies and explanations will be most useful.

Third, in principle, pro-democrats, on the one hand, may be defined as actors who consistently follow, uphold, and improve democratic pathways, as well as citizens' capacity to make use of them. This is in order to promote democratic principles and thus achieve their main aims. Under harsh conditions, moreover, they would not use other means, which could undermine democratic ones, and would only use force to uphold democratic principles such at the right to organise. Anti-democrats, on the other hand, would consistently try to undermine this. Finally in the middle, are the majority that may be labelled 'consumers of democracy' (as opposed to the pro-democrats who also 'produce' democracy). The 'consumers only' include clientelist and bossist politicians within formal democratic frameworks, who only follow the pathways and principles when it suits them. What is more, they sometimes undermine them, often bypass them, rarely improve them, and seldom enhance citizens' capacity to use them (Budiman and Törnquist, 2001).
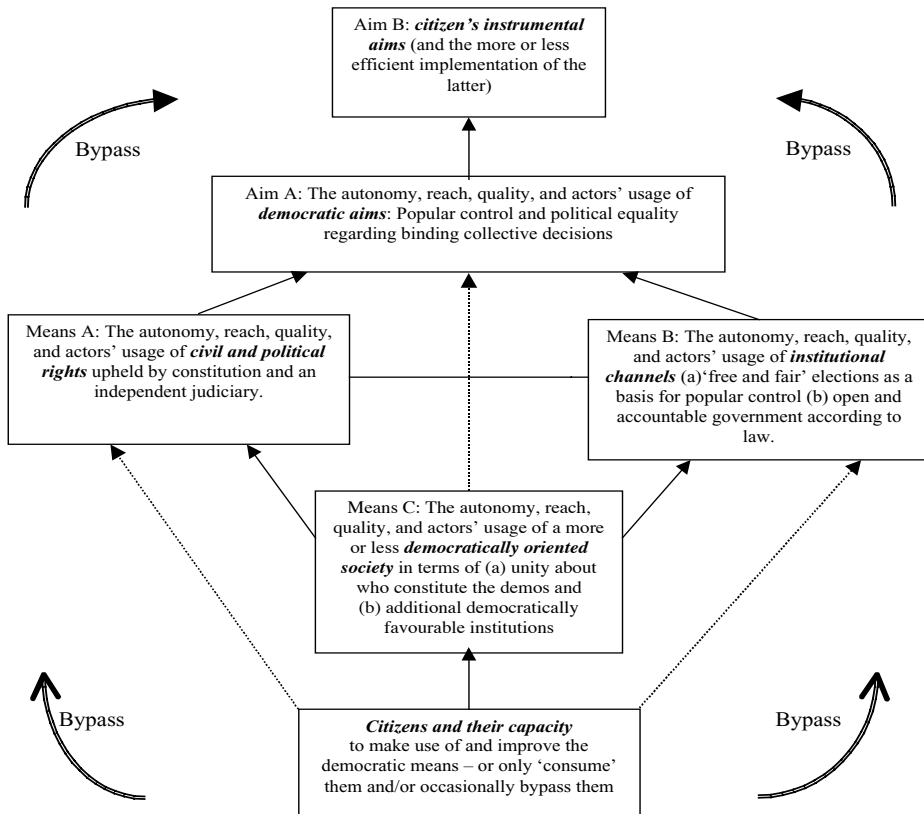
Figure 1: Elements of substantial democracy/democratisation. (Full lines are ideal-type connections and dotted lines are shortcuts within the system).

4.2   The competing propositions as reflected in the model

Since the concept of substantial democracy and democratisation is not a far-fetched ideal, the alternative framework in Figure 1 may also be used in empirical discussions of the validity of the various contrasting propositions. Below, we shall first indicate very briefly how the major propositions, if empirically valid, would be reflected in the model. The next major part of the essay, then, will be the point of departure for empirical studies.

To begin with, the four major mainstream arguments. The first, as we may recall, is that radical popular development and democracy with rural dimensions breeds authoritarianism through Machiavellian means and tactical adaptation to democracy as such. In the model, this would be indicated by actors bypassing the democratic pathways and principles and only following them when it is opportune to do so.

The second thesis is that actual capitalist development makes prices and labour more important than land and rural poor, while also generating fragmentation, scattered movements, and a reduction in the importance of class compared to other identities. In the model this would be reflected by the type and number of actors, their limited capacities, their main instrumental aims, and their divisive ways of furthering them.

The third argument, then, is about alternative policies, suggesting that it is possible to craft instant democracies almost irrespective of conditions, through international influence and by way of protection of private economic powers. This would enable political pacts within the elite and the promotion of basic constitutional rights and institutional channels including rule of law and 'good governance'.

Similarly, the fourth thesis is that the more dense and vibrant civil society and social capital, the better the democracy and democratisation. In the model, these two arguments would translate into a clear tendency towards the generation of substantial democracy in the system as a whole. It would not, however, cover essential economic sectors of the society, as it would mainly give priority to the promotion of aspects of the rights- and 'institutional channel' boxes in the first case and the 'democratic society' box in the second.

Turning to our alternative propositions, our initial alternative argument can be set aside as it has already been deemed convincing: that the rural poor and radical leaders have been fundamental to the early pro-democracy efforts under siege.[24] Furthermore, our second initial proposition that the problems of the radical project are not intrinsic to their theoretical basis by rather may be improved upon may best be evaluated by examining empirically the validity of the additional proposals which often relate to such attempts at renewal, in theory and practice.

Hence, what remain are five propositions of immediate contemporary concrete relevance. The first is that the Left (including rural poor) mainly fight political monopolisation (to hit at primitive accumulation of capital) and may possibly relate

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[24] See sub-section 3.1 above!

this to democratic rather than neo-liberal aims. In the model this would be reflected, of course, by the actors' instrumental aims and with their eventual linkages to democratic aims.

The second proposition, (in contrast to the second mainstream thesis) is that interests and movements may be fragmented, but have also come together against common enemies. In the model, the actor's capacities would thus increase in congruence with unifying instrumental aims—which in turn would relate to specific democratic aims and means.

The third and supplementary argument is that 'actually existing' capitalist expansion undermines Left-authoritarian shortcuts, while its repressive character calls for pro-democratic incentives. This would be reflected in the model by a clear tendency by actors to consistently follow, uphold, and improve the democratic pathways as such, as well as citizens' capacity to make use of them, in order to promote democratic principles and thus reach their instrumental aims.

Further, as we turn to pro-democratic policies, the fourth argument is that the mainstream elitist and a-historical crafting of 'good' rights and institutions as well as dense civil societies and social capital, is likely to create shallow and unsustainable democracies. This is because vital parts of the societal dynamics, including the primacy of power relations, interests, organisation, politics and ideas are set aside. In the model, then, this crafting would translate into little generation of substantial democracy, despite the promotion of specific elements in the three 'means-boxes'. On the contrary, a tendency to exclude essential sectors of society from the political system and otherwise only to 'consume' democracy would gain ground. Most dominant actors remain the same and only follow the democratic pathways when it is opportune, sometimes undermine them, often bypass them, rarely improve them and seldom enhance citizens' capacity to use them. Hence, democracy often does not make much sense to common people.

The fifth and final alternative proposition is that often it is popular instrumental interests and politics instead that are vital factors behind the generation of civil society and social capital, along with their possible (but far from necessary) democratic importance. In the model, this would be reflected not just by connections between instrumental and democratic aims and means, but also by a clear tendency towards causal links primarily from 'citizens capacity' to 'a democratic society', plus to 'the means in terms of 'constitutional rights' and 'institutional channels', as well as from those 'rights' and 'channels' to 'a democratic society'—and only secondary the other way around.

4.3   Enhancing citizen's democratic capacity through politics of democratisation

A fruitful and close study of the fifth proposition calls for additional analytical tools. What are the dynamics and problems of citizens' capacity to make use of, improve and expand democratic means to reach democratic as well as instrumental aims? The

first tentative answer, of course, is that this rests with the given socio-economic conditions. For instance, there may not be any reasonably unified classes similar to peasants who together fought their landlords. The mainstream thesis may be right about socio-economic fragmentation. This may generate a lot of scattered movements and interests, as well as identity rather than class politics.

Another obvious response is to point to unfavourable political opportunities. Repression and disorganisation is likely to matter (like that of Indonesia that lasted for more than thirty years). Also one has to consider the impact of various political institutions, such as the proposition among several NGOs to introduce simple-majority elections in single-member constituencies. This may favour the major established political parties, and/or bosses with (political) machines, at the expense of efforts to build new parties or coalitions just like in the Philippines, for example.

There is much to this. We must learn from the huge discussion about social movements and political opportunities. Political opportunity refers to the relative openness or closure of the political system, the stability of alignments among dominating groups, the possibilities for movements to associate with sections of the elite, and the risks of harsh repression (e.g. McAdam 1996).

To be able to discuss fruitfully the relevance of those factors we must select empirical cases with significant variations. To what extent does it matter if there are more or less favourable social structures, more or less repression and disorganisation, and different forms of representation, for instance?

But we must also be able to consider how and whether the dynamics of citizens' democratic capacity relate to the actors' politics of democratisation, i.e. how the actors read and are able to read, manage, and alter the political opportunities (which partly, in turn, reflect the socio-economic conditions). This calls for rather elaborate analytical instruments

4.4   Reading the political opportunities

To begin with, then, it is essential to ask how actors understand political opportunities or at least react to them. For all practical purposes this calls for enquiry into their preferred terrain of struggle. The very essence is the location and extension of political space. So where in the political terrain do actors position themselves—given the structure of political opportunity and the discussion among actors on how to read and relate to it? To answer, we need to imagine the political terrain and draw a map. An attempt is made in Figure 2.

The framework: state, business and self-management
The political terrain has three structural bases. These are the major and often overlapping ways in which societal activity is organised on the central as well as local level: state & government, business units (from small farms to big corporations) and self-government & management. The latter include voluntary neighbourhood management associations and non-profit foundations or co-operatives and other forms of

what might be called 'civil management', but ethnic and religious communities, clans, and families with similar functions as well. In Figure 2, these structural bases are indicated by the big circles on both the central and local level. Of course there are connections and overlaps. In the figure, these are indicated by the channels between the circles—within as well as between the central and local level.
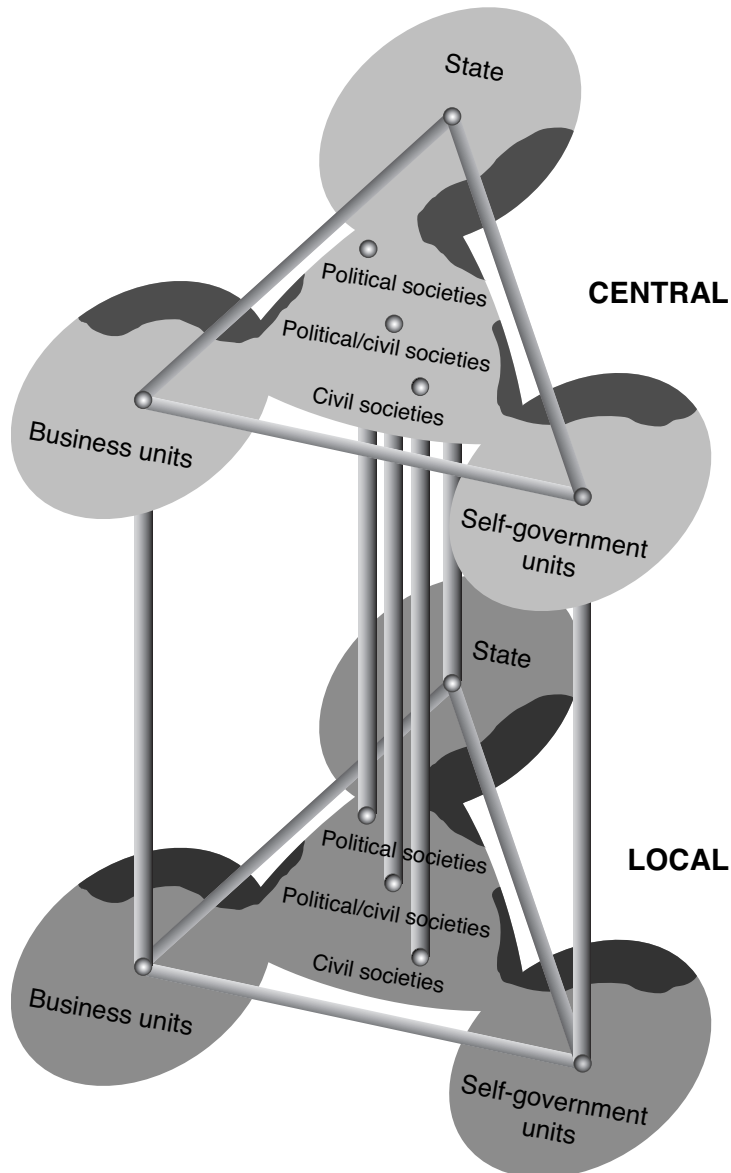
Figure 2: The political terrain for action.

The public sphere and political, civil and civil-political societies
The point is, then, that our actors must relate to these basic structures and channels. How do they work within them, including at their workplaces but also when elected into a local government council or a co-operative committee? And how do they try to impact upon them from outside?

The latter especially is usually done by way of activities in the *public sphere*. In totalitarian societies this is minimal, of course, but elsewhere it has developed between (and partly also within)[25] the basic structures and channels, usually as part of democratisation. The activities themselves are usually facilitated by different movements and associations, including political parties, pressure groups, trade unions, and networks.

Here we may also acknowledge, firstly, that some actors simply can not be active *inside* but have to (or anyway prefer to) stay *outside* the officially recognised 'system', at times even illegally and underground. In Figure 2 this possibility is indicated with shades. Secondly we need to separate between political, civil, and civil-political societies.

Political societies mainly try to influence directly state and government, on the central as well as local level (and in-between). With Linz and Stepan, this is the arena within which polity is elaborated that controls public power and administration. This is where political parties and lobbying groups are active, for example, as well as other networks (including clientelist ones) that have greater or lesser degrees of formality.

Civil societies are actually existing associations, not just the ideal 'civic and free and non-primordial' ones of many normative theories. In terms of politics, civil societies only affect indirectly state and government. Primarily they relate to business or self-management units. Trade unions or peasant farmers' organisations, for instance, tend to relate primarily to business units, employers, landlords and so on. Human rights groups in support of victims of violence, may relate to self- management units such as an independent legal aid bureau. Study circles may link up with a collective library. Religious movements may be close to various churches.

Civil-political societies, finally, combine or link the activities that relate to state, on the on hand, and business or self-management, on the other. One example would be a labour movement that includes a party as well as broad trade unions, youth and women groups, and co-operatives. Another example is human-rights groups that both support victims of violence and try to influence related state policies. A third case is peasant farmer's movements that do not just fight landlords on their own but also campaign for state led land reforms.

Generally, in each country, district, and specific case, there is a huge debate, on how to interpret the structure of political opportunity and what conclusions one should draw as to where in the political terrain it is most fruitful to be active, given ones ideal and instrumental aims. But before we consider this, let us also try to conceptualise what the actors do, given their positions in the terrain.

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[25] For instance when (as in Sweden and Norway) all state and government documents are public, when not classified for special reasons.

4.5   Politicisation

How do the actors go about their work? We have to consider two major dimensions. One refers to what kind of issues and interests they choose to bring up on the political agenda or politicise. The other is about how they try to mobilise support behind those ideas and interests by getting people politically involved and organised, or in other words politicised.

There is a lack of sharp analytical tools to handle this. On the basis of a Marxist-oriented understanding of civil society and democracy, Peter Gibbon has succinctly suggested some exciting propositions that may serve as a point of departure. Modern civil society primarily reflects the 'bourgeois' social division of labour with its individualised and privatised entities. The plurality of groupings created is not likely by itself to promote general interests and democratic forms of government. On the contrary, the associations may turn into prisoners of the process through the deepening of civil society, and become unable to combine single issues, specific interests, different localities, and associations through politicisation (Gibbon 1998).

This way of conceptualising politicisation, however, is slightly normative and general. One should not, for instance, rule out politicisation through development-oriented civil society organisations. And just like pluralism, politicisation is not a sufficient recipe for democratisation, as recently demonstrated in the former Yugoslavia, and earlier when carried out with the very best of intentions within the framework of various socialist projects. There is a need for qualifications and specifications.

Politicisation of interests and ideas
The interests and issues that actors focus on are fundamental, of course, and constitute the point of departure. They signal what kind of propelling social forces, such as class, that various movements relate to—as well as for what purposes democratisation makes sense (given that we analyse democratically oriented actors). At this stage, however, we limit ourselves to the broad and general categories that may later on guide contextual specifications.

First, there are the kind of ideas and/or interests around which people come together and which they consider in a societal perspective. Here we may distinguish between, on the one hand, single issues and/or specific interests, and on the other hand ideologies and/or collective interests. For example, the first category is often (but not always) linked to cause oriented movements, lobby, and pressure groups as well as craft- or factory based unions. The second, on the other hand, is associated, for instance, with parties based on societal conflicts and visions of how to handle them as well as large sector-based unionism. Whilst I previously thought that when analysing democracy-oriented movements it would be possible to avoid a special category for ideological thinking based on moral and spiritual values linked to communal loyalties and symbolic personalities, Abdurrahman Wahid et al. in Indonesia have revealed my naivety, so that category has now been added.

• Single issues or specific interests
• Ideology or collective interests
• Moral and spiritual values and communal loyalties.

Finally, of course, these different types of politicisation of issues and interests are then carried out by various actors positioned in different parts of the political terrain. For instance, some may lobby the central government for special social security systems, while others try to negotiate specific benefits from factory owners, and yet others promote co-operative self help schemes among labourers.

Politicisation of people
Politics, essentially, is about people coming together to decide on what should be held in common by all citizens (not just by members of various associations) and how this could be governed jointly. So, given the chosen arenas of operation for the actors, and the kinds of politicisation of ideas and interests that they give priority to, how do they try to involve people in politics by bringing them together and politicising them through mobilisation and organisation? This may be operationalised in three steps.

To begin with, of course, political inclusion is related to Sidney Tarrow's (1994) 'mobilisation structures'. But especially in third world contexts, we should start with a wider perspective. First—and in general accordance with Nicos Mouzelis (1986)—it is possible to distinguish historically between the *integration* of people into politics on the basis of relatively autonomous broad popular movements generated by comprehensive economic development (like in many parts of Western Europe), and the elitist *incorporation* of people with less solid organisations of their own into comparatively advanced polities in economically late-developing societies (like in the Balkans and many third world countries).

Second, and again following Mouzelis, one may separate between two different but not mutually exclusive ways of incorporating people: clientelism and populism. The concept of *clientelism* is not confined to Weber-inspired ideas of patrimonialism, but is more general and associated with what one may call *patrons or bosses* on different levels with their own capacity to deliver some protection, in return for services and votes. This, as we know from the Philippines and Indonesia, may well be combined with shallow democratisation. The main difference between patrons and bosses is that the former may still, to some extent, be related to patron-clientelism and more reciprocal and benevolent relations, while bosses' patronage may actually be protection against some of their own oppression.[26] In some cases clientelism is also 'modernised' in the form of state dominated corporatist representation (as was attempted in Suharto's Indonesia by reformist ICMI).[27] *Populism*, on the other hand, generally involves charismatic leaders like the Philippines' Estrada or Indonesia's

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[26] For a fine analysis of bossism, see Sidel (1999)
[27] Not to be confused with Scandinavian social-corporatism, now largely defunct.

Megawati who are able to express popular feelings and ideas, and sometimes, but not necessarily, interests. Their positions are essential to the stability of adjoining leaders and their ability to patronise followers. In addition to this, political leaders aiming to integrate people into politics have often tried shortcuts by adding elements of clientelism and populism—thus usually ending up with extreme elements of incorporation—which we may label *alternative patronage*. One obvious example is the attempt by the Philippine 'popular democrats' to gain from rallying behind Joseph Estrada. A more successful case is the West Bengal communists, who exchanged protection of small and 'middle peasant farmers' for votes and meanwhile, from top down, introduced extensive and efficient democratic decentralisation. We may also add the example of many development-oriented NGOs that offer alternative external support to people, thus giving them a chance to act more independently, but usually cannot sustain the initial dynamics.

Third, one may distinguish, in accordance with Sidney Tarrow (1994), between two basic methods of trying to integrate people into politics: one emphasises autonomous collective action and the other focuses on the internalisation of actions and movements in organisation with some leadership. The key-factor is the 'mobilisation structure' that helps movements to co-ordinate and persist over time by linking the 'centre', in terms of formally organised leadership identifying aims and means, and the 'periphery', in terms of the collective action in the field. Historically, according to Tarrow, there have been two kinds of solutions. One is to trust people's natural and spontaneous willingness and ability to resist repression and exploitation through linked *networks* and federations of autonomous associations (in reality, however, through instigating organic leaders as spearheads)—like the Indonesian students. Another is to stress the need for political ideology, *organisation* and intervention through *integrated* structures of parties, unions and self-help organisations (which in reality may hamper dynamic collective action)—like the reformist Kerala communists. In the West those have often been rooted in anarchist and democratic socialist thinking, respectively.[28] To avoid biased connotations, we shall instead talk of networks and organised integration. Finally, as far as I can see, a greater or lesser degree of networking and organised integration may well be combined.

Types of politicisation
In conclusion, let us combine the kind of issues and interests that actors bring up on the political agenda with how they try to mobilise support—to thus arrive at a typology of politicisation, as illustrated in Figure 3. Vertically are the different kinds of ideas and interests; horizontally are the various ways of mobilising people. Within the major categories of the latter, it is not a question of either/or but of a continuum. Incorporation varies between combinations of greater or lesser degrees of populism and clientelism. The same is true of integration with regard to networks and

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[28] In the "anarchist" solutions Tarrow also includes, for example, syndicalism and guild socialism; in the second he includes European Christian Democracy—and one could add reformist communist patterns.

	Mobilisation		
Ideas/interests	*Incorporation*	*Alternative Patronage*	*Integration*
Single issues/ specific interests	Populism<——>Clientelism	Incorporation<—>Integration	Networks<–>Organised integration
Ideology/ collective interests	Populism<——>Clientelism	Incorporation<—>Integration	Networks<–>Organised integration
Values/communal loyalties	Populism<——>Clientelism	Incorporation<—>Integration	Networks<–>Organised integration

Figure 3: Politicisation of interests, ideas, and people.

organised integration. Alternative patronage varies between greater or lesser aspects of incorporation and integration.

Within this typology one may map many of the experiences from different cases and contexts (as well as more general third world discussions). But for the typology to really make sense, one must analyse the types of politicisation within the spaces of the political terrain that the actors have given priority to. Thereby we may get an answer to both 'where' and 'how'.

Recalling Figure 2, imagine that the actors (and their transformation over time) are identified within the political terrain, and then apply Figure 3 to characterise what each actor does, over time.

4.6 Disputed propositions as reflected in the framework of politics of democratisation

It is difficult to identify a mainstream scholarly-academic debate about this. The most interesting propositions are from among activist-scholars and self-critical 'organic intellectuals' in the field. Because of lack of time and space, I will just identify five major general arguments that later on will be related to various actors in our empirical contexts and cases.

(1) According to the *class-party proposition*, a particularly important factor in the continued occurrence of problems is the neglect of political organisation and class-based ideology. Most democracy-oriented activists, it is argued, are lost and fragmented in NGOs and other civil organisations. These relate primarily to self-government units and bet on single issues and rather innocent questions, which the middle class may well have time to discuss, but which are not vital for the subordinated majority of the population.

Rather, it is recommended, one must build broad civil-political societies on the basis of organised integration of people, class interests and ideology. When such organisations are present, they need to be reinvigorated. When they have been eliminated (like in Indonesia), their fundamental ideas must be propagated and demonstrated.

When such organisations are present but non-democratic one may try to reform them or build new ones.

(2) Turning to *the pragmatic argument*, problems are instead due to a lack of realism and presence within the system. Unfortunately, it is stated, democrats avoid the centre of power—which must be shaken up, redirected and made use of—and prefer what is labelled unrealistically principled, radical ideas and organisation. Moreover, some of the self-critical pragmatists themselves add cynically, that democratic dissidents are hopelessly lost when it comes to mass organising.

Hence, one thesis is that the dissidents should gain as much influence as possible within the elite and avoid mingling with uneducated masses who are often attracted and misled by authoritarian doctrines and leaders. A partly different argument is that leading democrats should make their way to the top by drawing on the 'traditional' clientelist and populist clout of certain leaders. Both tendencies agree, however, that there is rather substantial space for intervention and change within the mainstream—within certain organs of the state, governments, expert committees, parties, universities, think tanks, socio-religious organisations and so on. Thus one can reform old policies, divide the elite, mediate somewhat better pacts, and craft improved rules of the game. Why shout in the street or lobby in vain if one can draw on activists outside and then change from within?

(3) The *grassroots thesis*, on the contrary, emphasises the lack of extensive civil associations and well anchored popular movements for real changes on the local level. The politically most active democrats, it is argued, often neglect this and focus on the centre, the state, and the elite.

The recommendation is that fragmentation and lack of political influence can only be fought if there is a solid alternative and democratic base. There are two major ways of going about this. One tendency, primarily among liberal oriented NGOs, is to emphasise the general extension and strengthening of civil societies and self-management in addition to decentralisation of the political system, to thus build a democratic local culture. Another proposition, which is more common among radical groups and activists, is to stress the organising of people in relation to various key interests, including via unions at their workplaces, and ideas of how to develop their villages and areas, again in relation to democratic decentralisation.

(4) The liberal-left *political-market thesis* is another pragmatic one. But here the argument is that all the other propositions are unrealistic in terms of politics of democratisation because none of them makes sense in elections and in terms of democratic governance. This, the adherents continue, explains the fragmentation and the lack of political influence among the democratic activists. The first thesis, it is argued, is partly right and partly wrong, and anyway too radical and long-term. The second can be applied but is too elitist and restricted, thus often limiting democracy severely. The third is right in principle but too radical when one has to strike deals and form broad alliances. Hence it does not make sense in elections and in terms of generating alternative governance. It is necessary to attract the votes of many more than (at best) the activists themselves, and then to govern for all. Hence, the adherents of the forth proposition conclude, there is no need to exclude the other

political tendencies but to form a popularly attractive political vehicle (for instance a generally progressive catch all party) that can bring them together, since it is the logic of liberal, representative, electoral democracies that counts.

(5) The extra-parliamentary *militant network proposition* is that the popular potential is contained by rigid structures and ideas, both in terms of the established political and administrative system and the conventional forms of protest and organising. Hence there is a need for groundbreaking interventions—near the centre of power but not inside. Networking and often militant activists should be in the forefront to pave the way and get people to understand the 'real' conflicts as well as possibilities.

It remains to be seen to what extent these propositions make sense—and if alternative and more powerful patterns (in terms of description and explanation) emerge when the framework is now applied empirically.

PART II:
PHILIPPINE, INDONESIAN AND KERALA CASES IN COMPARATIVE AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Chapter 5.   Cases, Design and Sources

What is the most fruitful way of bringing the nine competing propositions regarding democratisation in section 4.2 above to empirical test as well as venturing into the more specific problems of citizen's democratic capacity in relation to the five major and general arguments in section 4.6?

Since the late eighties and thereafter, I opted for a series of repeated case studies in three selected contexts where I had some earlier experiences. To begin with, these contexts had to represent predominant types of social, economic and political preconditions in the third world. To minimise the risk for straw man arguments, moreover, these also had to be critical cases where the mainstream theses seemed to be valid—but yet could be challenged (in a way that I shall return to a few paragraphs ahead).

The first context, therefore, was *the Philippines*, Asia's Latin America and one of the showcases of pro-democratic middle class uprisings. This uprising had a profound impact on the previously strong and well established Maoist and rural based left wing movements, which as a consequence became almost irrelevant. Also in the late eighties, new radical popular and democratic movements, that I predicted would gain ground, began to emerge.[29]

The second empirical framework was economically dynamic, but politically repressive, *Indonesia*. Here the established argument was that capitalist modernisation and slow 'liberation' of the middle class was the only realistic way to change. Meanwhile the old popular movements had been eliminated and new ones were only just beginning to occur. Despite this, my prediction was that mass based democracy would anyway become the key issue, and not just in the urban centres.[30]

The third context, finally, was the Indian State of *Kerala*. This is probably the major show case of the few stable democracies that have grown out of national liberation movements and consistent land reforms in the face of powerful resistance. By the eighties, however, much pointed to a crisis of the model in general and the old Left (with rural roots) in particular. In spite of this, my hypothesis was that a renewed radical and often rurally rooted popular and democratic movement was about to emerge and would become the most promising and significant alternative.[31]

Within these contexts, then, through equally theoretically critical case studies, I would focus on the kind of actors and processes that, according to the mainstream theses, should not become significantly pro-democratic—and would argue that there were in fact good reasons to suggest otherwise. In other words: the existence of Left oriented popular movements which did not reject Marx and class nor excluded the rural poor by only giving priority to labour and/or middle classes.

In the Philippines therefore, I focused on three new attempts: one by the legendary founding father of the New People's Army, Bernabe 'Dante' Buscayno; another by

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[29] For the initial hypotheses and research design, see Törnquist (1990, 1990a, and 1990b).
[30] For the initial hypotheses and research design, see Törnquist (1984a and 1990b)
[31] For the initial hypotheses and research design, see Törnquist (1987 and 1990b)

the similarly rural but also more middle class and civil society oriented 'popular democrats' with revisionist Maoist leaders in the forefront; a third by a coalition of revisionist communists, radical socialists and Maoists that bet more on gaining ground by reforming and participating in the democratic institutions, including elections. In Indonesia, the entry point was a follow up on what came out of various radical movements that related themselves to a major rural conflict over land in Kedung Ombo, Central Java. In Kerala, the focus was on the attempts by radical leftists, mainly communists, to renew the radical political development project by way of initiating popular and rural rooted civil alternatives through the People's Science Movement (KSSP)—this through co-operation rather than rejection of the government, political parties and various interest based organisations.

Among each of these actors, sources included interviews with (when possible) the same leading activists and key informants over time (between 40 and 50 in each context, plus additional activists and informants), supplemented by related documents, news clippings and relevant research literature. My visits were usually all too brief, but they were fairly numerous. Hence, it has been a privilege to be able to follow several of the activists and their discussions on relevant issues for more than ten years. In each case, I asked for their 'best' cases of pro-democratic efforts—to thereafter be able to carry studies that were as critical as possible without being 'unfair'. Further, I have often relied on self-critical evaluations by leading actors who, when in confidence (but not secret) accept and point to problems in their own 'pet projects', that tend to be much more reliable than inherently critical opponents.

Finally, there is a step-wise logic to the comparisons. As theorising within this field is weak, the point of departure is the contrasting of different key processes, attempts, and conditions (Skocpol and Somers, 1989). In relation to the specific theses, then, the comparisons are based on both standard methods. When analogous outcomes need to be examined, it is possible to compare similar attempts under very different conditions to identify common factors. When different outcomes shall be explored, historical perspectives in each of the contexts and cases may be employed.

Chapter 6. Operationalisations or Expected Contextual Outcomes

Given these contexts and processes, what are the indicators (in terms of likely outcomes) that one can focus upon in a discussion about the pros and cons of the mainstream and alternative propositions and arguments on how to enhance citizens' democratic potential? From section 4 above, we know the general characteristics of the models, but what are the rough equivalents in reality?[32]

In the Philippine framework, the mainstream expectations are that the Left, unable to renew itself in a consistent democratic direction, would again become significant, especially in relation to the rural scene and land reform. Further, urban workers might gain some importance, but otherwise there would be many, diverse and scattered movements and organisations and few signs of class loyalties. The middle class based process and crafting of democratisation from 1986 onwards, however, would be expected to generate more substantial and stable democracy, especially by way of decentralisation and the promotion of civil society.

If, on the other hand, the alternative propositions make sense, it is true that one would not anticipate a renewal of the old Maoist Left unless it revised its basic analysis. Those who were prepared to do so, however, would come a long way and give emphasis to the struggle against politically facilitated monopolisation as part of primitive accumulation, possibly relating this to demands for democratisation. Such efforts would make sense for a former Maoist guerrilla leader among his old peasant followers. Further, there would be 'objective' incentives for unified action among the many various groups. They would then opt for democratic means. Increasingly ecumenical leftists (from liberal social democrats to former Leninists and Maoists) would even combine the promotion of democracy with their instrumental aims of sustaining and expanding human rights, as well as 'formally democratic' ways of influencing the system. The middle class crafting of democracy, however, would largely be a failure, not making much sense to the common people and mainly nourishing atomised civil societies and 'consumers' of democracy, including local bosses.

Furthermore, if the class-party proposition made sense we would expect successful rebuilding of the Maoist organisations. Flourishing work within the series of post-Marcos government would indicate that the pragmatic argument is vindicated. Successful attempts to boost democratisation through the extensive NGO network and often related popular organisations would testify to the relevance of the grassroots thesis. The liberal-left market thesis, then, would be supported by success for the new People's Action Party (*Akbayan*), which fits broadly within this line of thinking, and aspects of the militant network proposition may be indicated by the dynamics and effects of the 'people power' revolutions.

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[32] For the early formulations, see Törnquist (1990b).

In Indonesia, the mainstream theses would translate into predictions that, while the Left and the radical (and especially rural based) popular movements are outmoded history (and would anyway have 'continued' to be non-democratic), rapid socio-economic development from the late-60s and onwards would either generate middle class democracy through a stronger civil society (within which industrial labour, as against other subordinate classes, would also gain influence), or demands from above, "within the system", for more efficient regulations, rule of law and meritocracy, and less corruption. Further, we may now add the sudden change in thinking among the mainstream scholars at the end of May 1998, whereafter they predicted that it would be possible with international support to craft a functioning and sustainable democracy within just a few years.[33]

If the alternative propositions proved right, however, demands for democracy would not be restricted to some middle class civil society groups and reformists 'within the system'. In fact, most of them would be rather co-opted and isolated. Despite the lack of liberal conditions and opportunities that most theorists see as necessary preconditions, the potentially powerful democratic forces would instead emerge among broad sections of the population, including peasant farmers and workers, all of whom were suffering from political and state promoted primitive accumulation. Corruption and human rights violations, for instance, would not just be a middle class issue but also something that related to the ways in which capitalists and managers controlled the economy, subordinated their labourers and appropriated the surplus. Within the extremely authoritarian framework of Suharto's 'New Order' regime, therefore, the issue of democracy, in terms of popular control and governance of common resources, might even either generate radical systemic critique, or set off extreme privatisation and deregulation. The new movements would be very scattered, but increasingly unified against political monopolisation and democratisation (whether related to liberal, social democratic or reformist-communist groups). Finally, we may now also add our alternative prediction from mid-1998, that the sudden introduction of crafting of instant democracy would largely fail and instead nourish fragmentation, political violence and various 'consumers' of democracy, including local bosses.

Moreover, the class-party proposition would be supported by forceful attempts at building new and radical socialist parties, the validity of pragmatic argument may be discussed through analyses of work in relation to Megawati and Abdurrahman Wahid (among others), and the grassroots thesis would be vindicated by successful pro-democratic NGO-activism. The liberal-left political-market thesis, then, may be evaluated by the efforts at building political vehicles behind Megawati and the so-called PAN-party of Amien Rais, whilst the militant network proposition would be evaluated by analysis of the student movement.

In Kerala, finally, (not forgetting that its underdeveloped economy should not, as it were, have produced a democratic polity in the first place) one major expectation from the mainstream theses would be that the long and outstanding importance of

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[33] For the early formulations (in addition to Törnquist (1990b), see Törnquist (1997).

Leftist politics would diminish after the land reform. Also, further democratisation could be expected to occur primarily in the southern areas where market middle class, civil society (and partially labour) driven modernisation was most important.

If the alternative propositions proved correct, on the other hand, the tendencies would be of a similar kind as in the Philippines and Indonesia, but, of course, less drastic. One likely trend following the land reform[34] would be increasing focus on the control of various resources (such as inputs) beyond land as such, through which it would be possible to appropriate surplus indirectly through the market. This would then spur co-operation among real producers in terms of joint management of, for instance, irrigation, the buying of inputs, and the marketing of their products. There would also be more need for co-operation among fragmented labour (rural and urban) organisations against mobile capital—which would call for democratic, political co-ordination among the former and negotiations and pacts on their part. Finally, therefore, democratic governance on both local and central levels would become the new main issue after the preceding struggle over fixed resources such as land. And all this would actually be propelled and lead by reform-minded communists in increasingly wide co-operation with other radicals, even liberals—with one foot in the independent civil associations' camp and the other in that of the old leftist parties, unions and peasant farmer movements.

Finally, the class-party proposition is related to the efforts to sustain the traditional communist party politics and the pragmatic argument to attempts at furthering democratisation from within the state and government. The grassroots thesis, on the other hand, should primarily be evaluated through the extensive work of activist organisations such as the People's Science Movement (KSSP) while the liberal-left political market thesis may be discussed in terms of the fate of the reformists related to the communist parties. (The militant network proposition has only played a minor role in Kerala.)

Changes over time: The rough indicators above in the form of contrasting expected outcomes are mainly from the early nineties, when the project started. As things changed (and indeed it is not just in Indonesia where much has been turned upside down) supplementary predictions were added as were further developed analytical tools. But the original indicators have remained basic, both as a matter of principle and because they have been quite fruitful. Hence, we may return to the supplementary indicators, theses and analytical tools along the road, as we begin to tell the story and are confronted with new developments and challenges.

So let us then (finally) turn to the exciting stories in each context! What happened? What arguments have been proved right? What new insights have been gained? Given the limited space available, we must be brief. The Philippine results will be summarised as a reference case. More will be said of Indonesia and Kerala. The rural dimensions are most central to the Kerala case.

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[34] The least inconsistent in India; mainly concluded in the seventies.

Chapter 7.   Fresh Ideas but Uphill Tasks in Muddy Philippine Waters[35]

7.1   A mainstream showcase

There is no doubt: the mainstream thesis is entirely correct—as far as the major and primarily rural-based part of the Philippine Left, the Maoist-led NDs ('national democrats') and their New Peoples Army are concerned. They have never come to terms with democracy. [36] As previously noted, they swiftly lost the initiative after rejecting the idea of fighting Marcos by way of 'liberal' democratisation. The basic argument was (and is) that even the best possible political and economic liberalisation would not be enough to alter the fundamental relations of power. Politicians, administrators and so-called bureaucratic capitalists did not have any real bases of power of their own which could be hit at by way of political democratisation. They continued instead to rely on the more powerful imperialists, compradors, and landlords whose private sources of power needed to be tackled head on by other means. Social and economic inequalities would prevent most people from voting in accordance with their own interests. But even if more progressive people were elected, they would not have access to many resources and almost no room for manoeuvre. Besides using elections for propaganda purposes and some horse-trading, one must therefore, the argument continued, hold on to extra-parliamentary and often armed struggles against landlords, capitalists and other fundamental enemies. Also, this required, of course, rather authoritarian but still enlightened leadership—at the expense of democratic principles within the movement as well as co-operation on equal terms with other progressive movements. Little of this changed over the years, except that the NDs did not repeat their historical blunder ten years later, in 2001, when another not very democratic president (Estrada) was toppled in another popular uprising ('EDSA 2'). Rather, they tried to make tactical use of the new president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's need for organised popular support.

Also supporting the mainstream theses: the democracy movement was rarely rural but mainly urban and middle class-based, comprising everything from liberal (and politically marginalised) businessmen, local bosses, and religious leaders to radical NGOs and students. Peaceful mass demonstrations and protests against massive electoral rigging incapacitated the military and brought down the Marcos regime. Corazon Aquino became the new president. Economic and political liberties were saluted. The fragile new government survived a series of attempted coups. Liberalisa-

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[35] For more extensive reports from the case studies over time, see Törnquist (1990a), (1993), and (1998a). (No report was published from the field studies in 1998 due to commitments regarding the transitions in Indonesia.). (I'm particularly indebted to co-operation with Randolf David, Karina Constantino-David, and Joel Rocamora, as well as with several other scholars-cum-activists related to the three groups of actors that I have followed.)

[36] For a comprehensive analysis, see Törnquist (1990).

tion and decentralisation were introduced. Even most of Marcos' supporters followed suit. His former chief of the constabulary, Fidel Ramos, was elected president in 1992 and managed to partially reform and stabilise both politics and economics by hanging on to global structural adjustment as well as some of the then successful East Asian Tigers' need to expand in less developed countries (such as the Philippines). When subsequent elected president Joseph Estrada abused his powers and responsibilities, the middle class defended the second and third pillars of democracy (in addition to free and fair elections): constitutional rules and rights plus open and accountable government. And while the mainstream predication of increasing socio-economic and political diversity (as against unified classes) also seems to have been vindicated, the 'actually existing' civil society (from chambers of commerce and religious groups to radical NGOs and actions groups) has been extended and often played a significant democratic role.

7.2   Shallow middle class democracy

But that was the rosy picture only. Below the surface things are different. Many radical pro-democratic NGOs and popular movements that had contributed to the undermining of the Marcos regime lost ground almost immediately. Constitutional changes paved the way for the return of 'cacique democracy'. (Anderson 1988) Of course, much of its old socio-economic basis is falling apart, but new solid forms are failing to appear. Even today the polity continues to be almost a caricature of the individualising, personality-oriented and ideology resistant American settler-democracy—which was exported to the former US colony and was then conformed with and taken advantage of by feudal-like clans and bosses. The widely esteemed middle-class democratisation still has no solid foundation, including reasonably clear-cut representation of different interests and ideas of societal change. The presidential position as well as most of the nationally elected senate is decorated with various personalities (from comedians, film stars and basketball players to strong men and generals, and crown princes and princesses of political dynasties), usually with roots in the most densely populated parts of the country. Meanwhile, modified patronage and political machines remain important in the elections of congressmen (representing various constituencies), governors, and mayors. Also, vote-buying and electoral rigging are most frequent at this level. After Marcos' god-father-rule, and with the new decentralisation, local elections have in fact become critical. Many bosses give priority to their own basic fiefdoms.[37]

Hence, in terms of the basic elements of democracy (outlined in our model 1), the most vital issues are often avoided in elections that are not very fair and only free for people with goons, guns and gold. There are all kinds of cheating and those

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[37] For the best analysis of Philippine bossism and its dubious relation to democracy under primitive accumulation, see Sidel (1999), and, e.g. Lacaba (1995); for regular mapping and analyses, see the reviews and electoral analyses by the Institute for Popular Democracy.

lacking resources rarely stand a chance to compensate by forming political organisations as these seldom make sense in one-man constituencies. The government and administration is formally open and accountable but 'by tradition' major sources for primitive accumulation of capital remain. The optimistic view is that the ousting of Estrada points to the rise of 'modern' dominating classes with less need of politics to make fast bucks than rule of law and legitimacy to sustain what they have already gained. But even so, and even if supported by the IMF and the West in general, they are surrounded by bosses and short of Estrada's broad popular following. Constitutional rights are largely in place and civil and political life is vibrant, but it does not mean very much for the majority of the population. While the upper classes wall their residential areas, political violence is widespread and mainly privatised. By regional standards, the society at large is comparatively liberal and there are many democratic civil organisations. However, most of the 'actually existing' civil society reflects the combination of religiously backed liberalism, commercialism, and feudal-like bossism. In brief, then, the dominating groups generally adapt to and 'consume' democracy, while also, 'when necessary', bypassing and even undermining major democratic pathways. Meanwhile ordinary citizens mainly serve as spectators without a real chance to improve and make use of the democratic institutions autonomously. The only exception seems to be protest voting against really 'bad rulers' (such as Marcos).

Interestingly, this is not the kind of 'illiberal' democracy that various scholars talked of when authoritarian rulers adapted to formal electoral frameworks (Bell et.al. 1995). I would rather label it a 'laissez-faire democracy'—where almost everything is possible, for the resourceful.

A final and major consequence is instability. For a few years under Ramos some political steadiness emerged. In the 1995 elections, several of the dominant local candidates even ran unopposed. With a combination of weak idea cum interest-based parties and organisations, new elitist horse-trading and finally some economic growth, there was simply no fertile soil for *any* powerful opposition. But this was temporary. In the longer perspective there is vacillation between briefly popular but shallow democratisation on the one hand and often populist but authoritarian tendencies on the other: By 1986, the middle class was deprived of its electoral victory and thus gained mass support against Marcos' authoritarianism. An entire world was thrilled, but the outcome under Corazon Aquino was the resurrection of the traditional elitist-cum-boss democracy, and under Fidel Ramos additional and more efficient structural adjustment. In the next presidential elections, therefore, populist and semi-nationalist Joseph Estrada could benefit from people's frustrations and win a landslide victory. But the outcome was misgovernance and abuse of public resources. So in early 2001, the undermining of another pillar of democracy paved the way for another middle class cum business led revolt—which may not necessarily be sustainable. The only other major difference from 1986 was that Estrada had not (yet) lost as much mass support as had Marcos—and that this was compensated for by the massive mobilisation of the major parts of the radical Left that had not stubbornly invested in Estrada's populism but finally learnt the lesson to defend constitutional democracy, some by principle, others for tactical reasons. [38]

7.3   A renewal-oriented Left

In the early 1990s, however, renewal-oriented popular organisations and movements began to address issues seriously that in turn put more consistent democratisation than the rootless middle class democracy on the agenda. One reason for this was that the once dominant NDs were in a serious crisis, ideologically, strategically, and militarily.[39] In face of the 1992 elections most NDs were not yet prepared to risk full-scale disintegration by stepping outside of the old fold. Only certain leaders within the open sections of the movement tried to stress important issues, to bet on 'electoral education' and to endorse 'progressive candidates.[40] But the crisis within the ND movement had also contributed to more democratic forms of co-operation among other dissidents within the Left as a whole. Many opposition groups felt more self-confident than before. As previously indicated, I decided to follow critically three renewal-oriented tendencies. They were all initiated outside the framework of the established political system—in 'civil society'—but represent different approaches in different settings.

The first was the co-operative effort in Tarlac, Central Luzon, by Bernabe 'Dante' Buscayno, legendary founding father of the New People's Army. This may be described as non-politicised 'democratic guidance' of large projects based on calculated interests and practical experiences—to prepare the ground rapidly for further politics of democratisation. Tarlac is where poor peasants first fought hard against the Japanese occupation and neo-colonial governments, and then formed the New Peoples Army in 1969.[41] While in prison (1976–1986), Dante produced new ideas but failed to change the line of the NDs, even after the fall of Marcos, and even though he was one of the Left senatorial candidate in the 1987 elections who gained the most votes. He thus returned 'home' to start anew.

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[38] Or take Thailand, for another example of democracy at risk. Just a few weeks before the recent debacle in Manila, Thailand's major business tycoon, Thaksin Shinawatra, won a landslide victory on the basis of an Estrada-like nationalist-populism, against a liberal middle class cum business and IMF sponsored 'post-1997-crisis regime'. The idealist NGO attempts at crafting new ambitious constitutional regulations against boss politics and vote buying did not help much. With fresh and massive backing, Thaksin himself might even avoid being disqualified for having tampered with the new and well-crafted rules of the game. But later on he may face similar problems as Estrada did.

[39] For some time, the armed units had been on the defensive, popular support was dwindling, and logistical problems were severe. Many of the leading members had been rounded up or had opted for other forms of struggle. Old theses and strategies were being questioned, especially, but not only, within the legal branches of the movement. The members were far from an agreement on what to reconsider and how to go ahead.

[40] For instance, in 1991, they made an attempt to revive the legal national democratic party *Partido ng Bayan.* Furthermore, in early April the next year, 'their own' movements were brought together in a separate non-partisan electoral committee, *Kapatiran, Kilusan ng Alternatibong Pulitika para sa Inang Bayan,* with some 40 organisations (including *Bayan,* New Democratic Alliance).

[41]For a more comprehensive analysis than the following, see Törnquist, (1990) and (1990a).

According to Dante, the peasants who had forced Marcos to implement a partial land reform were now facing exploitative businessmen with good political contacts and control of inputs, rice-mills, marketing, etc. Hence, he concluded, the small farmers could and would have to come together. Their interest in increasing production and making a better living was basic. There was no need for externally intervening intellectuals with fine theses and parties and 'concientisation'. Dante often indicated a lack of trust in this type of theorising 'comrade' due to previous bad experiences. He even stressed 'his' small farmers' ascribed interests to such an extent that friendly critics spoke of 'economism': One simply had to kick off by getting them engaged in economically promising dynamics, whereafter they would fight anyone that tried to stop them. The new liberties under Mrs. Aquino, and useful contacts with her,[42] made it possible to organise in late 1988 a NGO-foundation, ask for government credits, and initiate legal co-operation among some 500 suspicious but loyal small-scale farmers. Already two years later, the results were phenomenal: some 8000 farmers with individual plots[43], collective and efficient use of modern inputs and methods; drastically increased production; collective market arrangements, lesser indebted farmers and better paid workers, new jobs, a collective rice-mill, a duck-farm, a fishpond, and production of organic fertilisers; government credits repaid ahead of schedule… And while problems thereafter included the devastating eruption of Mt. Pinatubo eruption in 1991, there was also a lot of reconstruction work and the chance to participate in local elections.

The Movement for Popular Democracy had a similar background but very different projects. Former heads of the Maoist's legal National Democratic Front, Horacio 'Boy' Morales and Isagani Serrano, and the leader of the closely associated Christians for National Liberation, Ed de'la Torre, were in the forefront. In the mid' 80s they belonged to the ND revisionists who worked out platforms for broad coalitions, including the use of elections, against President Marcos and for the development of non-elitist or 'popular democracy'. This was rarely practised but the ideas survived and committed middle-class professionals, industrialists and intellectuals made alliances in post-Marcos coalitions. However, when neither critical support of the early Aquino government nor participation in the 1987 elections made much sense, their efforts to help vulnerable people to become reasonably autonomous citizens were increased. This was identified as a basic prerequisite for the development of democracy. Their projects, however, were very different from Dante's and usually based on time-consuming analyses, education, 'concientisation', and small-scale schemes with participatory democracy and supplementary coalition building. One branch was based at the Institute for Popular Democracy and mainly worked with general politi-

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[42]Through previous close relations during the anti-Marcos struggles with her assassinated husband 'Ninoy'Aquino.
[43]Actually, the co-operative efforts encompassed larger areas than the famous and huge sugar-growing hacienda Luisita nearby which is partly owned by Mrs. Aquino and covers some 6000 ha. While the co-operative efforts are, of course, endowed with less capital, they continued to expand further.

cal studies and discussions to pave the way for non-elitist popular coalitions and projects. Another, based at a BINGO,[44] was called the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM). The latter tried especially to revive the stagnating ND movements by offering progressive militants and their families (who had invested their lives in the struggle) alternative or supplementary ways of advancing their ideas and improving their lives. For instance, this was done through community organising where people tried to make best possible use of their own minor resources while also dealing with those who monopolised the land where people lived or drew water. Various projects were often related to ND leaders and organisations for peasant farmers, workers, and urban poor as well as related to their cause-oriented groups and NGOs.

In many ways, the Bisig projects are reminiscent of those of the popular democrats, minus the fact that they linked up with quite different coalitions and constituencies. Bisig, or the Alliance for the Advancement of Socialist Thought and Action, was founded in May 1986 by radical socialists and Marxists with various backgrounds, such as radical Christian social democracy, trade union work, community activism, concerned scholarship, and the new as well as old communist movements. In addition to several radical socialist labour leaders, the 'initial' personalities included professors Francisco 'Dodong' Nemenzo (communist scholar and later rector at the University of the Philippines), Randolf David, (dependency theorist, head of the Third world Studies Centre and later TV talk show host) and Karina Constantino-David (senior community organiser and temporarily junior minister under Aquino as well as Estrada). The projects were mainly carried out by a number of related NGOs, which in turn linked up with, for instance, rural poor communities in Greater Manila or Cebu City in search of alternatives to eviction; poor fishermen between Cebu and Bohol forming joint co-operatives, plantation workers in the south who were trying to save their jobs by taking over more or less abandoned companies, or ordinary workers in various strongholds having to develop their unions.

7.4   Collective empowerment and democracy

To what extent, then, are our alternative propositions on the growth of significant pro-democratic popular movements validated? To begin with, close studies tend to confirm an interest in democratisation, as is shown by attempts to fight the primitive accumulation of capital (often politically facilitated) as well as efforts to unite scattered people around the use and control of resources.

Projects among the three tendencies were usually in support of popular initiatives such as co-operatives; initiatives which in turn may or may not be related to interest organisations like peasant farmer's movements or trade unions. (Friction remained, however, between various NGOs, as well as between comparatively well endowed and non-membership based NGOs on the one hand, and poor popular organisations

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[44] Big NGO.

like unions on the other.) The point of departure was to address people's immediate problems of survival and development on the local level, whether among urban poor and workers, or with rural communities and peasant farmers. This is in contrast to previously dominating leftist ideas of first trying to get hold of political power, and then using it to redistribute essential means of production, such as land. The logic being that (carrying out) labour is also a way that people can enhance their bargaining power, along with more traditional strategies of blocking production. Moreover, the attempts at promoting production seemed to generate an interest in the availability, management, and control of necessary resources. Hence, while the renewal-oriented groups often went beyond conventional class conceptions and acknowledged the importance of many different issues and movements, their activities nevertheless indicate a common focus on the use and control of material resources. And this had a clear bearing on the importance of democratisation.

Aside from opportune nice statements, it is true that democratisation did not make much sense for local groups in need of external funds and political protection to get new alternatives started. The traditional Left was rarely a fruitful and sufficiently powerful partner. State, private domestic and foreign backing was necessary. This called for good contacts and clientelism. Several NGOs and popular organisations tried (and still do) to act skilfully on comparatively large and open 'markets', but this patronage remain one of the new movements' and organisations' weakest points. Once operational, however, democratic organising, management and co-operation tended to be instrumental for directly promoting people's 'empowerment' and better living conditions, precisely by enhancing their own capacity to use and control vital resources.

7.5   Divisive empowerment and insufficient democratisation

Simultaneously, however, many of these efforts at local empowerment through co-operation met with huge problems. The mainstream thesis that capitalism would generate socio-economic diversity and less class based action was vindicated. But at the same time the alternative proposition, that betting on civil associations and social capital would be insufficient without interest based political facilitation was also supported. Moreover, as the actors were confronted with these problems and challenges, we shall see that they all actually tried to move ahead in different ways, but generally speaking, as predicted in our third alternative proposition, by way of more, not less, democratisation. Then the remaining challenge is to understand why the results were usually so disappointing.

The collapse of Dante's project: Probably the most obvious case was the fate of the co-operative in Tarlac between 1992 and 1996. Of course, the 1991 Mt. Pinatubo eruption devastated most of the co-operative's land, made efficient rice cultivation impossible, and caused enormous hardship and financial losses for the individual farmers and the co-operative as such. Neither these losses nor the extensive resources and countless working hours put in by the co-operative in relief and reconstruction

work in the area were shared by the new Ramos government. But natural disasters and an unfriendly government do not explain why the co-operative was unable to handle these formidable problems in a better way. With hindsight the depressing outcome might even be seen as the best example of the need for more democratisation.

Some may put the blame on the co-operative's indisputably poor business management[45]—and there is much to this. But as a primary explanation it is shallow and technocratic. Many of the managerial problems were actually due to the imaginative and dynamic leadership of Dante and his team, without which the co-operative efforts would never have come about in the first place. The lack of checks and balances upon this propelling force was primarily the result of minimal democratic participation from below rather than inefficient business management from above. And the main reason why Dante gave no priority to democratic participation was that he overestimated the joint material interests of the members. He assumed they were peasant farmers, and that they would be eager to work hard and efficiently once they got access to the necessary resources. They would, in the process, achieve greater consciousness, assume the functions of management, and act politically. But most of the members (not to mention their households) were far from just peasant farmers (instead engaged in various activities) and had no clear-cut material interests even in paying back their loans, or in other ways maintaining the efforts of the co-operative.

Dante and his team were already aware by mid-1992 of the need to integrate the members in the running of the co-operative. But the continuous hardship—caused by Mt. Pinatubo, the new unfriendly government, and the undemocratic institutional logic and poor management within the co-operative itself—made it impossible to alter the situation swiftly. It is true that a greatly reduced co-operative was doing reasonably well by early 1995, primarily by growing sugar. Once again many wanted to join, but there was little room either for productive or political expansion. Efficient rice agriculture was very difficult because of ash falls and lahars.[46] Most of the former rice-farming members of the cooperative had left, and were suffering, unable to pay off their debts to it. Even if the cultivation of sugar was profitable, the market was limited. And while rice demands continuous co-operation in the fields—thus making it possible to initiate other forms of joint action as well—sugar does not require this.

Ideally, therefore, there should have been large-scale and popularly organised environmental relief work recovering fertile land, such as by way of reforestation in the mountains, and alternative production and sources of income in the plains. This could have brought many of the poor workers and tenants of Tarlac together once again, benefiting the province as a whole and even linking them up with the middle classes. Dante knew of this, of course, but at that point he was lacking influential contacts as well as loyal and dedicated co-operating farmers with families and relatives. Realising this, he simply had to rework his strategy and enter into local politics, thus trying to get access to resources and creating the necessary pre-

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[45]C.f. Montelibano (1994)
[46] Volcanic mud flows.

conditions for further popular co-operation and advancement. In the 1995 local elections in the basic Capas municipality, therefore, he engineered and backed an alternative coalition that aimed to develop a showcase local government, fight powerful resistance against the co-operative and create ample opportunities for both reconstruction and new efforts. Even if he could have engaged himself more in this project and campaign it was probably too late and it all failed. One can always put the blame on massive electoral cheating, but a few years earlier, that would most probably have been prevented by the dedicated and loyal people themselves. This was the final turning point for Dante's project. Thereafter there came only the tragic end game.

So the failure of Dante's attempt rapidly to combine development work (based on material interests that turned out to be more complicated than expected) with 'political guidance' does *not* prove he was wrong to stress the insufficiency of efforts that were restricted to the deepening of civil society. Rather it showed that while he understood that the primacy of struggle for land was over and that there was a need for joint action against the monopolisation of other resources, he underestimated the degree to which the rural poor had been fragmented (hence preventing an equivalent to former unified peasant class struggles for land), and thus also the need to add democratisation, within the movement, as well as in the setting as a whole.

Popular Democrats in search of new roots: A major contrast to Dante's efforts was that of the rural oriented popular democrats. While Dante had a social base and tried to build a new project from below, the 'Pop.Dems' initially tried to rescue (and redirect) the stagnating ND projects, by way of fashionable participatory and empowerment oriented NGO initiatives. The first problem, however, was that the NDs were reluctant, to say the least. So however the NGO initiatives might have worked out, they were lacking sufficient socio-political base in the first place.

The question then was whether the 'rural pop.dems.' would close down their shop or try to find a social constituency and political project of their own. The outcome was a compromise: an attempt to combine new ideas (and aid-money) betting on civil society and green alternatives with old ideas of community organisation and seemingly non-political popular fronts.

On the one hand, this was related to the new space offered by the implementation of the various decentralisation measures in the Local Government Code. There were substantial resources to fight for, as well as increasingly powerful local politicians and administrators that had to be dealt with. Also, the law stipulated that NGO representatives should constitute no less than one-fourth of the local development councils. An additional argument was, that when it came to local political candidates, the grassroots organisations would be better equipped to mobilise support *and* to keep track of them than of national politicians. The outcome, however, was rather frustrating. The attempts at strengthening civil society and community co-operation did not automatically generate political alternatives even on the local level. Various groups, issues, and initiatives remained disparate. The locally powerful bosses usually found ways, of course, to capture the decentralisation schemes, including by forming and favouring their own NGOs. The attempts at engineering local political coalitions were few, scattered and rarely successful.

On the other hand, the idea was also to relate the local efforts to similar alliances on the central level, thus gaining influence in key sectors. In the 1995 elections, for instance, the pop.dems with the PRRM under Boy Morales did most of the successful campaigning for President Ramos' widely acclaimed secretary of health, Juan Flavier. The next step was the major responsibility faced with the 1998 elections, for positing Estrada as a friend of the people and for organising his popular support. This was even more successful and a few concessions were given in return by the then new president, including the position as minister for agrarian reform to Boy Morales (while Ed de'la Torre preferred a less influential job with further education). The story of Estrada's presidency, his administration, the impeachment process and revolt to get him out of office is too well known to be told here. Morales' fought an uphill battle on agrarian reform, did not achieve much and stayed on the sinking ship (with de' la Torre), arguing, in the end, that if they remained with the captain and if he was able to hang on, their influence would increase. Democratic politics does call for tactics, but here it is obvious that consistency and credibility were set aside. The costs will remain substantial.

Obviously, then, the experiences of the 'rural pop.dems' testify to increasing socio-economic fragmentation and the insufficiency of an approach that bets mainly on deepening civil society without political facilitation and linkages. Again, also, attempts were made to move ahead by way of democratisation, though they were not very consistent and undermined by attempts to find opportunistic shortcuts.

The 'three little pigs' advance democratisation but fail to transform actions into votes: Most of the problems in the case of Dante and the 'rural pop.dems' were shared by the Bisig-projects as well—testifying to the fact that the problems were not just rural, but held true in urban areas and among the middle class and workers as well. Bisig-related activists and the 'pop.dems.' who worked at IPD on political analyses and coalitions (plus ecumenical Ed de' la Torre), however, arrived at quite different conclusions. Struggle against politically facilitated accumulation of capital, they said, called for strong intervention on the very political level, locally as well as centrally. There had to be some co-ordination of scattered demands and interests and civil society actions. There was a need for some kind of political leadership and alliances, despite bad experiences from party building. And it was not meaningless to enter into the established political field and try to advance via elections. Rather it was necessary to develop democracy further and to build new principled, transparent, and popular political alternatives.

Hence, the activists linked up with a non-elitist social democratic third group,[47] and decided in face of the 1992 elections, to form a partisan electoral movement, *Akbayan.* These, 'three little pigs' (as they were called at the time) against the big ND wolf, in turn, linked up with like-minded cause-oriented groups, NGOs, and interest organisations (such as unions). They adopted an agenda generated by many different progressive groupings as its own programme. The key-words were 'people's interest', 'participatory democracy', 'sustainable development', and 'genuine structural reform'.

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[47] *Pandaya para sa Sosyalistang Pilipinas;* Workshop for a Socialist Philippines

In the spirit of realism, moreover, leading members brokered an alliance with the liberal electoral coalition. The respected senator Salonga, ex-speaker of the senate and responsible for carrying through the anti-US-bases treaty campaign, and Aquilino 'Nene' Pimentel, primus motor in decentralising state powers, were presidential and vice presidential candidates respectively.[48] This was the only block with some ideological profile, radical propositions and progressive nominees, at least on the national level. There was also an exciting attempt by a broad group of generally progressive NGOs, to gradually intervene in politics—the so-called project 2001.

It is true that most movement activists were eager to stress that the new political efforts were subordinated to their basic tasks as, for instance, unionists or NGO-workers, "in support of people's own initiatives" and various forms of extra-parliamentary pressure politics. But now many of them really wanted to supplement and make use of all this to mobilise votes for progressive political representatives.

The results, however, indicated that the certified capacity of the new movements and associated organisations to carry out actions, conduct alternative development work, nourish civil society and support 'ideal' community networks and co-operation could not be transformed into votes and a more widespread and dynamic politics of democratisation. Most activists gave priority to their 'normal' progressive work independently of partisan and especially electoral politics. This time, for instance, almost the only thing that the NGO coalition could agree on was partisan "electoral education", including information of which candidates could be expected to support the aims and means of the NGOs themselves. Many groupings did not link up with the new efforts at all. It was an uphill task to convince radical people, whom the Left had been telling for years and years that it did not matter which way they voted, that this time it would really make a difference. Rival candidates gained a lot of votes even from people who otherwise fought against them, for instance within a union, action group or co-operative. Collective interests such as those ascribed to peasant farmers, workers or co-operative members were usually not strong enough to generate votes for progressive nominees. Basically the electoral movement carried the same issues as its constituent groups used to emphasise in their extra-parliamentary work, and paid little attention to how one should govern public resources and implement their great general ideas. Hence, the field was open instead for populist anti-corruption candidates (such as Miriam Defensor-Santiago) and clientelist politics.

In view of these experiences most leading activists talked of the need to institutionalise the electoral movement, but little happened. By the 1995 elections, moreover, progressive groups and movements had further disintegrated. The renewal-oriented organisations were still there, but limited themselves to supporting various 'reasonable' individual candidates and local efforts where there was more space for progressive grassroots organisations and NGOs, due to decentralisation of state powers. Simultaneously, however, implementation in the mid-90s of the Local Government

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[48] Plus, for instance, the radical nationalist senator Wigberto "Bobby" Tanada and consistent NGO spokesman and expelled agrarian secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad as senatorial candidates.

Code paved the way for traditional bosses and their client-organisations. It is true that much experience had been gained, that civil society was stronger, and that social capital had been promoted, but that did not hit hard at the bosses. The basic problem was still the need to transform fragmented interests, groups and actions into consistent and efficient politics of democratisation.

By the time of the1998 elections however, political opportunities had improved slightly. Firstly, a new 'party-list system' for limited proportional representation on a national basis in the Congress (in addition to the present simple-majority elections in single-member constituencies which made it almost impossible to build new principled alternatives) had finally been implemented. This was thanks to much pressure and lobbying. Secondly, the disintegration among the NDs had reached such an extent that several of its pro-democratic reformists (such as Etta Rosales and Joel Rocamora), as well as more revolutionary critics of the Maoist doctrines and chairpersons, openly sided with the attempts at building a new principled alternative. It was a long and painful process, but finally, in the run up to the 1998 elections, a new and permanent political vehicle, "*Akbayan!*—Citizens' Action Party", was formed. This was just a few months before the race. The new rules and options were complicated. The election commission did not do much to propagate them. And of course, the new opportunities also paved the way for several other party-list initiatives within the fragmented, dissident and non ND Left (including one 'from below', set up by the PRRM). Fortunately, however, this did not mean that all initiatives failed. *Akbayan* was among the few that made it above the threshold. There was a lot of enthusiasm and dynamism in the campaign and a sense of 'it will take time but we are finally on the right track' among the activists. But there were also many and serious problems, not just because of the miserable electoral commission arrangements but also, again, in relation to the uphill task of combining extra-parliamentary activism on various fronts, with electoral efforts for integrated programs. Thereafter, however, *Akbayan* (including its single representative to the parliament Etta Rosales), and associated groups and institutes, did very serious work in this area. For the first time within the dissident Left, the important work in-between elections was not set aside, such as the promotion of participation by way of continuous discussions (between activists and elected representatives) on current issues as well as education of activists and representatives on problems of 'good' local governance. Moreover, *Akbayan* played an important role in generating and building the case and movement against Estrada's mismanagement. So all this was expected to produce more votes for the party in the 2001 elections. At that time, even the hard-core Maoist NDs had decided that *Akbayan*'s strategy to take elections seriously had been proven 'right'. However, the result, on the one hand, was that the tactical ND party-list vehicle *Bayan Muna*, under media attractive ex. NDF-leader Satur Ocampo, made a very impressive showing, by unofficial co-operation with sections of the shaky Arroyo regime, covering its weak left flank, and applying traditional Philippine strongmen politics. On the other hand, the more principled *Akbayan* made only modest advances by relating to civil organisations, progressive unions and peasant farmer movements, and consistently opposing traditional shady politics. (Although it is true that it was the only other progressive party formation that

made it to the congress.) So despite fine aims and advances, the *Akbayan* perform-ance still testified to the difficulties of transforming and generalising activism into more general political influence.

7.6   The logics of the stalled popular potential

In brief, much of our alternative propositions are confirmed in the Philippine context. The showcase middle-class democratisation process remained unsubstantial and unstable. The strengthening of civil society did not help much. The Maoist Left remained undemocratic—but renewal oriented sections of the Left, even the legen-dary founder of the New People's Army, became increasingly interested in democ-ratisation as part of their attempts to unify people and fight politically facilitated primitive accumulation.

However, there were also serious problems. The proposition that there would be 'objective' incentives for unified action among scattered people and groups was far from vindicated. For instance, a similar assumption in the case of Dante (of unifying interests among peasant farmers) clearly failed to materialise and was an important factor behind the collapse of his project. Further, both Dante and the rural-oriented pop.dems. tried to find democratically inconsistent shortcuts. And generally, all cases testify to the incapacity of the new pro-democrats, even those who really tried, to transform scattered and extra-parliamentary actions into organisation and votes for institutionalised popular policies and governance.

What were the roots of these problems? Why has it been so difficult for pro-democrats to combat fragmentation and transform extra-parliamentary action into institutionalised political alternatives for society at large?

Neither of the major propositions from section 4.6 (operationalised in section 6) seems to make sense. The Philippine class-party adherents, to begin with, were not particularly successful. Generally speaking they have become rather disintegrated and have continued to lose momentum, apart from one faction (of the late F. Lagman) that demonstrated its organisational clout on the trade unions front and, recently, another (Sison and Ocampo) that succeeded in tactically entering the electoral arena. The principled theoretical positions have been combined with old communist ideas of the need to build organisations and strike alliances, in a tough if not rough way, within the framework of 'democratic centralism' and/or bossism plus machiavellian alliances. This has definitely contributed to their ability to sustain their own projects (and probably also to gain votes, such as in the recent case of *Bayan Muna* in the Philippines), but it has also met with wide criticism and is hardly a way of unifying the movement and gaining wider popular influence.

Secondly, the pragmatic attempts to work from within a serious of post-Marcos governments have proved rather frustrating, sandwiched as they have been by the establishment from inside and insufficient popular back up from outside. The grand 'Pop.Dem.' experiment to boost Estrada and use his strength to expand and promote radical reforms even ended in outright failure.

Thirdly, many Philippine pro-democrats have actually subscribed to the grassroots thesis about the need to counter traditional Left preoccupation with the central state and to emphasise instead extensive civil association and well-anchored popular movements on the local level. But the general liberal betting on civil societies and self-management has been plagued by fragmentation. More focused, but still 'autonomous', ground level interest-based organisation (such as among labourers) has often suffered from similar problems.

Fourthly, what is the fate of the political-market proposition that there is a need for a generally progressive party that can bring scattered efforts together at times when it is the logic of liberal, representative, electoral democracies that counts? The Philippine experiences definitely testify to the need for co-ordination of different efforts, which otherwise may not support and at times even contradict each other. But are the recommendations vindicated? They are very reminiscent of the electoral-party tendency within the Latin American Left after the transition from authoritarian rule. This involved building catch-all electoral parties within the formal political system in addition to (and at times rather separate from) more radical social movements on the grassroots level. (cf. Roberts 1998) Similar ideas were present in the discussions behind the building of *Akbayan* in the Philippines. Despite good intentions, the results are not altogether positive. *Akbayan* has not yet proven a full success, although that may have less do with moderation versus radicalism than with the co-ordination of electoral and parliamentary work itself on the one hand and the logic of movements and actions on the other. So, the problem of co-ordination remains unresolved.

The fifth thesis, finally, of extra-parliamentary militant networks, has of course only proved viable during brief periods of radical political momentum such as the 'people power' uprisings against the Marcos dictatorship and Estrada's mismanagement.

In conclusion, therefore, our empirical results indicate that while the five established theses offer vital insights, they can neither explain nor cure the problems. Hence, we have to proceed by asking 'why?'. *Are there any unifying factors (in terms of in the concepts of political terrain and politicisation in sections 4.4 and 4.5) which point to what might be neglected in, and by, most of the different propositions and actors?*

Indeed there are two such patterns. *The first pattern relates to the predominance of single issues and specific interests.* Aside from the adherents of the class-party proposition (who emphasise ideology and collective interests but in reality have often been linked to specific interests and sections of the working class or the peasant farmers anyway) the general tendency is quite clear. The followers of the pragmatic argument, to begin with, who have worked in relation to the Aquino and Estrada administrations, have tended to become prisoners of the issues and interests that the dominating actors have put on the top of the agenda.

The pattern is even more obvious among the proponents of the grassroots thesis. Here the deliberate policy of most NGOs is not so much to rally the masses behind collective interests, as to relate to a host of civil interests among various groups in order to promote co-operation and organisation in dense civil societies. In fact, more

cause-oriented civil society groups, such as human rights associations, have also tended to focus on single issues. Usually even sectoral and class oriented labour and peasant farmer groups have been lost in particular questions and interests related to the wish (or need) to start from the very grassroots level. And when Dante in Tarlac, tried to organise peasant farmers on the assumption that they were a class-collective, they instead turned out to be small farmers with a host of additional interests within their households.

The advocates of the more recent political market thesis usually try to aggregate issues and interests when forming, for instance, broad progressive electoral parties. The Philippine experience is comparatively encouraging. The history of the *Akbayan* citizen action party points to an increasing capacity over the years to present more than just a collection of scattered issues and interests. Yet, the ability to aggregate is hampered by the necessarily weak ideological principles. Many ideological groups co-operate by setting aside their different bases and focusing instead on concrete issues. Meanwhile there is no actual, strong, or collective social movement logic from below that could help define the priorities. So, potential advances still very much depend on organisational capacity (to which we shall soon return).

The most extreme form of concentration of single issues and specific interests, finally, is among the extra parliamentary militant networks. This characterised many of the dynamics in the series of people power manifestations. As the activists have left the streets, established leaders have set the agenda and defined the policies.

The second pattern (indicating what all the problematic propositions seem to neglect and what all the actors that follow such different theses seem to miss) *is the insufficient co-ordination between action in the civil, civil-political, and explicitly political society, as well as between the central and local levels.*

The adherents of the class-party position have focused mainly on the political society and the central level, even when there were strong local chapters and when the Maoists talked of encircling the cities. This relates to the previously identified tendency to promote democracy by bypassing much of the ground-work (in terms of enhancing people's democratic capacity) in favour of a single and top-driven institutional channel, the party with related organisations.

The pragmatists, moreover, have mainly tried to compensate their own weak ability to mobilise the masses by boosting, and then trying to advance behind populist politicians like Estrada, including through fairly independent means (such as Jeep)[49]. The failure, however, was devastating, and clearly related to the dual tendency among the pragmatics of consuming democracy in practice, while defending and promoting it in theory.

The supporters of the grassroots theses, on the other hand, have instead experienced the opposite problem—of being confined to the local context and to civil society work. This is partly a deliberate protest against statist and top-driven communist groups and parties as well as an attempt to project various civil-groups and

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[49] Popular grass roots organisation initiated by Boy Morales and Ed de'la Torre in support of Estrada.

individuals as non-partisan. More importantly, however, it also signals an inability of the grassroots activists to build links. Generally speaking they have either remained in the margins—and sometimes have even lost out, as in the case of Dante—or have had to rely on top-driven central networks of NGOs and pressure groups. In the latter case it is true that there are some clear examples of civil-political societies. But even when these have been less elitist and more rooted on the ground, they have usually been confined to specific issues such as human rights, agrarian reform, anti-debt or US-bases, or the building of sectoral trade unions.

As previously indicated, the primary Philippine example of the third thesis of political market, the *Akbayan* Citizen Action party, has proved increasingly capable of aggregating issues and interests (even though the lack of ideology remains a problem). But then the question of how to politicise people; to mobilise and organise and attract votes remains. There are no clear answers, instead there is a need for fresh research. Most probably, however, one factor (beyond the unfavourable electoral system) is that there is not (yet) enough organisational clout to compensate for the lack of spontaneously unified and powerful social movements from below; popular pressure and logic that otherwise might have helped to integrate the various groups, organisations and individuals that now support the *Akbayan* idea; thus defining priorities and linking central and local, as well as political and civil society.

Neither, finally, have the extra-parliamentary militant networks been able to handle these problems of linking the civil and political, and the central and local. Their action has mainly been formed in the cities and leading individuals have played a vital role—though students have been less dominant than in Indonesia. Further, the basic requirement of democracy in terms of clear-cut identification of who is eligible to decide and also who has to follow collective decisions is usually lost in the networking process. 'Bad' rulers may be done away with but there are few elements of democracy to use as a basis for better alternatives.

Chapter 8.   New but Poorly Anchored Democratic Options in Indonesia[50]

8.1   From disaster to showcase?

There has always been an unhappy relationship between mainstream theses on democracy and actual Indonesian developments. To begin with the West fought hard against the democratic nationalist movement and the new Democratic Republic. In the late-50s, liberal modernisation theory was first used to legitimate Western support of the regional-cum-ethnic and religious separatists, on the one hand, and the containment of electorally successful communists, on the other. This contributed to the destruction of Indonesia's parliamentary democracy. In 1965/66 the same thesis was applied to legitimate (and cover up) the massacre of at least half a million leftists. This destroyed whatever remained of Indonesia's democracy. For more than 30 years, then, the modern package was used to support Suharto's authoritarian modernisation. This again prevented rather than promoted democratisation (and caused the death of another 300,000 people, not just in East Timor). According to mainstream scholars, pro-democracy movements were irrelevant. In the long run, rapid capitalist modernisation would instead generate democracy via a stronger middle class, civil society and/or demands within the regime itself for more 'good governance' to handle, if nothing else, an increasingly liberalised and complicated economy. Little happened, however. Generally speaking, and aside from some dissidents, the middle-classes and its moderately expanding civil society adjusted to the rules of the ruler instead of fighting for democracy. The reform minded groups and individuals who wanted to change the system slowly from within, such as sections of the Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), were equally unsuccessful, especially after the 1996 clamp-down on the radical movement. With the 1997 crisis, finally, the action of the markets and its supporters proved politically disastrous, contributed to a socio-economic catastrophe, obstructed democratisation, and only accidentally helped oust Suharto. By April 1998 even IMF & Co. had conceded. It was little but Suharto's cocksureness and the economists' political stupidity (in relying on repression, provoking massive popular anger and thus triggering the end game, on May 4, by reducing food and fuel subsidies to an even greater extent than the IMF had asked for in order to 'get the prices right'), plus the students' spearheading of an unorganised democracy movement, that opened the floodgates and finally forced the elite to rid themselves of the old man.

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[50] For background analyses, see Törnquist (1984, 1984a, 1989, and 1991). For more extensive reports from the current case studies over time, see at first hand Törnquist (1996, 1997, 1998, 1999a, 2000, and 2001b), Budiman and Törnquist (2001), and ISAI (2002). (I'm particularly indepted to long time co-operation with Arief Budiman and, from the mid-90s, with ISAI, as well as to continuous operational support from Bimbim.)

In other words, it was only after the collapse of the regime on May 21, 1998, that mainstream analysts suddenly agreed that the problem was political, that a revolution might unfold, and that nothing would improve without legitimate government—which called for some democracy. As we know, much of the western discourse on democracy after the Second World War was about the need to defend liberal and democratic societies against authoritarian mass-opportunism. But never did I experience such liberal and democratic mass-opportunism as in Indonesia. This was not confined to the opportunist domestic elite. While 'parachuted in' western economists had failed to get the prices right, their somewhat softer colleagues were now flown in to get the institutions right and thus craft democracy. They were the big American and other Western party-institutes, the United Nations and national development aid agencies, the NGOs and the turn-key election managers, the democracy-consultants and the political science celebrities with ready made universalistic recipes. Within a year or two, it was argued, they would put Indonesia on the right track by supplementing economic and financial 'reconstruction' with, firstly, the brokering of pacts among moderate incumbents and realistic reformers and, secondly, the engineering of 'free and fair' elections, 'good governance', decentralisation and civil societies, plus essential right, and liberties.

About three years later, however, it seems as if the historical chance to promote the generation of the World's third largest democracy may turn into an equally historical failure. As such, Indonesia should be the best 'critical case' to study the problems of both the fashionable 'crafting of instant democracy thesis' and the alternative ways of promoting more sustainable democratisation.

8.2   Pacts without foundation

To begin with, according to the mainstream theses, the chances to craft democracy rested with the brokering of realistic pacts between moderate incumbents and realistic reformers. Initially this was rather successful. A triangular conflict unfolded among the elite. This was almost in accordance with Samuel Huntington's three common pathways of changing the system: of transforming it, of replacing it, or of compromising and 'transplacing' it.[51]

In the first act of this play, the then president Habibie, armed forces chief Wiranto, and reformist Golkar[52] leaders Akbar Tanjung and Marzuki Darusman with collaborators, entered from the right, preferring 'guided democratisation' from above. From the left, then, marched the radical students, spearheading a wider pro-democracy movement, and arguing that democratisation presupposed the replacement of the incumbents. From in-between, finally, emerged the dominant moderate opposition,

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[51] Huntington, (1991). And this, of course, fits well with the general results of the transition projects led by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), Diamond, Linz and Lipset (1988&1989), Linz and Stepan (1996), and Bratton and van de Walle (1997).

[52] The top down corporatist party of Suharto's New Order regime.

the Ciganjur four[53]—of pragmatic and often liberal oriented Muslim leader Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) (widely respected within the elite and with a strong mass base among rural Muslims in East and Central Java), nationalist party symbol Megawati Sukarnoputri (the daughter of the late President Sukarno), modernist and semi-liberal Muslim leader Amien Rais (with a mass following among urban Muslims), and the incarnation of 'the good Javanese ruler', the Sultan of Yogyakarta. The outcome was that the moderates managed to domesticate and benefit from the radicals' protests while basically focusing on negotiating and winning reasonably free and fair elections. Their next move was to form pragmatic coalitions and strike the best possible deal with sections of the establishment.

After the elections, however, when the radicals and most consistent democrats were outmanoeuvred and the second act of the play began, there was discontent amongst the two remaining corners of reformist incumbents and former moderate opponents. On the surface this was about the indirect election of the president. Megawati had won the parliamentary elections but had failed to negotiate a deal either with the reformist incumbents or with the other moderate dissidents. She was therefore eliminated in favour of Abdurrahman Wahid. Wahid, however, apparently thought that once appointed as, in theory, 'powerful president' he could abandon unofficial deals with the others and instead implement his own agenda, including substitution of repressive and corrupt sections of the state with civil society, negotiations and human rights. This, of course, generated all kinds of resistance among politicians, administrators, officers, and businessmen with all kinds of shady deals. Whereafter Wahid was also removed. Currently, we are into the third act of the play, where Megawati has been appointed president and has negotiated a more formalised and conservative deal with all the others, among them the incumbents, the moderate old opposition and the IMF. This may well last for some time, but under the surface the real conflicts remain formidable.

In fact, the difficulties in reaching a fruitful pact through which to craft democracy indicates that there was a lack of the most vital precondition for the implementation of the mainstream recommendations: that powerful businessmen are able to survive on their own while the political elite try limited democratisation. In Indonesia it was not the development of modernisation but a political crisis of despotic liberalism (the symbiosis between political monopolisation and economic liberalisation) that helped give birth to democracy. So given the character of this crisis, business either fled the country or was as dependent on political patronage as ever in order to survive. The institutions crumbled and there were no independent and forceful actors that could take command and propel change; economically, administratively, and politically. The international banks did not pay and the domestic tycoons escaped, so the huge losses had to be socialised. Hence, sections of the economic and political elite still fight about what companies and banks should be saved, plundered or sold; and what parts of the administration and public sector they will gain control of. The

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[53] So called because of the Islamic School run by Gus Dur where students managed to get the four leaders to meet on November 10, 1998.

most obvious central level cases relate to the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency, IBRA. Politicians, businessmen, officers and religious and ethnic leaders horse trade and struggle for services and financial back up. Local bosses, warlords, and business people can no longer gain enough power through relating to a supreme godfather, but have to develop their own alternatives through combinations of various central and local sources, by competing for control of local government and administration, and by organising their own security and popular backup. So the increasingly localised struggles tend to take on ugly proportions and to relate to ethnic and religious loyalties. (Ironically, local politics is also what we have least good knowledge of in Indonesia. Most studies have focussed on the central level and its elitist intrigues.) In fact, the quite understandable attempts by pro-democrats to undermine previous authoritarian state structures, and the current international aid agency euphoria over decentralisation and civil society, may even make things worse—given the poor democratic institutions and the weak popular checks and balances.

In brief, formal liberal politics became a battlefield for increasingly scattered, privatised, and localised military, administrative, and economic interests. There was a shift from centralised corruption, where the repressive godfather figure placed some limitations to promote his own high returns, to a laissez faire regime—without alternative democratic co-ordination—under which it is perfectly rational and only to be expected that symbiotic political, economic and military leaders will instantly grab and extract as much as possible.[54] Even the enlightened establishment thesis of the need to first promote 'rule of law' and 'good governance' was out of context. There was very little of the kind of *rechtsstaat* that preceded European democracy—and few ideas of what significant interests and groups would simultaneously promote 'good governance' and substantial democracy.

8.3   Unsubstantial crafting of democracy

In other words, the very idea of crafting democracy in Indonesia, without supporting the struggle against the symbiosis between politics and economics that undermine even elitist pacts, was doomed to fail. So what happened to the associated ideas of rapidly engineering democracy by introducing essential rights, mechanisms and institutions? The most clear-cut test is to ask the basic questions (discussed in section 3.9) about the substance and scope of the four fundamental prerequisites and instruments that most scholars (including of democratic audits) agree are necessary to develop if the principles of democracy (popular control and political equality regarding collective binding decisions) are to be realised.

Free and fair elections: The basically free and comparatively fair rules of the game in the June 1999 elections forced much of the elite to compete temporarily

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[54] This is no news for students of late developing countries—se e.g. McIntyre (2000)—but even international economic and political experts might now become aware of it as Mancur Olson last grand theory also addresses the phenomena.(Olson 2000)

by mobilising votes, rather than manipulating within closed elitist circles and trying to divide and rule by provoking religious and ethnic groups. But the context of the election was not so just, and its substance was shallow: there was a lack of reasonably equal opportunities for use of political liberties and many fundamental problems continued to be swept under the carpet.

For example, several of the major conflicts and issues in Indonesia were not subject to debate. The parties and leaders did not have to declare their positions on them. The major economic crisis, for instance, and how it should be solved, was almost a non-issue. The same was true with regard to the many subordinated struggles over land, the regional grievances, the struggle in East Timor, the problems of human rights, and the need to sustain and further develop democracy. It is a long list.

Moreover, the elections did not produce a reasonable representation of various segments, interests and ideas among the population. There were no reformed elections on the very local level, in the villages and their urban equivalents, which is where most people must find solutions to their problems. (And the current elections, or at times merely appointments, of new village councils to balance the power of the headmen, seem to be very arbitrary affairs that depend on the local balance of power and mainly involve sections of the local elite.) On the other levels, 7,6% of the seats were reserved for the armed forces. One third of the delegates who would then elect a new president were not elected, but appointed by the military and the political elite. Remarkably many seats in the elected parliament were allotted to provinces where Golkar remained intact. Ex-communist parties were barred from taking part. Most important of all: local parties were also not allowed. Only organisations that were already very strong—previously accepted parties or groups based on religious, ethnic or cultural loyalties—stood a real chance of winning. Other preconditions were also unjust. Golkar and its associates could make good use of the state apparatus and foreign funded credits for co-operatives and social safety net programmes.

The foreign experts on the crafting of democracy did not try to alter this but focused on instant elections to appoint 'legitimate leaders'. Support was limited to electoral arrangements, technical information, some restricted voter education, and electoral watch efforts via a few NGOs. Critical voter education about the actual political forces involved was scarce. Promotion of democratic organisations among labourers, farmers, civil servants, and employees was almost absent. There was hardly any attempt to give preferential treatment to new parties that focussed on vital social and economic cleavages, interests and societal ideas, beyond religious and ethnic loyalties.

Open and accountable government (which also requires independent public knowledge, movement, organisation, and government responsiveness to public opinion): Aside from informal contacts and networks, much of state and politics remains closed for those who lost out, and has often become non-operational and disintegrated in the process of fragmentation, decentralisation, and localisation of power. Boss politicians have taken over—brokering deals between religious and ethnic leaders with mass following, businessmen and administrators with resources, and military and militias with muscle.

It is true that the centralisation of power during the Suharto regime no longer exists and that much more power is now localised. But on the different levels, access is still through limited circles among increasingly rival factions of the political elite (c.f. eg. Sidel 1998, van Klinken 2001). This is enhanced by the fact that the elite itself has few organised links with the masses beyond socio-religious, ethnic, and generally cultural-cum-nationalist populist movements. The established parties are very much dominated by the elite on various levels. Ordinary people may relate to them but can hardly change them. In this respect, even the most ambitious attempt to form a secular, inclusive and democratic new party, called PAN[55], has collapsed and resorted to its partly non-pluralistic socio-religious pillar. And the PDI-P[56] has rapidly turned from what could have been a broad alliance in favour of 'de-Golkarisation' of state and business, to the combination of co-operation with vital parts of the Old Order establishment and secular nationalist slogans. Worse: there are only very weak alternative pressure groups and interest based organisations. It is true that several NGOs have emerged over the years, but generally speaking they remain urban student and middle class phenomena. There are still very few examples of forceful attempts at making use of new liberties, to go from elitist foundations to mass-based organisations. The attempts at building outright popular movements and organisations from below, such as trade unions or peasant farmer leagues, remain limited, scattered and often dependent upon links with patrons within the elite, and the dominant socio-religious and cultural streams. These problems are aggravated by the lack of formally institutionalised alternative channels of influence within the political system. Beyond the elections, with all their limitations (and the possibility, at best, to ask for a dialogue with elected leaders or civil servants) there are few other ways of making a difference than to turn to informal contacts and networks or outright pressure politics by using social, religious, economic or military resources, or simply to take to the streets or occupy plantation land.

Worse (again): this is partly nourished by foreign support, limited as it usually is to urban elite circles with good international connections. In addition to support for shallow elections and local administration, priority is given to monitoring and lobby groups, not to the universal accepted need for mass based popular organisation that may be able to enforce substantial elections and open and accountable government. Ironically, even the organisation of the foreign support itself is a good illustration of lack of transparency and accountability, at least in relation to those who matter (and are supposed to learn from foreign experiences), i.e. the Indonesian population in general and the pro-democracy movement in particular. Some handling agencies may include Indonesians, but how are they selected? On the basis of what criteria do these people in turn select projects? And to whom are they accountable? There is risk that a virtual 'democracy-industry' emerges among donors and well as recipients. And as the selection of people and projects is often related to previous individual

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[55] Partai Amanat Nasional (National Awakening Party) led by Amien Rais
[56] *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) lead by Megawati Sukarnoputri

contacts, such as education in the donor country and socialisation in international NGOs and organisations, the actors tend to belong to various factions of the intellectual, administrative and cosmopolitan city elite that survived Suharto's repression and have their roots in the old PSI-cum-Masjumi networks. For one, very few of these usually very nice and bright people have good knowledge of and contacts outside the major urban areas. One cannot but recall the so-called Berkeley Mafia promotion of New Order technocrats in the 60s.

Furthermore, the decisive public sphere that had evolved among pro-democrats during the struggle against authoritarianism (via open and underground communication and media by committed journalists and cultural workers) has been difficult to expand locally, outside the cities, and to ordinary people, especially when abandoned by foreign democracy-makers that bet instead on their own NGOs and consultants. Hence, speculative media has filled most of the empty 'liberal' spaces.

Civil and political rights: The liberalisation of civil and political life is vital and a relative success, but it is now under threat from the weaker emphasis given to it by Megawati and remains of limited significance for major parts of the population. Political violence is localised, semi-privatised, and nourished by instigation and manipulation of ethnic and religious loyalties. The lack of social and cultural rights is part of the problem.

In terms of the roots of these problems, Indonesia calls to mind Germany after the Holocaust, and still more so South Africa before it settled account with apartheid. There is a tendency to overlook the quests for trust and justice and give priority to unspecified reconciliation. But the major problem is not so much to find ways in which neighbours or members of different ethnic or religions groups can live with each other as equal citizens. The problem is rather that they must first be reasonably equal citizens. Hence, of course, basic minority rights, and probably reservations and perhaps even quotas, for instance, (like in India) must be regulated and institutionalised. But even before that, one has to come to terms with the political and economic instigation and exploitation of communalism, and the massive acts of violence and repression that have boosted conflicts in the first place. The victims and subordinated citizens have no reason to reconcile with these mechanisms and vested interests. Truth and justice cannot be repressed but must come first, if reconciliation between equal citizens and a reasonably functioning democratic society shall be possible.

Moreover, there is a tendency to focus on the violence against the supporters of the post-Suharto leaders, such as various Muslim groups and different factions in the Moluccas or Kalimantan. But actually, the violence, repression and sponsoring of militias and communal conflicts became established state policy during the massacres of 1965–66. Thus it continued, not just in East Timor or Aceh, and then turned more localised, as in the Moluccas or Kalimantan, when a central 'godfather' was no longer able to master it all. So the importance of returning to the earlier catastrophes is not limited to finding out what happened, and to rehabilitate and compensate millions of individuals, but that people in general (in addition to students and other educated and reasonably independent parts of the middle class) get rid of their fear, resurrect

history, and get a real chance to organise themselves independently. That, of course, calls for much more massive popular organisation, pressure, and education than the current individual and NGO-based networks, advocacy, information, and lobbying. And again the democratic West, by failing to reveal its earlier support of repression and authoritarianism, including with regard to the massacres in the mid-60s, has not really set a very good example.

A reasonably democratic society for citizens to be sufficiently self-confident: This relates to more general but necessary prerequisites in terms of a reasonably democratic culture based on the combination of, on the one hand, social and cultural rights (including of minorities) and, on the other, equal citizenship and open, free and plural education and discourse which is not limited to a few students, intellectuals, and reasonably independent professionals. There have been improvements (including with regard to the Chinese). And the role of the citizen-oriented Muslim reform movement in fighting both Suharto's authoritarian rule and non-pluralistic religious streams has been of vital importance, refuting Huntington's thesis that Islamic culture is incompatible with democratisation.[57]

Generally speaking, however, the problems are severe after decades of massive subordination, falsification of history (including of the struggle for freedom of democracy as part of the modern nation state project) and Suharto's promotion of feudal-like and authoritarian elements of Javanese values and customs. Moreover, much of the vulnerable majority of the population may not have been able to benefit from the new freedoms, but may rather have been forced to set aside any potentially independent views of their own. This is because they usually have to relate to neo-traditional patrons, bosses, and ethnic and religious networks to find ways of surviving the economic and social crisis. The authoritarian milieu, finally, has also influenced the pro-democracy movement. Most organisations therein remain liberal oases but continue to suffer from the lack of solid democratic practices and the primary need to find strong and influential leaders with access to funding, rather than to serve and uphold unity among members (if any) and followers—a phenomenon which in turn sustains elitist quarrels and divisions.

In brief, then, the picture is quite clear: There are important freedoms, but the civil and democratic rights and institutions are poor, often malfunctioning, and usually difficult for ordinary people to make use of. The politically marginalised but resourceful sections of the elite would probably have turned to non-democratic methods anyway. But what is really wrong with Indonesia's democratisation is that it does not make much sense even to its major potential pro-democratic force—the people at large—as a way of promoting ideas and interests, solving conflicts, and agreeing with others on how to handle issues of mutual concern. Rather, they usually have to find non- and anti-democratic methods and avenues. For instance, they have to pay

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[57] See Hefner's 'Civil Islam' (2000), though at least one self-critical leader involved has suggested the alternative title 'smiling Islam' and one may wish to discuss the extent to which the liberal tendencies among certain intellectual leaders, who Hefner so forcefully analyses, reflect the structural and institutional logic of the Muslim movements.

or bargain for protection and contacts within administration, government and elite circles as well as ethnic and religious networks. And if this does not help, they may have to take to the streets, occupy land, or end up burning down a police station.

8.4   The rise of a new radical democracy movement

The obvious question, then, is whether radical popular movements, including in rural contexts, had more potential? Did they continue to work within the tradition from the late-50s onwards where issues other than democratisation were most vital (such as imperialism, landlordism and the cold war)? This would support the mainstream theses. Or did new and more explicitly democratic preoccupations emerge, as suggested in our alternative arguments?

The basic problem within radical Indonesian opposition is that it is mainly confined to students (old and new) and other middle class intellectuals who are rather isolated from people in general. This is because of the destruction of the broad popular movements in the mid-60s and the authoritarian rule during Suharto's 'New Order'. Until recently it was even impossible to form membership-based autonomous organisations. Aside from religious organisations, there are still very few movements (which, moreover, are weak) among the people themselves that activists relate to. The same holds true in terms of critical ideologies and historical consciousness. Most of the dissident groups have had to work from above and out of the main urban centres where certain protection has been available from friends and temporary allies with influential positions. Organising in rural areas has been particularly difficult.

This way, layers of fragmented dissidents have developed over the years. Lack of space only allows for a very brief review. Of course, common people have always tried to find ways of surviving and resisting, in the face of harsh repression. But if we talk of movements and organisations that have openly opposed the regime, the first may only be called 'corrective' (Budiman 2001). The old radical nationalist-communist organisations had been eliminated. The new dissidents were students and other intellectuals who had helped bring the New Order to power but then turned increasingly critical of corruption, international dependence, and the unequal distribution of resources. Hence they set up study and lobbying groups and staged protests, aiming at reform within the system. This proved impossible, however. The regime simply cracked down on its own children. And the reply by the most vocal, in turn, was of course confrontational: one had to do away with the regime in general and Suharto in particular. Hence, neither of these tendencies gave priority to democratisation. One wanted reform, another quasi revolution. And as both failed, and critical discussions were prevented even at the larger universities, the third wave was less political, stressing more cautious work with NGOs. Again, democratisation was not the major issue. Instead the focus was on making people more independent through alternative livelihood projects and civil organising, as well as defence of their legal and human rights to do this and to criticise the regime.

Meanwhile capitalism expanded. The oil-crisis in the mid-80s generated more

investment in productive sectors. Rural areas were also affected. On the one hand, this called for authoritarian state intervention and gave rise to a multiplicity of interests and movements (rather than a unified working class). On the other hand, even limited liberalisation created some space which allowed certain people to try to improve their standard of living through different local efforts—not always grabbing political power first, and then relying on state intervention. Moreover, since it was mainly a question of authoritarian state sponsored primitive accumulation, most conflicts seemed to evolve between state and people rather than between private capitalists or landlords and their workers and tenants. Hence it was also possible to predict that the monopolisation of state power, including its repressive organs, would become major a issue and that demands for democracy might thus be a new unifying option for the opposition, and perhaps even generate a second liberation movement (Törnquist 1984).

Many scholars and dissidents were sceptical. The best way to find out if the above theory is valid is to analyse critically how various groups reacted and further developed in relation to a major and typical conflict that was not limited to the urban middle-class framework, but originated among rural poor. By the late 80's, one such case was villagers' resistance to the state imposed and World Bank financed building of a huge dam in the Kedung Ombo area in Central Java.[58]

Four rather distinct clusters stand out in terms of how different groups related to different ways of promoting substantial democratisation, in accordance with our model in the first part of the essay: [59] the top-down catalysts; the grassroots activists; the intermediary cause-oriented groups; the dissident political leaders; the problems and options of labour movement organisers.

8.5   Top-down catalysts enforce but bypass democracy

Some of the Kedung Ombo villagers were thus trying to resist eviction, expropriation of land and low if any compensation in connection with the construction of the dam. Radical students linked up. There was some space for protests. This was more due to quarrel within the regime on the central as well as local levels than, as the students tended to believe, because they staged unusually brave and radical actions. The case (and the protests) was thus brought to the attention of the media as well as administrators and politicians, locally as well as in Jakarta.

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[58] For a brief analysis of the Kedung Ombo movement, see Budiman and Törnquist (2001), Ch. 1.
[59] That is in what way (and to what extent) they promote substantial democratisation by way of integrating instrumental and democratic aims; by then struggling for constitutional rights (civil and political) and/or institutional channels ('free and fair' elections and open and accountable government), and/or by betting on building 'a democratic society'—plus to what extent all this is associated with improving citizens' own capacity to use and improve those means of democracy.

The basic rationale of the students (especially those arriving from Yogyakarta) was that there was a need for avant-garde politics to break up the regime and to thus liberate and give initial guidance 'from above' to suppressed people in slowly emerging civil organisations. People's own spontaneous ability to resist and carry out collective action only had to be ignited and linked up with networks.

Much of this thinking has deep roots in the Indonesian liberation struggle. There is also a tradition of trying to act as a 'moral force', above narrow specific interests, to thus de-legitimate a 'bad' ruler. At times of low tide in collective action, the position of the top-down catalysts had been (and continued to be) that of patronising various NGOs, courageously speaking up in favour of civil and human rights, and defending all kinds of activists on all kinds of issues, while also linking them up with disenchanted sections of the elite. With waves of radicalism, as now in the late 80's and early 90's, alternative forms of instigation emerged. Increasingly radical and restless students in covert study groups began to look around for signs in actual life of what they had read of exploited masses who could make a difference. They found local but still rather unarticulated protests among, primarily the rural poor against abusive land acquisition. They left most of the 'established' NGOs and dissidents behind. They formed new action groups, staged daring demonstrations, and thus tried to give voice to and space for the oppressed. Some constantly hunted for new issues attracting media and were labelled 'action maniacs'. When unifying rallying points failed to appear, they tried to make up for this by simply, (as was the common expression) "not talking so much about the future but concentrating on getting rid of Suharto".

Hence, little emphasis was given to the strengthening of the villagers own pro-democratic capacity. It was rendered impossible (given the repression) and building 'a democratic society' was considered too time-consuming a way to proceed. Rather, the top-down catalysts had to pave the way, and widen the space, by acting on behalf of the villagers. Their grievances would be related directly to the general need to fight the state, the very regime, including the president, and to demand justice, human rights, and democracy. Some efforts were made to specify necessary rights but very little was said and done with regard to democratic mechanisms, even in terms of ideals for the future. This was bypassed. Even the catalysts' own organisations were little but networks, with quarrels and infighting. Their relations with the villagers were not very democratic. And the co-operation with other less radical groups and activists that gave priority to different ways of supporting the villagers was poor.

Over the years, this avant-garde tradition has been most forcefully upheld by generations of student activists and alumni-cum-patrons, including the networking groups that were so instrumental in doing away with Suharto. (To be fair, in addition to a few intellectuals, the top-down catalysts were also among the few pro-democrats who brought up the issue of East Timor within the democracy movement.)

A major difference, of course, was that the students of May 1998 were no longer a few hundred 'action maniacs' from within the major elite universities, but hundreds of thousands from often less privileged institutions and with less secure economic backup and careers. But just like some ten years earlier at Kedung Ombo, the students

again believed that it was only their brave radicalism that mattered—rarely considering the importance of the crisis and conflicts within the regime nor years of other activists' more long-term work. Moreover, they were up against similar problems. To put the point simply, soon after the ousting of Suharto they were confronted with three great obstacles, of which they were only able to surmount the first.

The first challenge was presented by a campaign that portrayed them as immature muddleheads who mainly caused traffic problems with all their demonstrations, and who wanted to bring down the old order but had no program for what to put in its place. There was, to be sure, something to this. In Jakarta, at the time (late 1998), I was often reminded of the student movement of 30 years ago in Europe. The latter too was not just pronouncedly political; it was cultural and anti-authoritarian as well. Yet that was nothing to despise; indeed, it was probably that which had the greatest significance over the long run. In addition, there was, among the new Indonesian students, a still greater and more hopeful and dynamic power which issued from the fact that they were not just breaking with authoritarian structures: they were also rediscovering history (which was forbidden) and opening up their society (which was closed). The students were the weeds that broke suddenly through the asphalt and burst into full bloom: beautiful but disordered. And most of them neither were nor are, most assuredly, naive or muddleheaded. Great numbers of them did and do read, discuss, analyse, and come to democratic decisions. Never have I encountered students with such questioning minds and such a thirst for knowledge as those who, in December 1998, took me off in an old borrowed taxi to meet with a larger group of young leaders from various campuses, and who then insisted on a six-hour marathon lecture on the political situation and the historical background. The hour grew late, yet it seemed to me that the gathering burned like a beacon in the Jakarta night. In the long run, the students have history on their side.

When the dawn came, however, it still broke over the same Jakarta, and that made things harder. The second problem faced by the students was the fact that almost all the established forces were trying to tame and use them. For one thing, Habibie, Wiranto and their cohorts in the regime were doing their best to keep control and to acquire new legitimacy by directing the reform process from above, and by marginalising radicals like the students. In addition, leaders like Gus Dur, Megawati, and Amien Rais were taking advantage of the fact that the students were putting pressure on the regime. This enabled those leaders to compromise with the weakened establishment, and to carry out cautious changes at a tranquil pace. The moderates were also trying to tame the students, so as to be able to contest the upcoming elections with a minimum of disturbance.

The students were at loss as to how to deal with this. In November 1998 (in relation to the extra-ordinary People's Consultative Assembly) they failed to force the moderate leaders to unite and to go ahead on the basis of a radical mass movement. So then the students were faced with a third problem: that of formulating a political program of their own, and building an independent political base. This was the hardest challenge of all. The students functioned as a substitute for the lack of broad organisations among the middle and lower classes. They had no politics of their own,

however, for linking their demonstrations either with the concerns of ordinary people or with the established political institutions, where negotiations were conducted and decisions made.

Changing this was difficult, for the weakness of the students was also their strength. Their strength lay in independence, integrity, and a lack of self-interest at a time when most everything was (and is) dominated by new and old patrons and bosses within politics, the economy, and the armed forces. Largely gone now was the approach of the many earlier students, which was to ally themselves with critics in the military, the political system, and the intellectual upper crust. Even the pro-democratic elite of yesterday complained at the time that the students did not always listen to them and did not follow their advice. Yet if this was a strength, it was also a weakness, for what would serve as the base for the students' demands? What were the social moorings for their politics, their basis of politicisation? In order to protect their independence, as well as to avoid provocateurs and undisciplined masses of people, they even hesitated to allow 'ordinary people' to take part in the demonstrations and to demand their rights and defend their interests.

In the same way, it was both a strength and a weakness that the students were lacking a cohesive organisation with a distinct and encompassing leadership structure. It was (and is) networks that ruled the roost. This meant there was no top figure to seize or co-opt. It also meant it was possible to adjust to local conditions and to make use of the new vitality. At the same time, however, this loose organisational pattern made it hard for the students to reach out beyond their own group, to mobilise people on a broad basis, or to reach common decisions over long-term questions. The students were only able to unite behind resounding demands which were simple enough to be proclaimed on the streets and in the squares.

Worst of all, the students did not know how to relate to the coming elections. If we form a party, they said, we will be divided, and our independence and moral force will be lost. And if we concentrate our resources on political education and electoral monitoring, many added, we will risk legitimising not just a few good new forces, but also all those old villains who will assuredly be elected too. So even if the students had nothing against elections, their efforts proved irrelevant when election fever spread, and people realised that "villains or not—the only ones we have to vote for are the politicians of today and their parties."

In short, top down political catalysts have a long tradition in Indonesia. By the late eighties they got a new start with the agitation in favour of rural villagers in remote Kedung Ombo and generated much of the powerful May 1998 student movement. Their actions confirm, of course, the proposition that popular conflicts with the state and political monopolisation are central and may generate demands for democracy. Moreover, their assumption about the need to liberate civil society by drastic political means before more extensive societal democratisation can take place, may be seen as an extreme version of our thesis on the importance of political facilitation and intervention to make civil society and social capital democratically fruitful. And to put it mildly, the Indonesian catalysts have now proved their point by being the pro-democratic group that finally managed to oust Suharto. On the other hand,

their experiences also confirm the mainstream thesis about increasingly fragmented movements and refute our argument that this would generate democratic and co-operative solutions. Rather, the issues have been scattered and the actions have often been poorly organised and divisive within the democracy movement as a whole. With remarkable stubbornness, moreover, the catalysts have kept on abstaining from improving ordinary citizens' own capacity to promote democracy. The masses, especially the rural ones, should first be liberated by well-educated cadres with high moral standing, not mobilised, and organised. The catalysts have bypassed the promotion of 'a democratic society' as well as institutional channels (such as elections) and only proceeded via rather general demands for human rights to promote unspecified democratic aims.

8.6   Grassroots activists foster but limit democratisation

If it had not been for enduring and less conspicuous support of the villagers in Kedung Ombo by various grassroot activists, the students would not have many protesting peasant farmers to link up with in the first place. The grassroots activists also included some students (mainly from Salatiga) but were mainly related to small human rights-cum-alternative development oriented NGOs. The most principled ones included the groups led by legendary late liberation theologist Romo Mangun (Y.B. Mangunwijaya) and human rights activist Johni Simanjuntak. Later on, several less principled NGOs also entered the field.

In sharp contrast to the top-down catalysts, a common point of departure for the grassroots activists was the belief that there was no need to liberate people from above first. Despite tight repression there was instead some space for meaningful work in civil society. The basic aim was to enhance people's own economic and political autonomy and capacity to co-operate and then also to build democracy from below. People themselves, the argument ran, were quite capable and willing to stand up against oppression. Also, there was a good deal of suspicion against 'central' leadership and integrated organisations; networks were enough.

As already hinted at, this new generation of alternative development and human rights NGOs (beyond old charitable organisations) emerged with the intellectuals who first supported the New Order but then turned increasingly critical. As they failed to reform the regime, many 'adjusted' themselves by trying to work 'from within' the system, while the more principled activists linked up with the radical student activists who had been smoked out of campuses and had to find some alternative space.

It is important here to separate the grassroots activists who really focused on working in the field, from those who instead established organisations to service the 'field workers' and their 'clients' or simply to co-ordinate various NGOs. At times both functions were upheld within the same organisations (such as the Indonesian Legal Aid Association or the BinaDesa secretariat in support of peasant farmer livelihood projects). But the distinction is vital, as the former had both the potential and

the vision to act as an extended arm of temporarily defunct popular movements, while the latter, which we shall return to in the next section, were primarily supportive, acted more like doctors in relation to their clients, or mainly catered to the capacity of the professionals themselves, such as journalists or lawyers.

Over the years a virtual but scattered fleet of such popular oriented NGOs emerged, covering various sectors, groups of people and geographical areas. Among the most dynamic were groups related to villagers (usually with 'traditional' leaders) badly affected by state-led primitive accumulation of capital in many places other than Kedung Ombo: from indigenous populations fighting mining companies to villagers resisting several other state backed dams or logging companies, or polluting factories, or plantations, or golf courses, or parking lots. Similarly, several dynamic pro-labour, pro-urban poor and pro-women groups emerged.[60]

The experiences of the grassroots activists thus also confirm our proposition about the primacy of conflicts against state-backed primitive accumulation. The pro-democratic agenda and effects, however, were not self-evident. First, many grassroots oriented NGOs were less principled and worked within the established system. They included groups related to the socio-religious organisations (the most exciting of which was Nahdlatul Ulama, led by Abdurrahman Wahid, Gus Dur) that were among the few that could reach out in the rural areas during Suharto. Second, while it is generally safe to say, that grassroots contributed to the building of 'a democratic society', enhanced peoples' pro-democratic capacity, and contributed to the promotion of human rights, they rarely advanced much further. Like the top-down catalysts, they neglected other but shallow demands for and promotion of democratic channels (elections/open and accountable government). And while the catalysts were good at really pushing various issues and exerting political pressure, the grassroots activists mainly helped their local companions to form their own groups (often including respected traditional leaders), take their case to the local political or administrative bosses or connect their cases to a central service-NGO, who would then, at best, continue the work in higher hierarchies and internationally. Third, this in fact also pointed to the serious lack of co-ordination within the democracy movement as a whole. In addition to the major lack of an organised popular base, there were not even good contacts between the explicitly politically operating catalysts, for example, and the few grassroots activists that never the less existed.

After the fall of Suharto some activists took up explicitly political work, many continued with their previous activities which, of course, were as important as ever, for instance with regard to human rights, or the plight of tribes and minorities, or environmental destruction, or the promotion of autonomous co-operatives among

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[60] For a few recent analyses of their democratic potential, see eg. Budiman & Törnquist (2001) Ch. 2 on the Nipah dam case, ch 3 on the Amunge case in Papua, ch 4 on the Medan strike, as well as Collins (2001) on peasant farmers' and workers' actions in post-Suharto Sumatra. Good examples of additional pro-democratic NGOs include the activities generated by the YLBHI labour desks, the various associated NGO forums in greater Jakarta, Bandung and Surabaya, and the Urban Poor Coalition.

weak sections of the population. But this was the time when all actors had started to say nice things about democracy and human rights, and this was the start of mass politics. So the voices of the dissidents were easily getting drowned. And they were still not very good at either mobilising people or at co-ordinating their activities with the outright political activists. So on their own, (and much like the students) they came out as rather fragmented pressure-cum lobbying groups that also tried to service some more or less popular alternative-development initiatives.

Consequently, a major problem continues to be if, and how, these grassroots groups can contribute to the rise, independence, and dynamism of autonomous organisations among people themselves, such as trade unions and peasant farmer organisations. Since the fall of the Suharto regime, as space for popular organization has widened extensively, it often seems as if the scattered interests and associations among people are multiplied by the tendency among the NGOs to compete over ideas, territories, contacts, funding and leading patrons. While labourers may think twice before splitting up and becoming weaker in fighting state-backed employers, police, and gangsters—trying in this way to develop some form of democracy to handle their internal disputes—the NGO-activists may just form another institute, with new contacts and funding.

On the other hand it remains to be seen what will now come out, in terms of democratisation, from the revitalised labour and peasant farmer organisation. Those trying to build genuine and democratic unions and peasant farmer groups from below are up against a fragmented array of different conflicts (such as between plantation labour who fight for their jobs and peasant farmers who want their land back) as well as the tendency to form new and 'free' unions (as it is difficult to change the old ones). Moreover, there is a simultaneous need for resources and some kind of co-ordination. This is difficult to mobilise and achieve just from below but is offered from above, for instance, from NGOs, foreign donors, and competing egos (such as Muchtar Pakpahan) and political projects (such as those related to PDI-P and PRD).We shall return to this later with a special section on the particular problems and options of labour movement organisers.

Similarly after Suharto, more general rural unrest spread in various parts of Indonesia, not just in the form of partly instigated religious and ethnic violence but also, for instance, in relation to long overdue village elections in Java. Reporting was brief and scattered and it remains very difficult to draw any reasonably clear conclusions.[61] However, one way of understanding the problems with regard to democratisation should be to look briefly into a case which, relatively speaking, has the best of possibilities. Ideally it would also relate to the initial case of Kedung Ombo. So, once again, I called on a major and principled grassroot activist at that time, Johni Simanjuntak in Solo, and asked for a showcase to study. Simanjuntak continues to lead a now somewhat larger pro-human-rights and democracy NGO.

In the Central Java village of Gebjok, in Karanganyar district, just after the fall of

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[61] C.f. Lane (1999), Kammen (2000), White and Bayu Aji (2000), and ISAI (2002).

Suharto, a few dissidents asked Simanjuntak's group for help to sue their corrupt *lurah* (village head). The advice given, however, was that nothing would change unless they themselves linked up with others and sought the support of the villagers in general. So this is what they did. A *komite reformasi* was formed to fight the *lurah* who had appropriated money for a fresh water project, over-charged people for land certificates and privatised public land in favour of his cronies. Demonstrations, for instance, where held at the *lurah's* and *bupati's* (the head of the district) offices (the *lurah* is still legally responsible to the *bupati* rather than to the villagers). The *lurah's* office was occupied for two weeks, and an absolute majority of the villagers came forward to prevent the military and the police from intervening. When the *lurah* was brought to trial and temporarily discharged, the committee continued its work with regular meetings and public gatherings, initiated a co-operative to support agriculture, revealed local Golkar leaders' usage of the public social safety net for their own political purposes, and then discussed how to gear up for demand of total reformation of the local administration. None of this was dependent on the fluctuations in foreign media coverage of demonstrations outside the Hotel Indonesia in central Jakarta.

The committee members were hardly revolutionaries. The chairman was a dynamic local factory mechanic in his mid-twenties. Other members included a retired school-teacher who used to hunt communists in the 1960s, a much younger, well dressed and educated radical businessman, and a farmer-cum-agricultural labourer. Their party affiliations varied, some supported PDI-P, others the small NU-based PNU and one the conservative Muslim PBB.[62] "But that doesn't matter", they told me, jokingly picking at each other. "That's just general and traditional affiliations. The important thing is our list of what should be done here." This was in June 1999.

My fear was that they would be co-opted and divided by the established politicians and administration on the district level. Because this is as far as the official process of democratisation has reached, with elections and decentralisation but without local parties that are based on genuine popular organisations. This is what the international agencies have decided to 'consolidate' by strengthening the existing institutions—but abstaining from supporting efficient popular organisation (such as in Gebjok) and engineering political institutions that such groups could at least relate to and make use of. The Gebjok activists at the time responded they did not know what would happen. They just wanted to hold on to their own program and relate to similar committees in nearby villages, and if possible on 'higher' levels too. I asked if they knew of any such committee 'up there'—but of course they did not, since hardly any existed.

Between hope and reality, my query at the time was whether it was really beyond the capacity of the politically more 'advanced' pro-democrats at the more central levels to learn from Gebjok and unite on more aggregate but yet concrete minimum platforms (rather than only acting as isolated pressure groups or ideological spear-

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[62] PNU, *Partai Nahdlatul Umat*, PBB, *Partai Bulang Bintang*.

heads). This would help provide links and an organisational and ideological frame-
work between committees on different levels (before they too were infected by neo-
traditional politics and administration and supported, unfortunately, by the interna-
tional democracy-builders). (Törnquist 1999a).

Six months later, little of this had happened. On the 27th of November, just as I
revisited Gebjok, the committee failed miserably. The new bitter lesson, however, is
equally important to learn.

It had started well. Golkar lost massively in the June elections and the committee
won its legal case against the *lurah*. This meant an election of a new head of the
village would also take place. But then political reconciliation among the elite took
place on various levels. The new climate of 'Pact Order' took over. No common
enemy was left to fight. Personal ambitions gained ground in the committee, which
split. Two candidates for the lurah were nominated; one was brought in from outside
the group by its then leader, the dynamic skilled worker; another emerged from
within, the educated radical businessman. While PDI-P won the June general elec-
tions, remained politically and organisationally weak, and neither caused problems
nor gave help to the committee, Golkar lost the people's sympathies but retained its
organisation and remained informally in control of the local administration. Hence,
the latter candidate (the radical businessman) was skilfully prevented from running
on legal grounds (he had been residing just outside the village). The politically less
experienced committee was not able to work out an equally smart counter-move.
Rather it stubbornly opted instead for boycott. Even worse, it actually tried to prevent
the election on that Saturday morning (November 27) when I returned—and was
stopped, of course, by the administration and the police, who therefore appeared
as defenders of democracy and people's right to vote. And this people did, rather
massively—and in favour of a Golkar candidate.

It was virtually possible to see with ones own eyes how what was initially the
best possible local and popular *reformasi* group turned out to be totally insufficient.
The official (and internationally sponsored) local democratisation process did not
offer a clear possibility for the local group to either form a local party, or otherwise
participate in local politics in a way that would have made sense, in terms of advanc-
ing their instrumental aims. Rather they had to turn to personalised political competi-
tion and to lobby the parties and groups that continued to monopolise local politics.
And then without clear ideological and political leadership, even the best of pro-civil
society and social capital promotion failed miserably.

8.7   Intermediary cause-oriented groups serve but do not anchor democracy

If the top-down catalysts and grassroots activists in Kedung Ombo had not been
protected and able to take the problems of the villagers 'higher up' in the movement,
the case would probably have been lost and forgotten. However, concerned journal-
ists and academics wrote articles and essays. Lawyers from the Yogyakarta and

Semarang branches of the Indonesian Legal Aid Association (YLBHI), as well as its central Jakarta office, offered their capacity to defend, negotiate, argue, and lobby. Later, additional human rights organisations at the centre also entered. The joint organisation for independent Indonesian NGOs and their foreign partners, INFID,[63] took the case to the international level and put hard pressure on the sponsors of the dam, including the World Bank.

As previously mentioned, we are now talking about activists and their organisations who mainly aim to service the grassroots workers in the field, promote networks among various NGOs, promote their own activists' professional capacity (for instance as concerned lawyers or journalists) and lobby and take cases to the central levels of the state as well as to international institutions. At times, these organisations also do their own fieldwork, as sections of the YLBHI branches did, for instance. But generally speaking they are on an intermediate level, between the people and the activists on the grassroots level, and the general ('national') discourse, the state, and the international 'top' level.

A major problem, then, was (and is) that the intermediary organisations were not rooted among their 'clients' at the grassroots level. They simply did not have a clear base, both in terms of members and the people on the ground themselves. In the Kedung Ombo case, therefore, as in so many subsequent 'affairs', there were frequent conflicts between field-activists and well funded, well-reputed and at times self-important leaders from 'above'. But more than that, with so many actors and few bodies to co-ordinate (aside from some regional NGO forums), not to mention institutions for democratic deliberation and decision-making, various conflicts occurred over perspectives, visions, territory, money, contacts, patrons, and personalities. Civil organisational life was thus promoted, but once again it is clear, then, that the strengthening of civil society as such does not necessarily promote co-operation and democratisation.

Simultaneously, and over the years, many other groups that were and similarly harnessing, servicing, lobbying and cause-oriented have gained prominence. These including the environmental NGOs under the Walhi-umbrella, the rural community and pro-peasant farmer groups within BinaDesa, additional human rights and policy centres such as Elsam and PBHI, the journalists' and cultural workers' institute, ISAI, for studies and the promotion of freedom of speech, the women's communication, information and information centre Kalyanamitra, the more recent series of corruption, election and other watchdogs, and the lobbying and advocacy groups such as the centre for electoral reform and the solidarity movement for East Timor. A few and new mass-member-oriented action groups such as KontraS (to assist and organise victims of violence) have also appeared, as well as many others, especially at the district level.[64]

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[63] INGI (after 1993 INFID), International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development
[64] The full names are: Walhi, Indonesian Forum for Environment; BinaDesa, Indonesian Secretariat for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas; Elsam, The Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy; PBHI, Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association; ISAI, The Institute for Studies on Free Flow of Information; Kalyanamitra, Women's Communication and Information Centre; KontraS, The Commission for Disappearances and Victims of Violence

By the mid-90s, some of the old problems of weak bases, fragmentation, and lack of joint deliberation and co-ordination were addressed by efforts at convergence and political intervention. Increasingly many intermediary and 'non-political' NGOs claimed that alternative development, justice, and human rights called for democratisation. Several groups realised that it was not enough just to widen and strengthen civil society. They began to ask questions as to which social and political forces and actors could possibly enforce democratisation. This process first revolved around the YLBHI, with its self-proclaimed locomotive of democracy, Adnan Buyong Nasution (later on deserting the principled democrats).[65]

Simultaneously, although the 1994 crackdown on media (such as *Tempo*) and journalists with basic integrity was a setback, it also provided a major injection of support for the movement (cf Budiman and Törnquist 2001 Ch. 4). Many journalists and cultural workers—who had long been in favour of human rights and freedom of speech, but had mainly tried to serve the movement by doing their jobs, realised that it would be impossible to implement and sustain these rights without reasonably solid democratisation. This was not just a question of idealism and ideology, but was in line with their purely instrumental interests of being able to think, research, write and publish. Of course, the same was true of many dedicated lawyers, students, academics and so on, who were able to collaborate through their professional channels and work together to do some good. The journalists, however, were now restricted by the closure of the media. Those with integrity (some gave up) combined idealism and ideological commitment while directly catering to their own interests and constituencies. Alternative unions (AJI)[66] and associations (ISAI and others) for alternative studies, research, discussion, intelligence, communication and alternative media were established, on the basis of extensive networks, some money (from the old profitable days), international reputation (of senior editors such as Goenawan Mohamad), and organisational skill; plus a good portion of anger and decisiveness. In fact, several of the younger leaders were not just good investigative journalists, editors and managers, they had also received basic training as principled activists in the Kedung Ombo affair.

However, problems remained, as is best shown by the example of the human rights activists and journalists, who, with renewed vigour, made major attempts to advance democracy. By early 1996, they had generated a kind of action-oriented public space, thus spurring increasingly politicised efforts at democratisation. Regular (but fake) elections were due in early 1997. Megawati, the symbolic head of the marginalised but legal nationalist party, PDI, was in a position to cause some trouble, perhaps with unofficial support from Gus Dur's Nahdlatul Ulama. All this in turn, it was argued, could well develop into a breeding ground for genuine pro-democracy efforts. One major effort, therefore, was to bring together various groups at the central level, intermediate NGOs as well as dissident political formations, behind the forming

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[65] The need for more studies and discussions on this within the democracy movement was behind the project commencing 1994, see preface Budiman & Törnquist (2001)
[66] AJI, The Alliance of Independent Journalists.

of an electoral watch movement called KIPP.[67] KIPP would then be used not just to state (as usual) but also prove, beyond reasonable doubt, that the elections had been rigged. Thereby Megawati could refuse to accept the result (something which had never happened before), which in turn would cause a major constitutional and political crisis. In the process of first consolidating KIPP and then defending its expected verdict on the elections, plus spreading the demand for justice and substantial democracy, it should be possible to harness the scattered democracy movement as a whole, including on the grassroots level, and thus to generate common and genuine projects. That was the intention.

Well before serious efforts had been made to move KIPP beyond a discussion group among Jakarta elite personalities, however, Suharto intervened to prevent Megawati from running in the elections. This in turn led to a stalemate, where the democracy activists could not rely on a converging movement and programme of their own—since that had not yet evolved—and so did their best to advance behind Megawati. Unfortunately there was no alternative, since expansion beyond the circle of KIPP's dissident elite had never been given priority. They had not even linked up with the grassroots activists in various ground-level NGOs through the intermediary cause-oriented groups. At the time, when one of the best of YLBHI's leaders was asked as to the possibility of using the pro-labour NGO-network on the grassroots level to strengthen and anchor the KIPP, he replied that these were two entirely different projects. It is true to say that the regime, on July 27, displayed its incapacity to reform itself, by having to crack down with brutal force on the activists advancing behind Megawati (thus ironically generating ethnic and religious riots instead).[68] But simultaneously the basic weakness of the movement became equally obvious—its fragmentation and its separation between top-down activists who tend to 'run offside'[69] and grassroots activists who have not yet been able to generate interest-based mass organisations from below. After the crackdown on the democracy movement behind Megawati on July 27, it became extremely difficult to move ahead.

In conclusion, the intermediary groups were no longer solely focusing on the furthering of constitutional rights, or the building (to some extent) of a 'democratic society', to promote both instrumental and democratic aims. They were also considering institutional channels in terms of elections and governance. However, in this context they mainly functioned as elitist lobby and pressure groups with little integration and prioritisation between issues, ideas, and cases. Hence they could neither substitute for the lack of, nor harness the generation of, popularly rooted political parties on the basis of major conflicts and ideas of how society should be organised, or even similar mass organisations among peasant farmers and workers.

Little of this changed after the fall of Suharto. Of course, leading activists (at least) no longer risked open repression. There were no more intelligence people pretending to fish in the canal outside the office of the Alternative Journalist Association, to

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[67] KIPP, Independent Committee for Election Monitoring
[68] For a brief analysis of the 27/7 affair, see Budiman&Törnquist (2001) Ch.6.
[69] Moving too far forward.

take but one example. But only a few activists were able to relate their associations to the radical political opposition, including the students, offering various kinds of support—from advocacy and legal aid, to food and medical assistance. The public space created by ISAI and YLBHI, among other intermediary groups, could be used by activists who either tried to build new parties or bet on working within the mainstream formations with ones that stood a chance in the 1999 elections. But the intermediary cause oriented groups as such, mainly retreated to their role as lobby and pressure units. The Walhi NGO-network, for instance, rejected the idea of generating an alternative green political movement. KIPP, moreover, was turned into a mainstream electoral watchdog with few ambitions (not to talk of capacity) at going beyond superficial monitoring and voter education by, for example, harnessing the entire movement, including the students, in favour of radical democratic reform. Rather, KIPP and the elitist NGO-community at large seemed (and seem) to agree on promoting majority elections in one-man districts. On the one hand, this might undermine the big established (and not very pro-democratic) parties—and also any attempt to build new and more genuine ones (which the NGOs do not seem to be very interested in). On the other hand there would be some space for personality oriented and NGO-rooted lobby and pressure politics (which they do seem to be interested in)—but also for elitist and local boss-rule such as that in neighbouring Philippines or Thailand.

8.8   Dissident political leaders build and bend democracy

In the early 90s, many of the young top-down catalysts who made their debut in Kedung Ombo by negating cautious NGO work in civil society in favour of daring demonstrations began to feel that this was not good enough. To advance, they said, there was a need for consistent work on the ground, more overall organising, and a long term ideological perspective. There was still a need to break up the regime and liberate civil society from above by way of avant-garde politics. But this and loose networking had to be supplemented by enrolling and mobilising the people. In other words, one should build a party with a clear ideology and associated mass organisations (among workers, peasant farmers, youth and so on).

   This way a new, young, radical generation of Indonesian activists rediscovered and partly reinvented the need for and character of modern political organisations (such as those developed by West European social democrats as well as reformist communists and Christian democrats).

   Historically, of course, this was not new to Indonesia, just hidden away during thirty years of New Order, and swept under the carpet first by American non-ideological party politicians and then of non-politicised civil societies. In Indonesia there are two historical patterns. One model dates back to the middle class intellectuals who tried to build 'modern' parties but did not get popular support and ended up with elitist formations, like the former West-oriented Socialist Party, or elite-led parties based on conventional loyalties, such as the nationalist party (PNI)

related to Sukarno and the Islamic modernist party Masjumi, related to the former vice-president Hatta.

What remained in the mid-90s, however, was westernised leaders from the elitist tradition who initially supported the New Order but then turned critical of it and were deprived of their organisational and popular base. Their main enduring asset was some integrity and legitimacy in the eyes of may people, and among Western governments and agencies. This made it possible for them to mobilise some resources and, more importantly, to stand out as necessary partners of any slightly more liberal regime and the more or less well connected action groups and NGOs. Examples of democratically oriented political leaders at the time included Buyung Nasution and associates, Ali Sadikin and other ex-generals in the Petition 50 group, Abdurrahman Wahid and Marsilam Simanjuntak's Democratic Forum and later on Bintang Pramukas and Julius Usman's PUDI-party as well as Muchtar Pakpahan's pro-union groups.[70] There were also additional remnants of the old socialists as well as various nationalist and Muslim parties. Later on several of them were brought behind the electoral watchdog KIPP and tried to get a new lease of life in the 1999 elections, but again they suffered from insufficient organisational and popular bases. Only leaders who related to the parties that had been allowed to exist and develop networks and clientelism under Suharto (i.e. Megawati's PDI and the Muslim PPP) or to the two dominating socio-religious reform movements, Nahdlatul Ulama (led by Abdurrahman Wahid) or Muhammadiya (led by Amien Rais) stood a chance. The only major alternative was to turn to extra-parliamentary politics and to, for instance, support and 'guide' various students through alumni associations and old youth movements.

The other model is that of the reformist-communists from the fifties and early sixties who also made use of some conventional loyalties but still managed to build a comparatively 'modern' party with some 20 million people in attached popular organisations. While the reformist-communists are no more, the new generation of young radical political activists who want to build a modern mass party naturally still look at this only Indonesian example for some inspiration.

Like the dissident old elite, the new party building radicals were of course also short of a popular base to start off from, and also of contacts and funds. To make up for this, they first worked hard within various NGOs with resources and access to the grassroots. However, as it was thought that it would take too long, they rarely continued by going on to form mass organizations from below, such as unions and peasant farmers' associations. Instead they tried to carry out top-down, cadre-based mobilisation. In terms of our model of substantial democratisation, this meant that they neither emphasised capacity building among people, nor focused on constitutional rights or the alternative generation of a 'democratic society' but rather stressed the democratic channels in terms of elections and government. This though, in reality, mainly implied the building of their own party and various attached 'mass organisations'.

Yet, this way, and particularly because of their organisational skills, the young

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[70] PUDI, Partai Uni Demokrasi Indonesia, lead by Sri-Bintang Pamungkas.

party-political activists played an important role in the attempts in early 1996 to generate a more unified and politically relevant democracy movement. Their party, the People's Democratic Party (PRD), however, was only formally established in mid-1996 and was quite unable to make a difference when the general pro-democratic strategy (presented in the previous sub-section) was undermined (as Suharto prevented Megawati from running in the elections and KIPP failed to move beyond elitist negotiations in Jakarta). PRD could do little but try to advance 'from within' the populist movement in support of Megawati. This shortcut, as we know, proved disastrous: PRD was even officially accused of having instigated the July 27th riots, which followed the early morning goon-attack on the PDI-P headquarters, paid for and ordered by the regime.

While many liberal and moderate leaders within the democracy groups immediately took shelter, the new KontraS movement among principled human rights activists, however, and various journalists and cultural workers with ISAI, stood up and got a very exciting public reaction. For the first time there were clear signs that more and more people simply did not accept the regime's attempts to explain away its crackdown, by accusing 'communists' of masterminding the protests and the riots. Rather, what then followed was more co-operation between so-called communists and liberal journalists, Muslim democrats and human rights activists, among others. And the reports of conflicts continued between broader sections of the population, including peasant farmers and labourers on the one hand, and the state, with related businessmen on the other.

PRD itself, however, was crushed and its main leaders were on the run, imprisoned, kidnapped, tortured or at times assassinated. It was not until the economic and political crisis generated some new space, that the party-builders could make a new start. This time the shortcut was not Megawati but the renewed student movement—plus attempts to link them up with various protests in the society at large, including those of villagers but primarily with those of workers and the urban poor.

Short of their own mass organisations, however, the PRD-activists could do little to alter the situation. Despite being one of the few groups within the democracy movement as a whole that had paid attention to the need for democratic institutions such as parties, elections, and open and accountable government, the PRD failed to spread or give priority to this message among the students, but instead gave priority to action in the street. The party even faced serious internal divisions over whether or not it should participate in the elections. The actual result was that it did run, but not to make a difference, only to propagate.

8.9   Problems and options for new labour organisers

Interestingly, the major expanding party- and democracy-related group is currently the more pragmatic and grounded trade union movement led by Dita Sari.[71] The same goes for the progressive but non PRD-related workers groups that try to build organisations more from below (and which we already discussed briefly in section

8.6 on the grassroots activists). And there are some similar signs from among peasant farmers. This, however, is within very complicated fields of action.

To begin with, let us recall the mainstream general thesis that it is *the* working class (rather than the bourgeois forces) which, within the framework of capitalist expansion, and in alliance with sections of the middle classes, propel democratisation—as in many cases in Europe, Latin America and recently in South Africa (cf Rueschemeyer et al. (1992). Of course, labourers in general have become potentially more important in Indonesia with the expansion of capitalism, but the argument about their decisive role in the process of democratisation has not proved particularly helpful. It is true that the important Indonesian workers' organisations during the 50s and early-60s testify to the fact that massive and pro-democratic labour organising is far from impossible, despite weak and uneven industrialisation. But even the reformist communists at the time did not give priority to the workers. And then followed, of course, the destruction of all mass based popular movements, plus thirty years of authoritarian 'floating mass' politics—which created immense barriers to any kind of significant labour organisation.

Yet, and despite this, there were clear signs from the early-80s onwards of demands not just for better wages and working conditions (especially intense in new industrial sectors which had to compete on the world market and could not compensate various costs by increasing prices) but also for fundamental human and democratic rights, including the right to organise. This was most visible in private and foreign market exposed industries, but also elsewhere. Actually, it is quite obvious that one cannot 'only' explain the minimal role of workers in Indonesia's infant democratisation with reference to the massive repression under the New Order. Rather, one also has to add the weak popular politics of democratisation, including the lack of alliances with most of the politicised middle class democrats. Otherwise the breakdown of the New Order repression should have generated a massive rise of protests and organisation among workers, despite their weakened market bargaining power under the economic crisis. But that did not come about. In spite of great potential, workers and labour in general continued to play a comparatively minimal role in the pro-democratic work. So in addition to the historical factors and the sustained crisis, and the increasingly privatised violence of thugs and militias, one must add to this the weak popular politics of democratisation.

In my understanding the following are the major factors involved: first, the tendency to establish many new independent groups and organisations, since it is an uphill task to change the old ones; second, the divisive (formal and informal) strings attached to much needed resources, including from central organisations, NGOs, and foreign donors; third, the problematic way in which foreign partners try to promote 'unity' which sometimes causes more rifts; fourth, the localisation of politics and bossism which often cause further divisions among the unions; fifth, the predominance of pres-

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[71] Thus effectively refuting deterministic arguments (even in some PRD related circles) of the need for more advanced capitalism with more concentrated factories, for instance, before this kind of mass organising makes sense.

sure-politics, lobbying, and clientelism; sixth, the negligible importance for workers of parliamentary politics and elections; and seventh the lack of correspondence between the two separate progressive strategies of promoting grassroots initiatives or broad general-issue-alliances.[72]

In my judgement, the emergence of a broad labour movement with an independent but active political perspective depends on the positive interrelation between these two latter components. The first strategy is to try to uphold control and independence by building genuine, democratic, and viable unions on the local level, based on workers' concrete interests and the local, contextual opportunities and balances of forces. The second agenda (at least tentatively suggested by Dita Sari) is to identify the concrete but general (and potentially strategic) issues that may separate the genuine leaders and workers from the collaborators and blacklegs as well as unify workers on different levels and in most contexts. Tactical alliances may be built around the celebration of May 1 as well as to protest against oppressive structural adjustment policies and new labour laws. Such alliances may include unions as well as student action groups and NGOs. The idea is that they then become strategic and linked the local with the national, and the concrete union demands with wider political programs.

The major problem with the bottom-up strategy is that too few workers are consistently interested. It is such a herculean task for the principled and genuine worker-activists to compete successfully on the market (without giving up their integrity) with much less upright and much more resourceful unions on the local level. The latter mainstream unions, moreover, are often able to both strike a balance with government interest in rebuilding a viable labour regime and benefit from internationally sponsored projects to promote unity.

But the general-issue-alliance line is also troublesome. It is true, for instance, that workers are getting much more aware of the fact that their own concrete demands are dependent upon Indonesia's debts and the structural adjustment programmes. This therefore calls for political change. It is also true that there have been extensive forceful and so far fairly successful demonstrations against attempts to undermine the laws (without offering an acceptable alternative) governing employers' responsibilities when firing workers. The current regulation (Ministerial Decree no. 150/2000) stipulates substantial payouts to the workers. This, together with many other rules and regulations that workers either deem unfair or when fair, cannot see that they are upheld, continue to be a time bomb. Then again, this need to unite on certain general issues may primarily be related to central level negotiations and certain specific local manifestations but not affect the ways in which the local unions have to defend workers 'interests' on a daily basis in the workplace. Or to put it the other way around: so far it does not seem to be the basic and contextual local problems of defending the workers that call for this unity, but a few separate issues, albeit vital ones. In principle one may well argue (with Beckman 2000 and 2000a), that even industry should be interested in a more legitimate and efficient labour regime—which

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[72] For an extended analysis, see Törnquist (2001b)

would then include some of those regular basic issues—as it is more expensive to handle thousands of furious unorganised workers than to strike a deal with their unions and call upon the state to provide decent social security and unemployment schemes, for instance.[73] But the problem is that this calls for resources which, to my knowledge, nobody seems to be capable or willing to invest, including among foreign donors and/or investors. It is true that the IMF and the World Bank, for instance, were eager to involve organised labour in the attempts to promote a social pact in post-crisis South Korea. But that presumed that organised labour was already so strong that it could not be neglected, neither as an enemy nor as a partner.

8.10 The dynamics of the stumbling blocks

In Indonesia, as in the case of the Philippines, the results thus remain incomplete. Many of our propositions have been confirmed. Over the years, the struggle against authoritarianism tended to focus on political monopolisation as a basic element of primitive accumulation of capital as well as on general demands for democracy. Politicisation (and finally even a student revolt) was necessary to strengthen and turn the wider civil society in a pro-democratic direction. The then instant crafting of democracy has already proved deficient. Even in a country where conflicts between West oriented social democratic and communist theses have been most disastrous and remained paradigmatic well beyond the end of the cold war, our argument about possible new alliances within the Left seems to have been vindicated since the mid-90s.

   On the other hand, however, two major puzzles remain to be tackled. The democratic aims remained shallow. The breakthrough was only possible once globalised neo-liberals finally turned against their former strongman. And soon, of course, they were the ones dominating the agenda. Moreover, the mainstream argument that capitalist modernisation generates deep economic, social, and political fragmentation, was vindicated whilst the alternative thesis that this would necessitate democratic co-ordination among the opposition was proved wrong. Most serious, while many pro-democrats regarded human rights, and at times democratisation of civil society, as necessary means to enforce democratic principles and reach their instrumental ends, they never really bothered about shaping democratic institutional channels for people to be able to make use of elections and develop open and accountable government. Aside from advocacy, monitoring, and lobbing, they instead tried to bypass this by way of 'people power' and seminars on direct democracy, thus turning politically almost irrelevant as soon as reformist incumbents and moderate dissidents had brought the situation under control.

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[73] For example, the chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in Jakarta, James Castle of the Castle Groups, has given voice to the need to realise that "labor, management and government depend on each other", implicitly calling for a functioning social pact. *Jakarta Post 20/701.*

What were the dynamics of these key problems of democratisation? The difficulties are very reminiscent of the interim conclusions drawn from the Philippine experiences. So once again—though now in the special Indonesian context—we need to ask why it has been so difficult for pro-democrats to fight fragmentation and to transform extra-parliamentary action into institutionalised political alternatives for society as a whole.

Like in the Philippines—despite the very different context—none of the major propositions from section 5.6 (operationalised in section 6) seems to be validated. First, the young class-party builders of the PRD have definitely injected fresh and critical perspectives into the democracy movement. But they have focused on propaganda and attempts at mobilising people from the top down. There are no clear empirical indications that their propositions for how to advance would be more fruitful than most of the others within the democracy movement as a whole. The adherence to democratic centralism may further the efficiency of the core group but is hardly likely to leave the same effect on broad alliance work that is based on trust.

Secondly, neither of the typical pragmatic arguments among many Indonesian reformists has proved particularly successful. One is that the dissidents should gain as much influence as possible within the elite and avoid mingling with uneducated masses who are often attracted and misled by authoritarian doctrines and leaders; another is that leading democrats should make their way to the top by drawing on the 'traditional' clientelist and populist clout of leaders such as Wahid and Megawati. The moderate reformists working within the New Order system were effectively domesticated and isolated, with, at times, the partial exception of Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati. After Suharto, then, first Habibie's moderate reformists, attached to ICMI, and thereafter Wahid and his Democratic Forum friends, largely failed to reform the country and in the last case, even to govern it. At present most radical reformers behind Megawati have also lost out.

There is much to the grassroots thesis that conventional political dissidents focus on the elite-level at the expense of local, grounded work. There is even less indication than in the Philippines, however, that the grassroots prescriptions have been vindicated. Liberal promotion of civil societies and self-management, as well as more focused but still locally 'autonomous' interested based organising (such as among workers and farmers), continue to be plagued by fragmentation.

In Indonesia the political-market proposition (in terms of forming a generally progressive political vehicle that would stand a chance in elections) has so far only been attempted behind Megawati in early 1996 and in the post-Suharto building of the PAN-party. Both efforts, however, soon lost out to powerful traditional politicians with firm access to political machines and the capacity to draw on populist charisma and religious and other loyalties.

The most obvious case of the fifth extra-parliamentary militant network thesis, finally, is that of the Indonesian students who demonstrated their point by radicalising the discourse, opening up new agendas and overthrowing Suharto. But as we know from the previous analyses, no matter how brave and important their actions, they did not achieve this on their own. There were vital structural and other precondi-

tions, including the political and economic crisis and the work for many years of so many other sections of the democracy movement. What is more, the activists fundamentally unable to broaden and sustain their work and efforts, particularly when facing issues of representation (including elections) and demand for alternative policies and governance.

Just as in the very different context of the Philippines, therefore, we have to go beyond the common explanations and prescriptions by asking why they do not make sense. *Are there any unifying factors (in terms of position in the political terrain and politicisation; see sections 4.4 and 4.5 above) that could help us discuss what is wrong with the different theses?*

Despite the many sharp differences between the Philippines and Indonesia, for instance in terms of socio-economic structure and political opportunities, the pattern seem to be quite similar: the predominance of single issues and specific interests, on the one hand, and the insufficient co-ordination between actions in the civil-, civil-political, and explicitly political society, as well as between central and local levels, on the other.

Single issues and specific interests: Aside from the class-party builders who stress ideology and collective interests—but have rarely been strong enough to practice this consistently beyond the level of propaganda—the pragmatists who have worked, for instance, as specialists under Wahid and Megawati, have not just (as in the Philippines) been subordinated to the agenda of their masters, as in the Philippines. In Indonesia most of the pragmatists have also tried to benefit from identity based loyalties behind such leaders—but suffered from the shallow general ideas involved and the host of specific groups and interests under their surface.

The problematic pattern with regard to proponents of the grassroots thesis is even more pronounced in Indonesia than in the Philippines. Collective and interest based organisation was prohibited for more than three decades. NGOs have had few chances to relate to (or promote) anything but fragmented groups and specific interests, or rather innocent civic issues. Pro-democratic campaigners in favour of human and social rights, sustainable environment, freedom of the press and so on have tried to form civil-political alliances in relation to certain 'hot-cases', and later on also within their realm of specialisation. But the focus on certain and separate key-issues and interests remain the same.

The advocates of the political market thesis in Indonesia tried to pave the way for aggregation of issues and interests by boosting processes that might generate broad and comparatively progressive political parties. But the support (in 1996) for Megawati and the building of a politically broad-based electoral watch organisation were short even of unifying ideas on democratisation. And the more recent (1999) PAN platform was mainly established to attract middle class voters behind good solutions to a series of separate issues, while the major glue and ability to mobilise support still rested with modernist Muslim values and loyalties.

The most extreme form of concentration of single issues and specific interests, finally, is among the extra parliamentary militant networks that were even more important in Indonesia than in the Philippines. The students were very important but

'only' did away with Suharto. Suharto, corruption, human rights and a few others issues had become the major focus of so many different groups, old and new. A series of additional issues and interests were of course related to them, but class-based labour and peasant farmer issues, for instance, were set aside. Students in terms of a moral force (or the lonely cowboy coming to town and cleaning up),[74] were at the forefront. And few knew how everything fitted together, if it did at all. Nobody was able (or willing) to try to work out priorities or elements of a program. Those who tried split immediately. Hence, there was no focus on an alternative project in terms of government, governance and development of the society as a whole at different levels—only on promoting or resisting this or that. So when elections appeared at the top of the agenda, the militant networks were immediately marginalised.

Civil vs. political society; central vs. local level: The Indonesian adherents of the class-party proposition have continuously focused on the central level and political society. Their weak local basis is of course much due to decades of repression, but aside from the separate trade union work, and some attempts among peasant farmers, priority has been given to top down propaganda approaches and attempts at broadening campus-based student activism. Also, there has been more belittling of grassroots civil society work than attempts at finding ways of relating and linking it up to efforts at the level of political society. Like in the Philippines, this is related to the previously identified tendency to promote democracy by bypassing much of the ground-work (in terms of enhancing people's democratic capacity as well as the various means to promote democratic principles) in favour of one single and top-driven institutional channel, the party and its associated organisations. In the most extreme case of Indonesia, this in turn has generated interests in shortcuts by rallying behind popular leaders, such as Megawati in 1996.

The Indonesian pragmatists that have tried to influence the mainstream elite have been even more isolated than in the Philippines and have been even more unable to mobilise popular support than the class-party activists in their own country, especially on the local level. Some have made up for this by relating to politicians with an ability to mobilise mass following through populism and clientelism. Certain attempts have also been made to establish more independent forms of alternative patronage through foreign funded central NGOs. Yet the problems have persisted and become even more serious with the localisation of political power. Many of the populist and clientelist ways of incorporating people into politics have been based on, on the one hand, religious and ethnic loyalties and, on the other hand, rough political methods. The result, of course, is even more divisiveness, dangerous conflicts between various communities, patrons, bosses, thugs and followers—and an even weaker democracy movement.

Also, as in the Philippines but more dominant and serious in Indonesia, the supporters of the grassroots proposition have to a great extent been confined to the local level and to civil society work. It is true that many activists have refrained

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[74] To use the allegory of one of the founding fathers (from the mid-60s) of the contemporary Indonesian moral-force-student-movement, Arief Budiman.

from entering or linking up with political work in order to be able to focus on the strengthening of civil society or the building of a trade union or a peasant farmer organisation without being abused by politicians of all kinds, left or right. But also, as in the Philippines this simultaneously indicates an incapability of the grassroots activists themselves to offer an alternative way of relating the local to the central as well as civil to political efforts. Hence, they have either remained in the margins, or have had to relate to rather top-driven central NGOs and pressure groups. In the latter case there are examples of civil-political societies that link and include actions at both the political and civil levels. But these have often been top-driven with limited internal democracy, leading personalities (including 'friendly pragmatics' within political society) are weakly anchored among popular organisation on the ground, and confined to specific issues such as human rights, sustainable development, or sectoral but highly factionalised attempts at building trade union federations. In terms of politics of democratisation, this has further exposed the previously revealed fundamental weakness of the grassroot thesis—its neglect of institutional channels.

The Indonesian proponents of the need to apply the political market thesis have been both weak and unsuccessful. The efforts to generate a positive dynamic in the support for Megawati against Suharto—including through the forming of the KIPP electoral watch movement—mainly remained a top-down project with few efficient links to the local level and between political and civil society. The post-Suharto middle class and issue based PAN party remained dependent on certain Muslim communal loyalties. Political activists within various NGOs (such as Walhi) abstained from forming new parties (which they had too poor a popular following to build anyway) and bet instead on electoral reform. The aim was to dethrone the existing parties by introducing single member constituencies and direct presidential elections (which, unfortunately, would be likely to produce local political bossism instead) and thus pave the way for lobbying and pressure politics.

Finally we come to the extra-parliamentary militant networks. These have been particularly important in Indonesia. The pattern is very clear. Firstly they are centralised in cities and on campuses and focused on individuals. Secondly, their networking activities are not disciplined and they lack democratic coordination. The basic requirement of democracy, in terms of clear demarcation of the demos (or the members), who both have the right to decide and the obligation to adhere to collectively binding decisions, is negated. Thirdly, total priority is given to political societies and there is no firm co-operation with civil society organisations beyond the need for logistical support. The general consequences in terms of efforts to promote substantial democratisation are obvious: lack of sustainability; vulnerability to elitist shortcuts, manipulation, and infiltration; total neglect of the need to build institutional channels and to address issues of alternative open and accountable governance.

Chapter 9.   Pioneering Attempts to Renew the Kerala Model[75]

9.1   Politicised class-based engineering of democratic development

Kerala is not just uncommonly beautiful, it has won international reputation for having accomplished, in addition to stable democracy, comparatively high levels of health, education, and social welfare despite a gross national product per capita lower than the Indian average. According to the old deterministic thesis, Kerala's achievements in the face of low economic growth should be almost impossible.

But what of the more idealist contemporary arguments about the crafting of 'good' development by way of essential rights and institutions in state and society? Is it not true that the key to the puzzle is that Kerala has one of the Third World's strongest civil societies? Partly it is. Public debate is lively, the free media are numerous, and the majority of citizens are both literate and voluntarily organised in a multitude of organisations. Among the latter we find a wide range: socio-religious associations, educational bodies, development organisations, environmental groups, women's organisations. And this is nothing new. This strong civil society has its roots in popularly based demands since the latter half of the nineteenth century in the two British-dominated principalities of Travancore and Cochin, in the south of what today is Kerala. The demands in question were for greater equality in religious and social life, for the right of all to seek public employment, for fairer economic legislation, and for state support for the improvement of health care and education. A sort of embryo, in other words, of a bourgeois revolution. A bourgeois revolution which was, however, inhibited by colonialism. Later on there appeared so many other citizen associations as well, such as co-operatives and a library movement—in addition to political parties and trade unions.

On closer inspection, however, it is also clear that Kerala's achievements vary over time—and that (given the economic constraints) they vary less with the strength of civil society and (roughly estimated) social capital, than with supportive and executive popular and government politics in favour of structural change to enhance the democratic potential of ordinary people to make use of (and improve) favourable democratic means, principles and instrumental aims.

In a comparative Indian perspective, to begin with, Amartya Sen and Jean Drèze

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[75] For background analyses, see Törnquist (1989, 1990, and 1991). For more extensive reports from the current case studies over time, see first Törnquist (with Tharakan) (1995), which is a full report up until about 1994, and then partial reports on additional field studies in (1996a), (2000b), and (2002a). (I'm particularly indebted to long time co-operation with P.K. Michael Tharakan and operational support from, among others, M.P. Philip, N. Rajmohan, and Alwin Jayakumar.)

have concluded that "determined public action" both with and for state backing explains the positive human development in Kerala as compared with the less impressive West Bengal indices and miserable (but economically partly dynamic) Uttar Pradesh. Liberation of economic initiatives, they argue, must therefore be accompanied by more, not less, government intervention in favour of public action (Drèze and Sen 1996).

Secondly, the great advances stemmed from activities in the 1920s and onwards. This was when broad, radical, and politicised popular movements extended and broadened previous caste and communal societal movements. There thus emerged socially embedded, but also class based movements, among peasant farmers, agricultural and other labourers, as well as civil servants and many others. While civil society was strongest in the south of what today is Kerala (in the comparatively autonomous and enlightened principalities), the strongest class-based organisations emerged in the more feudal north—in Malabar, which was governed by the British via Madras. Simultaneously, equally class- and ideology rooted parties (as opposed to the more normal patron-client based Congress party) also developed; and later on a series of progressive state governments ruled on top of a comparatively well functioning public administration. In fact (and of course quite against the mainstream theses), the first elected Kerala State government was led by moderate communists.

Two years later, this government was undemocratically ousted by a reputedly more liberal-democratic Congress Party and its Western supporters. The Left-led governments have never managed to stay in power for long periods. (Anti-incumbency sentiments have often been decisive in elections usually won with very narrow margins by either The Left- or the Congress- led Fronts.) But while there have been more democratic advances under the Left-centre coalitions, the popular movements have also kept up pressure when Congress has been in office, thus often preventing outright bourgeois policies.

This way, radical leftists and social movements finally enforced India's most consistent anti-feudal and bourgeois land reform. Of course, there were serious limitations to the reform. It is true that the idea of a rice levy on the largest owners (to be redistributed through fair price shops) did not prove effective. Nor did the ceiling of the size of land-holdings generate much surplus land to be redistributed to the landless, and the tribal people and the fishermen were largely set aside. But the basic concept of doing away with landlordism was fairly consistently implemented. Tenancy was abolished in land. Landlords were compensated and tenants became new owners. This did not help labourers, but tenancy in house-compound land was also eradicated, and unions and radical party factions successfully pressed through an agricultural worker's act, including regulations of employment conditions and social security arrangements. Moreover, similar advances were also made through very extensive (and innovative) unionising of other labourers—including in the so-called informal sector—private professionals, and civil servants.

Thirdly, this strong, propulsive leftist movement is actually rooted in the former British Malabar in the North—with initially much less civil society than in the subordinated princely states of Cochin and Travancore in the South. Thanks to

popular pressure and state intervention, these socialists and communists have not just managed to implement the land reform in the state as a whole, but also to create more civil communities in the previously quite feudal North than in the South where, despite 'modernisation', caste identities still play a more important role.

Hence, the case of Kerala now enables us to discuss critically the validity of Robert Putnam's claims about the importance of civil society and social capital. In Putnam's case of Italy it is difficult to test the competing hypothesis that radical politics, rather than path dependent social capital, explains both citizen co-operation and good democratic government, because leftists never even come to power in southern Italy. (This would have made it possible to study their performance in an area with less civil society and social capital) (Levi 1993). However, this situation has now occurred in Kerala, and the competing hypothesis is confirmed. (The case of West Bengal is another example.)[76] What is more, generally speaking, even the new and internationally unique campaign for democratic decentralisation and popular planning from below, which we shall return to, seems to have been more successful in rural than in urban areas. The campaign also had more success in the old feudal, but now Left dominated north, down to the central Trichur district, than among the old civil societies of the South.

9.2   The old model undermined

However, by the 1980s, these earlier achievements, often unaccompanied by economic growth, had clearly also contributed to the emergence of new problems. To begin with, social and economic benefits had seldom been tied to economic growth (in the form, for example, of alliances between trade unions and modernisation-oriented entrepreneurs). The economy still bore a colonial stamp. The production of raw materials for export predominated, but was less profitable than it had been; agriculture of the 'usual' kind was stagnating and industry remained small and weak. The only branch of the economy that was growing was the commercial and service sector, which of course implied large scale import of consumer goods. In addition, demands from below for measures from above had helped to produce unwieldy, expensive, centralised and badly co-ordinated state organs. The bosses and employees of these organs, moreover, had developed their own special interests. Meanwhile the old fragmentation of civil society (with tight boundaries between different arenas and associations) had left its stamp on the parties and on political life in general, as well

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[76] Similarly, the communists in West Bengal do not only have their main base in rural areas with deep feudal roots, but have also, since the mid-70s, managed to generate India's most impressive democratic decentralisation, and a good deal of community co-operation and development too (despite using some alternative patronage and many top-down policies compared to Kerala). This is a bit more than one can say of the eastern part of Bengal, Bangladesh, with, in the late-seventies, similar landlordism and ideas about democratic decentralisation, but later a myriad of voluntary associations (promoted by all kinds of foreign agencies in favour of civil society and social capital) rather than forceful democratic communists (cf Thörlind (2000)).

as on a range of trade unions and co-operatives.

In this way, then, Kerala had developed a system of politically organised special interests. This system had provided subventions to various groups, but it had also undermined common efforts at economic development. In brief, the successful work of distributing the pie to as many people as possible had been done in such a way, and with such specific interests in the foreground, that it had contributed to the difficulties of making the pie grow at the same time.

Since the mid-1970s at least, much of production had tended to stagnate, both in industry and in agriculture, despite the land reform. This problem was primarily related to its consistent bourgeois character. A positive outcome of this was many more independent citizens than in West Bengal. A negative outcome was economically fairly uncooperative individuals and families. Hence, while intensive political organisation and state intervention survived, this 'old' organisation and politicisation were increasingly affected by privatised and atomised economic activities and interests—soon extending beyond farming into commerce, real estate, etc. So, even though many talked of 'over-politicisation', this was only true in the sense that atomised economic actors often made selfish and non-productive use of state and conventional politics. The problem was instead privatisation and atomisation that caused lack of co-operation among the producers and the citizens at various levels. Coping with such problems, as we shall see in a moment, actually required a good deal of political facilitation.

Unemployment statistics, furthermore, had risen catastrophically, and were usually estimated at a fifth of the labour force. Moreover, the state authorities were receiving too little in the way of taxes to meet the costs of the far-reaching welfare system, which was accordingly in disrepair. This problem was exacerbated by the fact that the state authorities were (and are) subordinate to New Delhi in tax questions. In addition, Kerala only benefited to a limited extent from all the monies repatriated by migrant workers who hailed from the state. Finally, the state's ability to protect and reform exposed sectors had diminished on account of the more liberal economic policy, at that time quite recently introduced by India.

Were one inclined to put the point harshly, one could say that while public consumption had been reduced—including the ability to make strategic productive investments and to improve quality within the public sector—the comparatively high level of private consumption (including the growing private sector in health care and education) was being maintained by the labours of young Keralites who toiled under miserable conditions in the Gulf states and elsewhere in India, and who sent home a portion of what they earned. (Young Keralites, that is, whose parents struggled for decent conditions in Kerala.)[77] But just as former tenants had turned petty bourgeois and seldom worked together with others to produce more on the lands they obtained through the land reform, the incomes earned by migrants were individual in nature, and often spent unproductively. Cynicism, furthermore, was spreading, as evidenced

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[77] These monies are often reckoned to account for between ten and thirty percent of Kerala's gross yearly product.

by widespread comments to the effect that "The economy is deteriorating and there's nothing one can do about it—because the market decides, and politicians serve their own interests. So let him save himself who can."

In the mid-80s, therefore, my own conclusion was that the old mainstream Left had stagnated and seemed caught in a dead end. The old land reform policies did not make sense any more. New and complicated relations of exploitation and subordination had developed. Top down solutions were undermined by compartmentalisation, factionalism, vested interests, locked political conflicts and, of course, lack of sufficient revenues. Old organisations and leaders became defensive and were lacking visions and alternatives. New and partly rival groups and movements emerged, from the left and the right and various identify-based organisations. All the factors that had previously forced narrow (religious and caste) communalism into retreat were now losing ground—socio-religious reform efforts, public welfare measures, fairly clear-cut class conflicts, and class based political organisations.

9.3   Renewal from the Left

To my utter surprise, then, the left-centre front in 1987 again succeeded in winning an election and forming a government, after many years in opposition. This was mainly a result, most probably, of widespread dissatisfaction with rule by the right-centre front under the leadership of the Congress Party. Left had not been able to renew itself and the reform-oriented groups within it were in a clear minority. Yet, there were some attempts that may have played a positive role. These were about going beyond the old policies and to address new major issues such as unemployment and the need for further democratisation (rather than privatisation) to curb increasing corruption. Even more importantly: after the elections had been won, and after lengthy discussions, the reform oriented groups were able to initiate a series of innovative campaigns. In these they were supported not so much by the dominant party, CPI-M, as by some parts of the Left Front government, as well as by a series of volunteer organisations, with the KSSP, the *Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishat* (KSSP), the 'People's Science Movement', as the leading force.

Here was thus an exciting and important opportunity to observe and analyse over time whether there was some substance to the alternative propositions about the dynamic, pro-democratic and more unified Left (outlined in Part I) in an already liberal-democratic and post-land reform context.[78]

9.4   Impressive campaigns, insufficient base

The most important driving force in the pro-reform work was (and is), thus, the KSSP, winner of the 1996 alternative Nobel Prize. The KSSP began as a rather narrow educational organisation aimed at spreading rational thinking and scientific methods to 'the people'. In the 1970s, however, the association was broadened and

changed. Tens of thousands of activists opposed first the New Delhi emergency rule and then, in the name of environmentalism and alternative development, a large power plant in Silent Valley in northern Kerala. The work was carried on by students, youth, retired administrators and scientific experts. By the mid-80s the KSSP was not just a typical progressive and urban-based middle-class organisation, it also built on the unusually strong educational ideals of the peasant farmer and labour movements in Kerala. During the struggle for national liberation, for instance, three movements were formed everywhere: the political movement, the trade-union movement and the library movement. Moreover, Kerala still contains no really large cities in which modern social life is concentrated. In the lowland countryside, as well as a good way up into the mountains, semi-urbanised areas lie close up against one another, complete with both middle-class groups and organic intellectuals. So the social basis and actual presence of the KSSP was widespread—with clear and strong rural dimensions.

Like many other development-oriented volunteer organisations (NGOs) in India and elsewhere, the KSSP worked along two parallel tracks: firstly to scrutinise public development policies and sketch out alternatives—e.g., within health care and education; secondly to carry out pilot projects to show how people themselves could change their situation—e.g., by installing cheap stoves which reduce indoor smoke and require less fuel. Like other radical NGOs, finally, the KSSP took the view that an alternative path of development presupposes far-reaching social and economic change. In contrast to most like-minded groups in India, however, the KSSP did not turn against the previous generation of progressive political and trade union organisations. Instead, the KSSP reasoned, alternative development work and traditional political commitment both can and should enrich each other.

Many KSSP members were accordingly active in political parties which typically, though not always, formed part of Kerala's left-centre front. *This front was (and is) dominated by the largest communist party, the CPI-M, which is considered reformist and by all practical means social-democratic, apart from the fact that it still upholds the principle of democratic centralism.* At the same time, however, it is often the case that other parties within the front—including breakaways from

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[78] The analysis which follows takes up two different matters: to begin with, the first generation of campaigns, which took place under the government of the left-centre front between 1987–1991; and subsequently, the impressive attempts beginning around 1994 to undertake renewed efforts. The first period is covered in my research with P.K. Michael Tharakan (Törnquist 1995). The study of the second period is not yet concluded. Here I must rely on my (not yet fully analysed) interviews (including with the People's Planning campaigners and their local partners), on running press coverage (mainly the Hindu and Frontline), on certain key documents, reports to and deliberations at conferences on the Kerala experiences, and preliminary observations (including from an intensive round of discussions in verious panchayats in early 1999)—some of which have been reported upon in (1996a), (2000b), and (2002a); (cf footnote 66 above).—as well as observations by colleagues; see, e.g., Isaac and Tharakan (1995), Isaac and Harilal (1997), Franke and Chasin (1997), Bandyopadhyay (1997), Chekkutty (1997), Isaac (1998), BCAS (1998), Parayil (2000), Issac with Franke (2000), Social Scientist (2001–2).

the Congress Party—wield an influence out of proportion to their numbers. Their voters, after all, are strategically important in the hard fight to win majority elections in single-member districts.

Within the CPI-M, the ideas of the KSSP enjoyed the least support among those who called for a revitalised policy of centralised and state-led modernisation; this group included many trade unionists connected with industry and parts of the public sector. Others, however, were more favourably disposed, if for no other reason than that certain party leaders bore a grudge against the 'trade-union fraction'. This did not mean, however, that those two faction-like sides of the party each took a distinct view of development policy. In and around the party there were many patterns of conflict, which coincided with each other only in part.[79] On the specific question of development, I have distinguished instead between 'state-modernises' and 'popular-developmentalists'. These tendencies are found in many different groups—both within and outside the CPI-M.

Hence it was the popular developmentalists, the PD's, who after the Left Front victory in the elections, were able to put forward elements, at least, of an attempt to renew the increasingly defunct Kerala Model. The basis of their efforts was three campaigns and efforts at decentralisation.

The first campaign consisted of a massive literacy drive. It may seem strange that the primary efforts of the most literate state in India were focused on eliciting the engagement of the comparatively small proportion of the population (ca. 20%) who could not read or write. Firstly, however, human (rather than just economic) development requires that all be able to take part; secondly, it was politically important to try to emancipate many poor groups which had hitherto relied chiefly on religious patronage; and thirdly, a massive literacy drive, coupled with various follow-up activities, was an excellent way to mobilise the efforts of all those who had previously been attracted by the KSSP's educational efforts.

The pilot campaign was carried out in the district of Ernakulam (including the small but internationally better known city of Cochin). Enthusiasm was at a high level. Unlike most Indian NGOs, the KSSP did not focus its efforts (any longer) on a project of its own, but rather a broad collaboration among a large number of volunteer organisations and interested parts of the central and local administration. In this case, both the literacy commission in New Delhi and the district administration under the leadership of a previous chair of the KSSP was engaged. A great many activists and volunteers were mobilised. At first, 50,000 volunteers carried out an investigation of all 600,000 households in the district, whereupon 18,000 largely volunteer instructors made contact with those people who could not read or write. The initial results were impressive. Already after a single year's work, Prime Minister V.P. Singh could in February 1990 proclaim Ernakulam to be the one completely literate district in India. The KSSP garnered appreciable international recognition

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[79] Rammohan's (1998) attempt to analyse conflicts within the CPI-M by using my results (among other materials)—but without taking the several different conflict patterns into account—is therefore partially misleading.

(which by rights ought to have extended in part to the local administration as well). The popular-developmentalist forces in Kerala got wind in their sails. The campaign in Ernakulam was used as a model for a larger campaign in the state as a whole. It was applauded by the literacy agencies in New Delhi, and it inspired a multitude of groups in India as a whole.

But there were also significant problems. The air soon went out of the campaign. For one thing, the organisations had not prepared—though they knew better—any proper program for following up the campaign. For another, political parties and groups did not show themselves to be especially interested in engaging a large number of new sympathisers from the very poorest groups. Finally, it proved even harder than anticipated to get co-operation between campaign-oriented volunteers and permanent public administrators to function well.

The second campaign sought to promote co-operation within agriculture— through 'group farming'. Despite India's most consistent land reform, production had not notably increased. A particular worry was the production of rice. The large number of small landowners seldom joined in collaborative efforts. Sometimes, in fact, they worked at cross purposes with each other, as seen in the transition from rice cultivation to coconut production, which made the irrigation of the remaining rice fields more difficult. In addition, centrally directed agencies that controlled vital components within agriculture also found it difficult to co-operate at the local level: some, for example, were responsible for irrigation pumps; others for the electricity required to run them. Furthermore, conflicts arose between small landowners and agricultural labourers. And finally, the countryside too was being affected in ever greater measure by the incomes of mobile migrant workers. In many cases, landowners and their families preferred to concentrate less on agriculture than on other activities which were more profitable in the short term, including land speculation on the outskirts of the many towns and urban areas. For a substantial portion of the rural population—including supporters of the left parties—property and speculation seemed to have become more important than work and production.

Earlier attempts at collective solutions had failed miserably, and the left in Kerala could not follow the example of their comrades in West Bengal. In West Bengal, the formation of separate organisations for agricultural labourers had been prevented; in Kerala, such organisations already existed. In West Bengal, tenants and small farmers had not been furnished with more land, but rather with political protection; in Kerala, by contrast, the land had already been redistributed. In West Bengal, the policy had been tied to the decentralisation of administration and development efforts on the one hand, and continued central political control on the other; in Kerala, the odd combination of Indira Gandhi's Congress Party and the rather small pro-Moscow Communist Party of India (CPI) that were in power when the land reform was implemented never dared to undertake decentralisation. (They would in that case have lost power to that section of the left led by the CPI-M, which was much stronger on the local level.) All of the factions then turned their efforts to conquering and keeping the power that had been concentrated in the central organs of the state government.

Yet something still had to be done in Kerala. The strategy that emerged was to promote volunteer co-operation among cultivators—or 'group farming'. First, an uncommonly dynamic minister of agriculture saw to it that the operations of his ministry were delegated to its local units, and that much of the support it disbursed went to the co-operating farmers. Second, certain experts sought, together with local interest and volunteer organisations, to mobilise popular support and participation.

The campaign won broad support, including within the left-centre front and the government. It also produced results in the form of higher rice production and reduced tensions between landowners and agricultural labourers. Soon, however, a series of new problems came to the fore. The active collaboration of the agriculture ministry was important, but its delegation of tasks to local units of the ministry itself also conserved the old top-down approach, and it did not provide a good way to solve the lack of co-operation between different centrally directed agencies at the local level. The rise in production, moreover, was at least as much due to subsidies and a heavier use of pesticides than to co-operation among farmers. Landowners often seemed more interested in obtaining external support than in co-operating with one another. And just as in the case of the literacy campaign, political parties and groups were not very interested in truly committing themselves to development work and in this way trying to win new sympathisers.

A third campaign—'*resource mapping*'—was launched in order to remedy the problems arising in connection with the lack of follow-up in the literacy campaign, as well as in connection with the inadequate grassroots work in support of co-operative cultivation. Anyone who has visited the central office of a local government in Scandinavia, for instance, knows that all development work carried out there is based on a far-reaching mapping of local resources and the manner in which these are used. This is lacking, wholly or in part, in India and in Kerala. The deficiency in question could quickly be remedied, certainly, with the help of modern methods of measurement, including the use of satellites. But the purpose of the campaign in Kerala was not just to create maps; it was also to ensure that people would be able to use them! The mapping of resources, it was hoped, would promote local conscious-ness of existing resources, and discussion about how these could be put to better use. Some able and committed geographers, accordingly, sketched out a program whereby they themselves would attend to the advanced aspects of the mapping, while volunteer groups would gather a large portion of the information. Afterwards, then, the whole lot of them would be able to discuss different development initiatives together with local politicians, experts and interested parties.

The resource-mapping program got under way too late, however, to benefit from the enthusiasm which had been built up during the literacy drive. Aside from the activists of the KSSP, it was for the most part devoted youth who took part. Once again, neither local administrators nor political groups showed any great interest.

Fourthly, decentralisation: It now became clear, moreover, that successful local alternative development required that local governments (*panchayats*) possess some resources, and a measure of decision-making power as well. The lack of any signifi-cant measure of local self-rule proved, in fact, to be a fundamental obstacle to *all*

of the new popular initiatives. The problem, however, was that decentralisation in its turn required that parties and politicians make the 'right' political decision. With a few exceptions—like the late communist patriarch E.M.S. Namboodiripad—there was no great interest in such circles for measures of this kind. It was only the rhetoric that interested them. Much too late, and with too many inconsistencies, some decentralisation to the districts was announced just a few months before the 1991 state elections.

Furthermore, activists who had engaged in alternative work outside the formal political system were without direct opportunities of their own for affecting the political process. Nor was it the simplest thing in the world to mobilise broad popular support for radical political and administrative changes. Results could not be expected except over the long run. As mentioned earlier, moreover, decentralisation was not coupled—as it had been in West Bengal—with the implementation of land reform. Without massive development efforts, therefore, broad material interests in favour of decentralisation and alternative projects were lacking. It had been very different in the case of earlier reforms, such as the redistribution of land, when the advantages for the individual were plain for all to see.

Accordingly, no far-reaching social movement—one able to live on irrespective of which parties formed the government—emerged in favour of democratic decentralisation 'only'. The campaigns stood and fell, rather, with the commitment of devoted activists (associated first and foremost with the KSSP) and certain favourably disposed politicians and administrators. When, consequently, the left-centre government lost the state elections in 1991 (which were held in connection with the national elections, in which many citizens expressed their sympathy for the murdered Rajiv Gandhi by voting for his party), it was not merely the case that the government had to stand down. The campaigns in large measure collapsed as well.

In conclusion, the campaigns verified our thesis, that there would be major conflicts over fragmented monopolisation (often by extra-economic means) of not just land but also other resources (as part of primitive accumulation of capital). Further, the campaigns themselves were an attempt to fight this—as well as the associated complicated forms of exploitation, extraction of informal rents, subordination and fragmentation—by means of collective democratic organisation. The literacy campaign aimed to mobilise and increase the democratic capacity of vital groups of marginalised people. 'Group farming' aimed to fight speculation, increase production, and increase returns for both small farmers and agricultural labourers through joint operations and buying and selling. Resource mapping aimed to promote democratic control and sustainable development of local resources as against monopolisation, speculation, and environmental destruction. Decentralisation, finally, aimed to make it all more feasible. Further, the campaigns themselves were very democratically designed. They were based on, and their success rested with, increased democratisation of various forms of co-operation and organisation in civil society—as well as of peoples' capacity to participate and make use of this, including in relation to state and politics.

On the other hand, however, ordinary people rarely came out in collective clear

support of this. No new social movement equal to the old ones emerged during the struggle for land reform. Rather, the mainstream theses proved right in predicting decreasing collective interests and action in favour of fragmentation and other identities. Further, less attention was paid to institutionalised civil and political rights—not because any one saw them as unimportant, but because emphasis was given to the generation of popular capacity and pressure to make use of and enforce them. Initially there was even less interest in working through and promoting democratic institutional channels. Most reformist activists looked upon themselves as 'facilitators' and only turned to politics separately. Simultaneously, however, there was a tendency to co-operate more with the state authorities and to promote democratic local governments to generalise and institutionalise alternative efforts beyond NGO pilot projects. Hence, many activists stressed the need for democratic decentralisation, and in the end they became worried and frustrated by the lack of interest among politicians to implement it. No doubt, politics thus proved essential. On the one hand it paved the way for the campaigns and for democratising public action. The 1987 electoral victory, for one, was an opening. On the other hand the results also indicate that the problems of extending and sustaining many of the remarkable popular campaigns from the mid-80s till early-90s were partly due to insufficient politics of the movements themselves which meant that they were unable to enforce democratic decentralisation (and not, as some would have it, because of too much respect within the essentially civil society oriented KSSP for the established Left). [80]

9.5   Rethinking and counter-offensive

Many committed activists refused, however, to give up. Instead they licked their wounds, assessed their experiences, and sought out new paths. While earlier experiences indicated that a true decentralisation of resources and decision-making to district- and local governments should be a key to success, they also showed that established politicians were unlikely to carry out such measures on their own. Now, therefore, activists themselves had to find a forceful way to exert pressure for their cause.

   Paradoxically, their efforts were now facilitated by the fact that the central government in New Delhi also sought a certain decentralisation, albeit for wholly different reasons (in order, that is, to promote its new liberal economic policies, and to reach out directly to districts and local governments in states where it did not control the state government). In any case, activists in Kerala were thereby able to mobilise broad support (including among some leading moderate academics and other personalities) for criticism of the conservative state government, which had scrapped whatever efforts had been made by the former (Left Front) government and then not even

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[80] KSSP was often accused of abstaining from the otherwise 'normal' NGO-pattern that involves neglecting the importance of radical politics and established leftist organisations. See e.g. Zachariah and Sooryamoorthy (1994)

carried out the kind of decentralisation championed in New Delhi. Politicians from the left-centre opposition were not, of course, late to join in. On the contrary, activists enticed them into making one binding promise after another about how much better they would implement decentralisation if only they were returned to power.

At the same time, of course, the new conservative state government obstructed the literacy, group farming and resource mapping campaigns. It was a tough time, and many sympathisers fell by the wayside. Yet many others struggled on as best they could. This was particularly true where resource mapping was concerned. A series of pilot projects were continued. Important experiences were gained, both in regard to resource-mapping and to the various ways that local development programs could be initiated on the basis of these mapping exercises.

In 1994 the activists succeeded, moreover, in staging a counter-offensive—by mobilising and demonstrating all the knowledge, competence and drive to be found among the large number of both schooled and organic intellectuals in Kerala who were seeking alternative but undogmatic roads to development. A gigantic "Kerala Studies Conference" was organised, with a good 1,500 participants and about 500 papers.[81] Of course, the movement was not able to follow up this conference with as many regional seminars as had been planned. And, certainly, concrete local development programs were still conspicuous by their absence when the left-centre front formulated its strategy for the local elections of 1995, and the state elections of 1996. But discontent with conservative rule was massive. The left-centre front made gains at all levels and formed the new state government.

9.6   Bold new initiatives on more solid ground

After this electoral victory, moreover, the reformers had a much better starting point. The politicians had pledged to institute decentralisation, and the activists themselves had amassed a great deal of theoretical and practical knowledge about how alternative development could be furthered from below. Accordingly, before the forces of hesitancy were able to put obstacles in the way, leading reformists within and related to the left-centre front were able to present complete and comprehensive plans—which they did rapidly and with great tactical skill—for what could and should be done under the aegis of the Kerala State Planning Board with Prof. I.S. Gulati as vice chairman. Moreover, the new efforts were not just led by knowledgeable scholars cum dynamic and politicised social activists in the KSSP, some of which were also remarkably dynamic political leaders such as Dr. T.M. Thomas Isaac.

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[81] Indeed, the very skilful manner in which the proceedings in Kerala were carried out—on the basis of local resources and the volunteer efforts of academics, political activists and trade unionists—prompted the small group of international participants to ponder, in mute admiration, their own difficulties in getting even small workshops to function properly. The abstracts of all the papers are gathered in four volumes published by the organisers. For a fruitful attempt at a summary, see Isaac and Tharakan (1995).

Moreover, they also got full support by undisputed scholar, social reformer, national-
ist hero, and communist patriarch E.M.S Namboodiripad who neutralised indiffer-
ence and (at least initially) resistance with both the Left Front and its Congress
opponents. Hence the road was now open for renewed efforts at alternative develop-
ment on the local level (aside from where industrial and fiscal questions on the state
level were concerned).

   Creating central support for democratic development from below: What were
the major ideas behind the new efforts? To begin, the reformists emphasised, the
district- and especially the local governments themselves (*panchayats*) were only
able to decide over details, and were without any resources of their own to speak
of. Indeed, this had been the case ever since the founding of the state. Changing the
distribution of the running activities and expenditures of the state would take time;
still, a start could be made with the investment budget. And following the victory of
the left-centre front in 1996, in fact, the reformists succeeded in pushing through a
decision that the district- and the local governments themselves would through the
State Planning Board receive as much as between 35% and 40% of the investment
budget (as compared to the previous negligible amounts).

   Furthermore, the reformists claimed, almost all planning to that point had been done
from above. Alongside the 'district collectors', different departments and agencies
had each been responsible for their own little sub-units, even on the lowest levels.
Activities had neither been co-ordinated nor formulated on the basis of local needs
and opportunities. Now, the reformists said, it was time to turn this arrangement
upside down. Goals and operations must be formulated and co-ordinated locally.
A certain degree of central and regional co-ordination was necessary, they granted,
but this should be accomplished through the State Planning Board, and in broadest
possible co-operation with all interested parties. Thus, it was hoped, the new effort
would be less party-dominated and party-politicised than the previously most suc-
cessful decentralisation program in India had been—that undertaken in West Bengal.

   A critical argument among reformists, moreover, was that most of the popular move-
ments—the political and trade-union movements especially—had hitherto mainly
demanded state and local measures, and furthermore had done their utmost to ensure
that such measures would favour their own members and sympathisers. This, the
reformists claimed, had helped create such conflicts between different political groups
and special interests, and such expectations that the state and patrons with access
to it would take care of everything, that the participation of citizens themselves had
been set aside, and development efforts to the benefit of all had been neglected. And
with diminishing fiscal basis for public welfare policies and economic growth, it was
anyway necessary to find new local and citizen-based forms to rescue and renew the
Kerala model of human development if one did not want to surrender to privatisation
and communal based charities. The goal now was instead to promote co-operation
and complementary volunteer efforts on the basis of the broadest possible discussion
within each district and locality of what needed to be done. Broad committees of
co-operation and voluntary action were formed on a range of levels.

   This was not a question, of course, of some kind of apolitical developmental-

ism—even if much of the texts and propaganda often gave that impression. But neither was it the kind of conventional party-partisan[82] attempt to capture and redistribute state resources to loyal sympathisers that the political opposition talked of. On the contrary, it was a conscious political project on the part of reformist left-centre forces to ensure that *all* local governments and citizens would enjoy equal opportunities to participate in the new efforts to be undertaken. Thus it would facilitate political competition as to the best possible policies for and with the popular majority, rather than for and with the members and clients of each distinct party or group.

The reformists worked with public agencies, established popular organisations, and new volunteer associations (of the KSSP type). Experiences from the earlier campaigns showed the necessity of working more closely via institutionalised and legitimate organs (like the local governments) if all volunteer forces were to be capable of working together and co-operating on projects that would be tenable over the long run. Voluntary commitment presupposed political initiative and legitimacy. At the same time, the wish was to continue to attract fresh blood (outside of the established organisations), in the form of committed experts and youth. At the lowest level, activists sought to create neighbourhood fora capable of unifying the splintered fragments of civil society. All documents and decisions, furthermore, were to be public. In the end, of course, activists hoped that these grand efforts to introduce and practice substantial democracy would result not merely in improved economic and social development, but also in the renewal of the established trade union and political movements, and of the state and local governments as well. The parties, for example, would no longer just compete over who could help 'their own', but also over who could develop entire localities and districts.

Finally, the new efforts were in the first instance social and extra-parliamentary. The most important thing, the argument went, was not growth at any price, but rather engaging ordinary people, so that they would be able to influence development themselves. And, according to the activists, it was almost as important that it not be experts and politicians who discussed how laws and directives for decentralisation ought to be carried out (for in that case those opposed would be able to put spokes in the wheels), but rather that citizens themselves got going with local projects of their own, discovered what they could accomplish, and developed the ability to demand true democratic decentralisation.

How was all this to be accomplished? A six-step plan had already been formulated in its main outlines before the new left-centre government took power in the middle of 1996.

First, the necessary information materials would be collected, and a large number of people trained (about 600 at the central level) whose task it would be to train

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[82] Especially in the Kerala context one has to make a distinction between being politically partisan in general, which implies taking a stand in political issues but not necessarily to link up with a special political party, and being party-partisan, which implies that one relates closely to a party.

roughly 15,000 others at the regional level; these latter would then be charged with training some 100,000 persons at the very local level. The idea was that a similar educational process would then be undertaken at each subsequent step in the campaign.

Already between mid-August and October (1996), all of the roughly 1,000 local governments in Kerala wishing to take control over their portion of the investment budget conducted—with the help of the above-mentioned trainees—general meetings in basic localities. All citizens were entitled to take part in these meetings, and to have their say about which problems were the most serious, and which development projects the most urgent. Some ten percent of the entire population or about three million people, among whom a fifth were women, are estimated to have taken part. Reports and follow-up were then introduced at subsequent meetings.

Between October and the end of 1996, the general goals of each local government were then complemented with a comprehensive analysis of its history and resources. These reports were carried out by working groups that had been appointed at the general meetings. The reports were then approved at development seminars—in which local elected politicians and local administrators took part—and finally sent via the districts to the State Planning Board. This was one of the high points of the campaign. The quality of the reports was equal, in several cases, to that of a master's thesis.

From the New Year to March of 1997—when the economic circumstances became clearer—a good 10,000 working groups formulated concrete projects on a range of levels. From March to June, the groups reviewed what specific resources could be mobilised, and drew up local plans. During the rest of the fiscal year, finally, these local government plans were integrated on block (sub-district) and district levels. During the first year, over 2.7 billion rupees[83] were distributed in the form of projects which had been drawn up by the central state authorities but which would be implemented by local authorities, and as much as approximately 7.5 billion rupees in the form of grants to local projects. The mobilisation of supplementary local funds and voluntary labour was also encouraged. The general directives included an instruction that at most thirty percent be invested in roads and the like, that a somewhat higher proportion be invested in the social sector, and that priority otherwise be given to measures that promote production. All this was to be done, furthermore, completely transparently and without expanding the public sector.

Thereafter, it was hoped, it would be possible to go ahead realising the plans. But the working groups had not functioned sufficiently well. An additional phase—of expert examination and correction of the projects—was therefore required. It was simply very difficult to spend the money on technically acceptable projects. The work was delayed, and in October 1997, in fact, it seemed that an impasse had been reached. Several politicians were hesitant. Many publicly employed administrators and experts on the central state level were not deployed to the local bodies and were

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[83] One US dollar corresponds roughly to some 47 rupees—although locally, of course, the rupee's purchasing power is greater.

dragging their feet. It was first after political intervention (from among others the communist patriarch E.M.S. Namboodiripad, who later on passed away), and after the mobilisation by the Planning Board of tens of thousands of volunteer experts, that the projects could begin to be implemented. But by then some of the initial broad popular participation had withered away, various vested interests tried to get access to the new devoluted resources, and the core activists worked day and night to resist it and prevent the campaign from derailing and get the best possible project on track.

9.7   Important advances

Without doubt the People's Planning campaign was unique and bold, and it drew widespread attention, including internationally. At times certain foreign sympathisers who wished to point to Kerala and the campaign as *the* progressive alternative, tended to report uncritically and discuss aims, means, and stated results, fitting them into fashionable recipes for civil society action. In fact, much of the self-critical reflection by leading activists (in discussions and interviews based on trust) was more realistic and cautious, pointing to the advances as well as the serious obstacles and hindrances yet to be overcome. Yet the most sensitive issue of all, and also the most important, was the need to analyse the politics of the campaign. That was even avoided in the major self-critical analyses by the outstanding leader of the campaign, scholarly as well as politically, in his account of the results (Isaac with Franke 2000). Unfortunately, this fits in well with the predominance in India of both deterministic social sciences (such as sociology and economics) and secret politics of 'democratic centralism' and 'high commands'. Interestingly, it was only after the devastating local and state elections that many leading campaigners—though still off record—finally spoke up on the importance of vested interests and political and administrative factors, and of how their efforts had been abused and so many genuine activists prevented from moving ahead.

In spite of this, judging from the reports of colleagues, the local press, and local contacts (including, again, with both the prime activists and their critics), the campaign did not do that badly. For several years and compared with the expectations of its opponents, it even went rather well. Among the almost one thousand local governments (village *panchayats)*, the campaign leadership was, by early 1999, highly satisfied with the results in about 15 percent, dissatisfied with the results in a fifth, and moderately impressed with the results in the rest. The goal was then to make it possible to classify a majority of the local governments as highly successful. That target, however, was never fully reached.

It is true, of course, that there were several problems and that criticism was building up among political groups as well as ordinary people. But the fact that many politicians began to worry also signalled that the campaign and the decentralisation (which initially they did not take seriously) were finally becoming real and part of mainstream politics. These politicians, along with related commercial contractors,

therefore had to become involved in and adjust to decentralisation, at least on the surface, or else try to block or take control of the process. Moreover, the criticism from below was primarily a sign of people becoming engaged, being able to look into previously non-transparent practices, and being capable of standing up against abuse of resources and corruption. These practices used to be hidden and took place higher up in the system where commoners previously could rarely detect and fight them. Most important of all, and despite the losses of the Left in the elections, to which we shall return: there is no doubt that the point of no return has finally been reached with regard to democratic decentralisation. Even after so many decades of arguments that nobody listened to, rhetoric that nobody took seriously and resistance from almost all powerful groups involved, it will now be very difficult for anyone to turn back the clock completely, regardless of which politicians or governments come to power.

9.8   Two general problems

With these relative achievements in mind, one can begin the work of drawing lessons from the difficulties encountered and the experiences gained.

(a) Marginalised problems of production: Of course the campaign never aimed at tackling and solving all problems. Kerala's lack of industrial development, its negative balance of trade, and the difficulties faced by its many migrant workers are just some of the questions which must be addressed, mainly by other means. The activists never claimed that alternative local development on the basis of geographical rather than sectoral units was and is the cure to all ills. And the fact remains that 'only' somewhat over thirty-five percent of the investment budget was available for these purposes.

It is significant, however, that (with a few exceptions) clear connections were still not being made between, on the one hand, the various local projects, and on the other, larger-scale sectoral and central economic investments, the situation of migrant workers, or the best possible use of these workers' savings. Moreover, it took quite some time before the campaigners gave clear-cut signals of the need to use a good part of the devoluted funds for dynamic productive investment and not 'just' for infrastructural, social and educational improvements, plus distribution of resources to the poor. Little emphasis and direction were given within the field of competitive industrialisation. There is no doubt that most of the campaigners gave priority to the social and political dynamics among the weaker and lower-middle sections of the population, plus to agriculture and ailing traditional industries. Many of the show-cases for participatory local planning and development were based on experiences in Left governed 'traditional' rural or semi-rural settings. Most campaigners were suspicious of even innovative mainstream scientists and technicians, entrepreneurs, and administrators as well as the extensive modern middle classes—idealistic volunteers apart. The problem of combining popular planning with the dynamics of the actually existing market economy was not a major theme. These weaknesses became even more serious when New Delhi's neo-liberal trade regime caused a major recession

in Kerala's largely ageing and not very efficient productive sectors (which often, moreover, had to compete with export from third world areas with more oppressive labour regimes). So while there was a desperate need for productive alternatives and jobs, the local infant and popular based efforts within the campaign were more exposed than ever to powerful competition on the market.

Many campaign-leaders were well aware of much of this. In these cases it is important to examine the obstacles they faced. It was difficult, for instance, to coordinate local efforts and potential within the framework of the campaign with sectoral and top-down oriented ministries and offices. The latter were under the control of experts, politicians and administrators who had quite different interests and priorities. Coordination was further hampered by the fact that the only powerful institutions with a co-ordinating capacity, such as the communist parties, their left front and their cabinet, proved too weak in terms of vision and understanding and too factionalised in terms of interests and organisations to carry out their tasks. (In the worst case, they blamed the campaigners for not being able to serve them up both economic and electoral miracles on a silver platter.) One possibility (for the campaigners), then, was to build further on the local co-operative sector, which may seem especially appropriate in view of the fact that the public sector could not be expanded. In this case, however, the co-operatives had to be reformed and liberated from political and economic special interests. Activists hoped, in fact, that legislative revisions would lay the basis for this. But it was not possible to reach that aim fully and only some exciting experiments were initiated, such as labour co-operatives (called labour banks) offering their services to farmers (with little interest in employing people to grow labour intensive crops) as an alternative to the leasing of land (prohibited after the land-reform). And meanwhile, again, globalisation, of course, made it increasingly difficult even to initiate viable productive efforts from below.

(b) Unclear social basis: Similarly, those critics who aver that the campaign did not put the class struggle foremost, and that it scarcely amounted to a death blow to capitalism are correct. But that, of course, was (and is) not the point. As under colonialism, a good portion of the problems facing Kerala today derive from the fact that dynamic economic development of virtually any sort—the capitalist kind included—is inhibited. Earlier, the left sought to solve this dilemma through such methods as land reform—methods which would make it possible for the beneficiaries themselves to increase production. The reformers of today wished 'only' to reconnect to this development-furthering strain within the progressive movement, and to find new ways by which the mass of the people themselves—as opposed to just the well-to-do—could be stimulated to invest and to increase production.

In addition to socially unregulated globalisation, the most serious problem in this area is that it remains unclear what exactly the new obstacles to development are that have to be combated this time round—now that the large landowners and tenancy system of old have been disarmed. One problem is that this question is difficult to answer, inasmuch as contemporary exploitation, appropriation of rents, subordination and accumulation of capital in general are very complex, and many of the clear old class lines have disappeared. Another problem is that activists themselves tiptoed

around this question, including the need for political reform and realignments. The fact is that many supporters of the left-centre front too were and are involved in everything from patron-client relations within trade unions and parties to speculation in land and the unproductive use of (for example) cultivable soil and migrant workers' incomes.

9.9   Four specific lessons

Generally speaking, the campaigners never really managed to solve either of the two major problems from their earlier efforts: first that of fragmentation which meant that no new social movement based on fundamental conflicts and interests emerged; second that it was difficult to transform radical social activism into forceful politics that allowed for basic changes to be implemented.

Alongside these overarching difficulties, however, it is necessary to identify clear-cut 'moments of transparency' that signify general weaknesses but offer entry points for more specific analyses and lessons. We shall focus here on four such points in the form of concrete obstacles. They relate to the earlier tendency to side-step, or put less emphasis on, the work for and through institutional democratic channels both among fragmented people on the ground and (for instance) in relation to government; rather than trying to work directly in favour of democratic aims by betting on increasing citizens' pro-democratic capacity and on building a 'democratic society'.

The first lesson is about partisanship, clientelism and corruption, and thus relates to issues of open and accountable government. The second is about direct and representative democracy. The third is again about how to favour open and accountable government but also how to relate to the combination of central and local within the framework of decentralisation as well as what importance should be given to constitutional rights in terms of rule of law. The fourth, finally, is about the relationship between social activism and political representation as reflected in the elections.

(a) The handling of political partisanship and clientelism: An important part of the critique against the campaign was of partiality to the left-centre front in general, and the CPI-M in particular. The argument is that the leaders and key activists of the campaign came from the front (especially the CPI-M), and that state resources were used to benefit the front's (especially the CPI-M's) supporters. In face of the local and state elections, this allegation was blown up and turned into accusations of massive corruption.

As far as the campaign activists and their deliberate policies are concerned, most indications that I know of show that the allegations were just political half-truths. Indeed, the campaign was obviously political—but it was not narrowly *party*-political, nor did it deliberately restrict benefits to certain groups. It was political inasmuch as its activists co-operated with political and trade union organisations, and inasmuch as they used volunteer organisations and state resources on behalf of local development policies which were not exclusive in nature, but which instead were generally

beneficial. Undeniably, most of the leaders and key activists of the campaign sympa-thised with the left-centre in general and the CPI-M in particular. But this, in view of their expertise and experience and the fact that this party has by far the largest number of grassroots members and sympathisers, is as inescapable as the fact that campaigns for the benefit of business would be dominated by businessmen and their experts. Nor, clearly, did the campaign's leaders and activists have anything against strengthening their own parties. Yet the primary logic of the campaign was precisely that this would only be the result of the parties' efforts to be the best at promoting universalistic and non-partisan local development for people in general, not just their own members and sympathisers.

On the other hand, there were definitely many cases where party-leaders on various levels, local politicians, administrators and related contractors took advantage of devolved funds and distributed benefits to their own clients. Of course, this was against the rules stipulated within the campaign and the instructions on how funds should be used, and new checks and balances were being institutionalised. Although there were impressive regulations about full transparency, the context was one of top-level politicians (including ministers), and centralised bureaucrats and parties with leaders on various levels, who lost some of their influence to locally elected politicians and campaigners. Also, many locally elected politicians soon developed their own vested interests within the new framework. So it is an open question to what extent the new checks and balances and transparency really worked well in practice, especially in the numerous cases where the local activists and politicians were not fully in favour of the principles and visions of the campaign. Local groups, associations, beneficiaries and the public attending regular general meetings at the ward level began being able to keep track of abuses and to fight them. But since it was not possible to support everyone, politicians and party people either had to find ways of protecting their clients and followers, or try to uphold strictly the long-term perspectives and rules of the game, so that people would trust the criteria for deciding on priorities, now and in the future, rather than conventional patrons. And no doubt, the former tendency turned out to be the predominant one. Even the beneficiary committees—which were formed to promote participation and transparency—could be manipulated. And those who did not benefit directly often lost interest.

Similarly, the campaigners had really taken extra care to ensure that all of the interested parties in the political scene were present within the co-ordinating organs at different levels. The leadership was also anxious to demonstrate its impartiality. For instance, local governments in which the Congress Party and its Muslim associ-ates predominated (c. 40% of the total), and in which their members truly exerted themselves, enjoyed especially good opportunities for obtaining substantial resources. And actually there were few signs, as far as I know (including from discussions with actors critical in the campaign), that local governments with a left-centre majority had been given preferential treatment from the Planning Board.

On the other hand, again, what happened further down the line when increased funding became available on the local level is more difficult to assess. Something akin to partiality must have been expected anyway, because some voices within the

left-centre front were critical of the way in which the campaign leaders 'handed over money and power to non-left dominated *panchayats'*. Also, and probably more significantly, there was opposition from smaller parties in the left-centre front, especially those with rather thinly spread-out members. These had been able to exploit their swing vote in elections, and on this basis to demand privileged representation in the full range of boards and committees, but who now ran the risk of losing out when the actual presence and participation of activists at the local level turned more decisive. But there was also resistance from activists and politicians within the 'big brother' CPI-M party who confined themselves to traditional political activities and felt that their hierarchy and informal rules for gaining command and benefits could partially be bypassed by development campaigners and engaged citizens.

Meanwhile, those groupings and leaders within the dominant party (the CPI-M) who really supported the campaign in a principled way appeared to have strengthened their positions, at least until the late 2000 local elections. Also, various more or less successful attempts were made (both within the State Planning Board and the party leadership) to ensure that the campaign stood above the various internal party disputes and factions. But then again, it was not just for the good of the campaign that the party finally, from about 1999, committed itself to such an extent that it seems to have reached the point of no return. The reason behind this move was probably less due to principled support than the fact that the campaign had become an issue in a row amongst members of the Left Front, especially between the CPI-M and the CPI. The dominating CPI-M simply had no other successful, fresh policy ideas to draw upon in the then upcoming local elections (the outcome of which we shall soon return to). The outcome of this, as has already been discussed, was that conventional logic of party leadership and ways of mobilising support affected and undermined the character and principles of the campaign.

(b) Of tendencies towards populist democracy: A second critical problem was the accusation that the campaign was in favour of replacing representative democracy, in the form of elections of party people to posts on various levels, with extended red cells of popular power. To be sure, many activists have long been frustrated with the established political system, where parties are said to only favour their own supporters. Hence many activists instead prefer direct democracy, consensus decisions, and popular participation to constitutionally regulated forms of decision-making.

At the same time, however, it is important to note that the KSSP has changed over the years from a typical NGO—a private and rather apolitical association—into an organisation engaged in politically oriented development work in co-operation with state agencies, local governments, and elected politicians. Indeed, one vital difference between the KSSP's work during, on the one hand, much of the first series of campaigns up to 1991, and, on the other hand, its work towards the end of that period and especially after 1996 is its commitment to decentralisation and to long-term collaboration with the local governments. In addition, activists became increasingly anxious to ensure that elected politicians (and state and local government employees as well) were represented in all new development organs. Obviously, however, there are conflicts here. An important objective of both previous and later

campaigns, after all, has been to engage larger numbers of people, young and old, in local development work, with an eye to revitalising the political system. In reality this means that the Kerala Left had to find ways of combining, on the one hand, its established united front work on the basis of parties and their affiliated organisations and, on the other hand, the new campaign based popular front work with more space for engaged individuals and 'ordinary citizens', but also less regulated rules of the game to handle attempts by various groups and factions to dominate. This, of course, is a classic problem within the Left all around the world and it is surprising that it was hardly deliberated openly in Kerala. The same goes for the apparent conflicts between locally elected politicians, who gain influence through decentralisation, and the central and middle-level politicians and the top-down organised party-activists on all levels.

One issue that merits discussion, moreover, is whether or not priority should have been given, in the post-1996 campaign, to requests to parties to train their activists in the dynamics of the campaign as well as publicly organised training of elected local government politicians and new administrators. [84] This would mean training for all, not just pro-developmental activists who were at times accused of inventing their own populist democracy. After some years, the campaign leadership put this high on their agenda, and finally the Kerala Institute of Local Administration got a new forceful and competent leadership with supplementary international funding to promote 'good governance'. But even that took many years for the Left to accomplish—while subsequently the new Congress-led government only needed half a year to undermine and derail it all.

(c) Of governance: A third concrete problem (which relates to the previous point) lies in the difficulties the campaign met when working with established administrators and technical experts. The fact is, as earlier indicated, that the entire campaign risked being deadlocked (after somewhat more than a year's time) when the projects that had been elaborated could not be implemented, due to difficulties encountered by activists working with the regular administrative experts whose go-ahead was needed. This is at least as great a problem as that presented by the earlier-mentioned state politicians and party-activists who are unhappy about losing influence as a result of decentralisation.

As a matter of fact, the conflicts with administrators and experts are just the tip of the iceberg. For while the development campaign was moving on at a breakneck pace, it was taking a much longer time to develop a full legal basis for political and administrative decentralisation to the local and district governments. The same applies to the afore-mentioned training but also to the importance of relocating administrators from the central to the local level. The so-called Sen-committee, which was charged with drawing up guidelines, rapidly saw the need for some relatively radical principles. But then the forceful chairman passed away and much

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[84] Thus training would also to a larger extent have included many inexperienced (but potentially important) women who came into elected positions thanks to the new national quotas (which require that one-third of elected politicians be women)

of its more detailed work came to a standstill. The campaigners gave priority to their campaign and the politicians (including from the left-centre front) and the administrators (and their often left-oriented trade unions) gave priority to their vested interests. The work—which was characterised by concession and compromise—was moving forward only very slowly. In late February 1999, finally, amendments were made to the *Panchayat Raj* Act. However, the need to elaborate and implement the regulations themselves remained, as did the deployment of sufficient administrative personnel. And that process was never really concluded during the five long years that the left-centre front had at its disposal before new elections were due.

As already indicated, many of these problems between regular administrators and campaign cadres is, of course, due to the special interests of various groups and factions (mentioned earlier) within the bureaucracy, their trade unions and the related parties. But it has also to do with the fact that the campaigners cannot easily fight such interests, since they are deeply rooted even among members and supporters of the compartmentalised left-centre front itself.

However, disputes over principles also enter the picture, as in the debate over the influence that elected representatives ought to wield in comparison with rule-bound administrators. On the one side are those who say that all administrators on the local level (including the 'district collectors') should be subordinate to elected representatives on that level. On the other side are those who say that the 'delicate balance' between politicians and administrators must not be upset, especially since the latter are required to follow various rules, and moreover, in their own view, are the only ones who are capable of holding the country on a steady course in the face of all the doings of 'corrupt and power-hungry politicians'.

In this conflict, the campaigners, of course, tended to prefer politicians to bureaucrats—at least when the former were reasonably radical. But then the situation became more complex and serious in the form of a dispute over what influence volunteer campaign experts should have in the triangular relation between politicians and administrators. To the extent that this was about what should be done in cases where not enough administrative personnel had been deployed, the campaigners and their volunteer technical experts had a very strong case. But unfortunately a strong alliance never emerged between local administrators and the campaigners. And the fact remained, that the volunteers were also needed to uphold the principles of the campaign in face of more or less corrupt local and clientelist politicians, party activists, and bureaucrats. So since the campaigners had few possibilities to impact upon the politicians, the party-people, and the bureaucrats, their best bet was the volunteer experts. And then most bureaucrats objected—unfortunately even on the local level—while dissident politicians in the left-centre front even forced the campaigners and their political allies to give up. By the first part of 1999, the minor left-front parties, spearheaded by the CPI, managed to reduce the influence of committed expert-volunteers at all levels in favour of politicians and their party-people and administrators. The campaigners had some leeway until enough administrative staff had been deployed. But another window had been opened for the narrow party-partisan favouritism and local bossism that undermined the campaign and contrib-

uted to the electoral debacles that we shall soon return to.

By 1999 several leading KSSP activists were recommending that these problems be fought by way of a massive campaign from below, to strengthen popular participation and awareness against various abuses. Simultaneously, these activists believed, it should be possible to relieve the central campaigners, and ultimately the Planning Board, of some of their responsibilities for keeping everything on track. By now, the activists indicated, there was an understandable but increasingly unfortunate tendency to revert to top-down measures when problems appeared. The campaign leadership, however, felt that all those involved should dedicate themselves to elaborating and implementing more-production oriented projects.

This 'concrete results first idea' fitted in well with the overall theory and rationale of the campaign. The propelling leaders repeatedly argued that they had consciously refrained from getting closely involved in the political, administrative and legal conflicts. Rather they had concentrated on getting real development efforts under way. It had been clear already during the struggle for land reform, the leaders continued, that it was futile to await legislation and new rules before starting to implement changes. Besides which, it was hard to organise mass movements over formal questions. The only thing that produced results was when activists mobilised people to start implementing the land reform before the formalities were altogether ready. It was then that things started to happen. In the same way, campaign leaders explained, the need at the time was to heighten expectations and to get concrete projects going which would really help people, so that demands for decentralisation and for new rules and principles would have a broad and powerful movement behind them.

There is a great deal to this argument. But aside from the problem already discussed of fragmented aims and interests and the fact that no real new social movement had emerged, unproductive tensions will arise between the popular power championed by activists and the constitutionalism defended by administrators and some politicians if the argument is taken too far. These tensions will in turn complicate the institutionalisation of local popular self-rule. Just as it is not enough for people who expect to benefit from the policies pursued by the elite to place demands on it (they must also participate in governing society), development work and expectations from below can only facilitate, not create and implement, the necessary pro-decentralisation rules.

In my understanding, efficient regulations regarding decentralisation and deployment of personnel were not given priority as a parallel process and necessary follow up of the 'concrete results first-idea'. Neither were the forms of popular participation that had been practised really institutionalised as integrated parts of reformed and vitalised normal representative democracy and united front work. This shaky ground made the campaign vulnerable.

(d) Politics and development: An important reason for why the mainstream Indian communist movement has survived is that its commitment to democracy has allowed for new ideas and projects to emerge whenever necessary to win elections. In Kerala political activists of the Left often asked if the campaign would generate any votes. The campaigners answered that it might—if the political activists not only backed

the campaign but also proved to the voters that they were the best at making use of new space and resources to promote real, non-partisan local development. I, then, often asked the campaigners what they would do if the political activists did not adjust or tried to promote development. Would they be as helpless as when the politicians abandoned consistent decentralisation in the late-80s and early-90s? Would the campaigners have enough political clout this time to alter the picture? The answer was, that people themselves would react. If the campaigners increased people's capacity, provided resources and showed villagers and others what was possible they would keep track of the politicians. So what happened?

Almost all political analysts, and the Congress opposition too, expected the Left Front to benefit from the fairly successful and dynamic people's campaign in the late 2000 local elections. On the contrary: given these expectations the elections proved to be a major disappointment for the Left. There were few advances and marginal losses. It is true that the losses were mainly in concurrence with where the campaign had been least influential, especially in central Kerala, in the municipalities and in the blocks[85]. It is possible to say, that the Left would have done much worse if it had not managed to sustain previous positions in areas and on levels where the campaign had been more visible, mainly in the north and generally on the village level and in the districts. Also, it has been argued, the campaign really made people care much more about local elections and local issues, including, at the very least, preventing local bosses from occupying office for too extensive periods of time. There were also more votes for independent candidates. Yet it is remarkable that the Left, which had indeed promoted democratic decentralisation and local planning that was unique, even lost out in several places where the campaign had been really well implemented.

A major explanation seems to be, that while the established politicians and party activists, as we have seen, often abused the campaign for their own purposes, the reformists at their end were not strong (and/or willing) enough to make an impact on the formal political level—not just in order to alter such practices but also to get the right people to run for office. The left front parties simply did not allow very many new, or incumbent, politicians that had worked well with the campaign to stand as candidates. So first these potential candidates could not harvest what they had sown, and second most of the training and experience invested in them were lost.

Initially, in other words, few of the powerful leaders took the campaign seriously. This provided the campaign activists with enough space to get their grand project off the ground in co-operation with not very senior but at times genuinely interested people who had been elected to the then rather unimportant local governments. Thereafter the campaigners managed to transfer resources to the local level, to involve a lot of ordinary people, to introduce open and accountable government, and to empower those who really engaged themselves. So those who ran the risk of losing out on the more central levels and within the party hierarchies, tried to get on the bandwagon by adjusting, capturing resources, and getting into local governments.

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[85] Blocks are the administrative units between districts and villages.

This, however, was how the campaign became undermined—and 'only' capable of hitting back in the form of the transparency that had been introduced, the popular vigilance that had developed, and the miserable election results. It was a lost historical opportunity of sorts.

This in turn effectively reduced the possibility for the Left Front to bank on the introduction of democratic decentralisation and people's planning in the State Assembly elections of May 2001. While the opposition continued its allegations about leftist partisan abuse and corruption, the Left now gave very little space to all the very positive aspects of the decentralisation and the campaign. Other issues dominated, including unfortunate Left Front government handling of educational reforms, poor liquor policies, (very) bad financial management, and no policies to alter the low agricultural prices (caused by New Delhi's neo-liberal foreign trade regime). So when the Left also failed to isolate various communal forces (including BJP, conservative Muslims and certain caste groupings), the State elections turned into a disaster with additional losses in terms of voters, and huge losses in terms of seats. One of the few exciting exceptions was that the dynamic leader of the People's Campaign, Prof. T.M. Thomas Isaac, entered into formal electoral party politics and won the same seat that senior party leader and polit bureau member V.S. Achutanandan lost last time. He now belongs to those who continue to try to show what can be done within the new decentralised political system from the outside (the ministry of finance, for instance) and by linking up action on both the local and state levels.

9.10   The dynamics of the lost historical opportunity

Much is clear from Kerala. Reformist communists and primarily rural based struggles continue to be central to pro democratic development efforts. In co-operation with a broader and more liberal socialist Left, these activists have propelled one of the world's most impressive attempts at new popular projects. The major post land-reform conflicts are about fragmented monopolisation (often by extra economic means) of other resources as well. While this is 'retail business' as compared to the wholesale primitive accumulation of capital in Indonesia and the Philippines, there are basic similarities. Even our proposition that the need to struggle against both fragmentation and less visible and more mobile resources than before will generate various forms of democratic co-operation, is vindicated by the various campaigns and projects.

Moreover, it is true that civil society and social capital have played important roles in Kerala's achievements. But the history of political shaping of civil associations and powerful class-based trust (beyond caste and religion), as well as the enforcement of land reform and so many other policies and programmes, testify rather to the primary importance of political intervention and organisation in attempts at creating more solid foundation for democratisation and development. In fact, for instance, the more recent attempts at renewal would have been impossible without the support of the Left Front governments and active central guidance by the State Planning Board,

including their virtual army of principled voluntary experts, young and old.

This, of course, needs to be problematised. It is clear from the course of the People's Campaign that results were not automatically best either in localities governed by the Left, or in areas where civil society and the market had long been strong.[86] Popular and democratic development work is not something that can be called forth by political command; nor is it something which emerges of its own accord just because private activities are widespread and associational life and networks are strong. It is true that all of the reports and observations of which I am aware, as well as my own interviews, including in *panchayats*, indicate that the campaign encountered its greatest problems in parts of south and central Kerala, where civil society and the market had long been strongest. But it would be facile to state that the successes in parts of the north can only be ascribed to the fact that the left has long had its greatest strength in those regions. For another important difference between the north and the central and southern regions is the fact that social life in general is much less commercialised and privatised in the north. Besides which, there were important exceptions in the central and southern regions where the campaign was doing quite well, and it did not always succeed in the north. The key factor seems rather to have been the presence, on the one hand, of enthusiastic local politicians, and, on the other, of genuine popular organisations (usually with KSSP in the fore-front) which were focused on political development work, which were not narrowly party-political, and which did not just demand state and local government measures but also facilitated citizens own actions.

Finally, however, it was also, primarily, political and administrative problems that undermined all the impressive advances.

Firstly, no efficient policies were developed in response to the fact that no new social movement (similar to that for land reform) have emerged despite the efforts to promote democratic co-operation (to counter social and economic fragmentation) and fight common enemies (who often use extra-economic means to control various resources). It was not even made clear who and what the enemies and practices were one would have to fight in order to promote new productive, but still socially responsible, development. And it is hard to avoid the suspicion that this has some-thing to do with the widespread unproductive and petty *rentier* practices, also within the rank and file and sympathisers of the Left itself. The hard but simple question is, whether the old clear-cut class conflicts that generated the current organised Left are so far removed today that their remnants in the form of organisations and leaders and ideologies prevent new and dynamic politicisation of issues, interests and people

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[86] These were the criteria of the State Planning Board to measure success in the People's Campaign: 1.Participation a) number of male/female in *Grama Saba*. b) number of delegates to seminars. (male/female) 2. Additional resource mobilisation a) voluntarily labour and contribu-tion b) institutional finance c) beneficiary contributions d) other official funds 3. Transparency a) beneficial selection done as per rules b) publication of accounts c) public exhibition of summary details of the public works (Source: Performance Audits Report) 4. Inevitable programs a) in technology b) in organisation c) in integration 5. Number of genuine beneficiaries. 6. Efficiency of tax collection.

in accordance with new conflicts and ambitions.

Secondly, while there have been more and more impressive, unified and co-ordinated attempts at promoting popular development through the widening and strengthening of democratic principles, this has mainly continued to be done through improving people's pro-democratic capacity and by democratising society—not so much by fighting for constitutional rights and especially not by trying to improve institutional channels related to representation and open and accountable government. It is true that there was extensive interest during the People's Campaign in working with government and administration and various political groups and movements. But the institutionalisation of rules, rights, representation, and administration largely continued to be left to others and to be seen as something that would not be a major problem once there was sufficiently strong and broad popular pressure. So the second hard but simple question is whether politics and administration are too important to be abandoned by the dynamic social campaigners and left to the political establishment.

By around 2000, the activists were thus back to a situation that in principle was reminiscent of the situation after the 1991 elections. This was when they had to face the fact that no unified and strong social movement had emerged and that their impressive campaigns had failed to make a major political difference. Of course many substantial advances have been made since then. Decentralisation, for instance, could not be abandoned again as it was in 1991. But by this time, ten years later, the dream of facilitating a similarly stable and progressive rule in Kerala as in West Bengal—which would be much more civil and democratic—by way of decentralisation and popular mobilisation, had faded away. And much of that was not just because of formidable resistance from communal forces, contractors, conservative clientelist politicians and so on, which was only natural. But much was also due to weak *politics* of democratisation among campaigners who tried to avoid politics in favour of established leftist politicians who now stabbed them in the back, seemingly giving priority to their own vested interests So the third hard but simple question (among frustrated political reformists) is whether this will generate a massive internal self-critical debate within the parties of the Left, especially the CPI-M and CPI,—or whether this was not only a lost historical opportunity but also a sign that the old organised Left is itself lost. To my knowledge, there are still few signs that the internal critique (which definitely occurred in local party conferences, for instance) has generated fruitful positions and alternatives, rather than new ammunition in the struggle between various political leaders and factions that (according to almost all close observers) are more based on personal ambitions and vested interests than anything else.

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Despite the fact that Kerala is so very different to Indonesia and the Philippines, it is still striking that basically similar problems to do with politics of democratisation appear here as well. One of these two key problems, as we know, is of fighting

social and political fragmentation; the other is of advancing from impressive extra-parliamentary action to institutionalised political alternatives for the society at large. *So what were the special dynamics in Kerala in relation to these general stumbling blocks?*

Just like in the other contexts, none of the common explanations (of what went wrong) and recommendations (of what should be done), from section 4.6 (operationalised in section 6), seem to make much sense.

To begin with, it is beyond the scope of this analysis to discuss closely the fate of the Kerala class-party proposition. But there is no doubt that it failed miserably.[87] It was, instead, the ridiculed reform efforts that turned out to be the only fresh and forceful alternative to renew, not just the broad Left and the defunct Kerala model in general, but also two Left Front governments and partly at least the major communist parties behind them. The class-party advocates, as we know, even contributed to the undermining of the reform efforts.

Secondly, history has not been very kind to the pragmatic thesis either. It is true, of course, that various Kerala pro-democrats have made vital contributions from within the central as well local organs of the state and government, the parties, academia and so on. But the real importance of these people, ideas and propositions—including with regard to democratic decentralisation or people's planning—have been entirely dependent on support and linkages with mass opinion and movements outside.

Hence, the relevance of the third grassroots proposition (of the need for extensive civic associations and well anchored popular movements for real changes on the local level) is, of course, much more obvious in Kerala. This is even what many of the new achievements since the late-80s have been all about. But on closer inspection it is also clear, as we know, that those advances have varied according to additional involvement and linkages with political organisations and government on various levels, for good and for bad. So the third proposition is not supported even by the results from Kerala.

In Kerala, fourthly, the political market argument (of the need for a politically realistic vehicle to aggregate vital issues and interests and co-ordinate actions) was one of reforming the established party structures within the Left and of supplementing them with organisationally and ideologically less doctrinaire formats in the local settings. Despite good intentions, the results are not altogether positive, especially in view of what caused the failures in the recent local and state elections. So much of the problem of how to aggregate issues and interests and co-ordinate civil and political actions on different levels is still unresolved.

Consequently, and just like in the other contexts, we must move ahead by asking why the common theses have not proved particularly fruitful. Does any alternative common explanatory pattern emerge from the empirical material, if we apply the analytical framework (from sections 4.4 and 4.5), regarding position in the political

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[87] One basis for this proposition was within the so-called trade union faction of the CPI-M, but it was actually common among several other factions and groups as well. See Törnquist (1995).

terrain and politicisation? In the contexts of Indonesia and the Philippines two disturbing factors seem to hold true for all the conventional theses—thus, possibly, explaining much of why none of these explanations and recommendations seem to make sense, but have instead contributed to the problems of politics of democratisation. The first factor, as we know, is the commonness of single issues and specific interests; the second is the insufficient co-ordination of actions in civil, civil-political, and explicitly political society, and between central and local levels. Interestingly, this holds true for Kerala as well, where achievements and set backs over time also seem to vary with the performance in these two respects.

Single issues and specific interests: The Kerala class-party advocates talk a lot about the importance of unifying ideology and collective interests, but a major problem with their actual politics for a couple of decades has been their strong association with the groupism and specific interests that have come to characterise the largest communist party CPI-M and the trade union movement. This, for instance, has been one of the main problems in the attempts at promoting pro-development pacts between capital, labour and state, as well as in effectively promoting democratic planning from below by way of decentralisation and deployment of personnel to the *panchayats*.

Turning to the pragmatic argument, this, as we know, has been vindicated only to the extent that those working within the system, including state and government, have been much more closely related to broad and unifying demands and movements on the outside, such as the class-based organisations and the campaigns, than in the Philippine and Indonesian contexts. To the extent that those organisations and movements have been undermined, however—both from within and in relation to more single-issue and specific interests groups (including communal organisations)—the pragmatists have also been negatively affected. And this tendency, unfortunately, seems to be on the increase.

The relative success of the grassroots thesis in Kerala has also, to a large extent, been dependent on 'external' factors such as the unifying of perspectives and ideas (such as the resource mapping and people's planning concepts) as well as the aggregation of issues and interests in co-operation with governments, authorities and, to some extent, parties and collective interest organisations. This has been the unique and positive feature in Kerala, and the ups and down in the grassroots efforts over time are clearly related to the effectiveness of such 'interventions'. The dilemma, however, is that this has only partly compensated for, and not cured, the basic problem of increasingly fragmented issues and demands on the grassroots level, and the lack of a new unifying social movement similar, for instance, to that for land reform.

The Kerala equivalent of the political market theses has been precisely this kind of aggregation of grassroots issues and interests, through co-operation with administrative and political organs and collective interest organisations. But as we know, even the most forceful of campaigners were up against huge obstacles of getting their broader concepts and perspectives accepted and adhered to by those organs and organisations, affected as they were by special interests and clientelism. And of

course, one reaction among the civil activists is to stay away from 'dirty politics' and retreat to their own 'pilot show cases' in civil society, even though they tended to be fragmented.

Civil vs. political society; central vs. local level: Historically the class-party position in Kerala has forcefully combined civil and political work and central and local levels. After the land reform struggle, however, much of the new civil action has taken place outside the established organisations. The adherents of the class party idea have prevented rather than found ways of promoting new forms of combination and integration. And when they tried to harvest the electoral fruit of superficial support to the People's campaign, they both undermined the reformist project by intervening with conventional partisan party policies and caused local and state level electoral disasters for the Left, by rarely even allowing the reformists to run as candidates.

The advocates of the pragmatic thesis have suffered similar problems of linking civil and political work on different levels with regard to the aggregation of issues and interests. Even the massive efforts at linking the civil and the political under the authoritative guidance of reformists working from within the state planning board and (in some cases) party committees, and with about 35% of the state development budget as a huge carrot, did not suffice. Campaigners, politicians, party people and bureaucrats (even those at the local level) still found it difficult to co-operate and especially to institutionalise new synergies.

It is true to say that the grassroots advocates in Kerala have not suffered like those in the Philippines and Indonesia from being confined to the local level and to civil society work. Of course many Kerala activists have also been reluctant to enter and link up with dirty politics so as to be able to focus on strengthening civil associations without being abused by politicians of all kinds, left or right. There have also been signals in Kerala that the grassroots activists themselves have been unable to offer alternative ways of relating local and central as well as civil and political efforts. But there was not such a strong tendency in Kerala to rely on networks established by top-driven central NGOs and pressure groups. The KSSP did play such a role, but it is a democratic organisation with a mass base. It is true that the undisputed nationalist, social worker and communist leader, the late E.M.S Namboodiripad served as a patron, but in general the Keralites and their movements are too independent for such semi-authoritarian policies.

Of course, the political opportunities in Kerala have been more favourable than in Indonesia or the Philippines, but the activists have also been remarkably innovative and successful in creating links, based on concrete work and action, between various activities and levels. The KSSP has usually abstained from the otherwise 'normal' NGO pattern of negating radical politics and the established Left. Instead, most activists have realised their incapacity to co-ordinate, generalise, and institutionalise various projects, or to 'enforce' single-handedly powerful local political societies and civil-political movements which could handle these projects. Hence they have, over the years, given more and more priority to the links between work in civil and political society, and action on local and central levels. Civil-political work, as well as explicit civil society efforts related to self-government, has been carried

out independently of, but in association with, local governments, political organisations, and interest based mass movements. There are many similarities with the old Scandinavian practices. Alternative ideas, good voluntary expertise, and the ability to get things done have developed locally as well as centrally, in civil-political and civil societies, and have been drawn upon to influence parties, local governments, the state planning board etc. Popular expectations and pressure generated in this way, combined with influence within parties and authorities, have been used to gain political acceptance and funds, to generalise and co-ordinate programmes, and, strategically most importantly, to institutionalise new practices and get the established politicians to adapt themselves and/or allow the reformists to advance, at least locally.

Despite this, however, the activists have so far failed to institutionalise firmly the positive practices and ideas of how to relate civil action to public administration and to civil-political and political society. As we know, many of their efforts were undermined in the process; and the loss of a historical opportunity to take a qualitative step ahead was confirmed with the electoral debacles.

This brings us to attempts to put into practice the political market thesis: to add new political vehicles to all the other groups and movements (including those on the grassroots level), so as to make a difference within the mainstream political system, including in elections. This is exactly what the Kerala reformist stopped short of doing. They tried to combine new civil efforts, on different levels, with the old concerns and organisations of the Left. I am not saying that they should have attempted the political market thesis (quite on the contrary), but their own flexible and informal substitute, as we know, was not very successful either.

The grassroots activists largely remained civil society activists *or* political activists—i.e. the combination was usually by way of being a 'member' of both (and due to time constraints, the campaigners tended to be rather passive within the parties). The civil-political society, in terms of institutionalised linkages, remained dominated by the established political parties and fronts. The reformist activists were not able to bring their new popular organisation and dynamics into these 'old' structures—or initiate a viable alternative and broader civil-political organisational framework. The reformists remained outsiders who tried to lobby and influence, while the established political party and civil-political movement leaders offered conditional support in return for expected votes; votes which could not be delivered as these leaders themselves undermined the project with their old party-partisan and clientelist policies, plus narrow party-dominance in selecting electoral candidates.

PART III:
CONCLUSIONS—THE MISSING LINK

Chapter 10.   Elitist Democratisation and new Popular Efforts

10.1   General conclusion

The comparative and theoretical propositions outlined in part I have been analysed in the framework of contextualised cases and processes. For lack of space, the contrasting experiences and the importance of contextual factors will not be summarised here. We shall limit ourselves to the general tendencies. With two major exceptions, the mainstream theses about popular development and democracy have proved invalid while our alternative propositions have been vindicated.

   (a) The determinist (Marxist as well as liberal) theses that democratic development rests with West-oriented bourgeois and middle classes, have largely been set aside as simply not very convincing. The mainstream crafting of essential rights, institutions and dense civil societies and social capital, on the other hand, has been discussed in theoretical and comparative perspective and has proved insufficient and ineffective; at times it has even undermined efforts at more substantial democratisation.

   The crafting paradigm neglects vital parts of the social dynamics and the balance of power. The showcase middle-class democratisation in the Philippines remained superficial and unstable. The increasing density of civil society as such did not help much. In Indonesia, western modernisation doctrines have historically undermined most of the democratic efforts. Aside from principled, politicised pro-democrats, and vanguard students, civil society did not play an important role in the fall of Suharto. The sudden turn, thereafter, in favour of instant crafting of democracy with the support of the West has generated shallow democratic rights, institutions, and mechanisms that generally neither make sense to vital sections of the elite nor to people in general and are instead bypassed or only formally adhered to. In Kerala similar crafting has mainly been important in relation to civil society and social capital, which have indeed had an impact. But progress has been more related to political shaping of preconditions for pro-democratic civil associations and co-operation (in terms of everything from structural land reforms to the promotion of class interest rather than identity based associations) as well as organised political, labour and peasant farmer action, direct as well as via the state. Even the most impressive and civil society related people's planning campaign for democratic decentralisation rested with a Left-centre government and central guidance by devoted scholars-cum-activists at the Planning Board—in tandem with the politicised but non-party-partisan KSSP movement. The best results were where this combination worked well—which was not primarily in urban heartlands of liberal civil society and social capital, but rather the opposite. The worst results were where the combination did not work—but even in these cases the campaigners' vigilance and transparency exposed the established politicians' clientelist and partisan undermining of the project, whereafter people protested in local and state elections.

(b) In contrast to the elitist crafting-thesis (and far from being a closed authoritarian chapter in history), renewal-oriented sections of the Left (including, when not massacred, moderate communists), have been in the forefront of the pro-democratic struggles, often with rural dimensions. There are even clear tendencies towards new co-operation between, on the one hand, liberal and social-democratic sections (that used to argue in favour of a long modernist path to progress via elitist middle-class regulation of imperial capitalism), and on the other hand, radical nationalists and communists (who tried mass-based but top-down and tightly guided shortcuts with socialist orientation). Neither of them, however, is currently valid on their own premises, as capitalism expands and there are better conditions for mass-based democratisation.

In the Philippines, the Maoist Left continues to relate to democracy on a tactical basis. But large sections of the broader Left, from former guerrilla leaders to liberal social democrats, have come to view substantial democratisation as a strategic way to further their aims. In Indonesia, radical groups and individuals from different ideological traditions have tended to work together more and were (and are) behind the significant and consistent parts of the democracy movement. Reformists among the Kerala communists, with strong roots in the 'old' labour and peasant farmers movements (not least in rural areas), have been in the forefront of broad renewed co-operation with left-liberals and social democrats, in state government (till mid-2001), local authorities and mass based civil-organisations, where democratisation has been the major way to improve the derailed Kerala model for human development.

(c) Generally speaking, democratic aims and means seem to make sense for people when trying to further their interests by fighting extra-economic monopolisation of various resources (as part of primitive accumulation of capital).

An example of this in the Philippines is shown by attempts to resist repression, eviction, monopolisation of a rice or sugar mill, the capturing of funds for reconstruction after a volcano eruption, or the prevention of consistent and effective agrarian reforms. Here, moreover, democratic means also made sense as a way of promoting co-operation among scattered peasant farmers, among others, as well as organisations. Yet, the limitations and problems were abundant, the most obvious of which was the disintegration of Dante's farmers' co-operative. In Indonesia, the struggle against the Suharto clan and associates' monopolisation of most of the country's resources, the state apparatuses and their regulative powers (on central as well as local levels) was in the forefront. But it was long time before democratisation gained prime significance—rather than simply the replacement of Suharto with a more 'just ruler'. There were few significant attempts to promote effectively an alternative democratic co-ordination of scattered subjects and groups against the common enemy. Even the democracy movement in general was extremely fragmented and, most serious of all, quite isolated from and unable to organise common people. In the end it was the neo-liberal recipe to privatise and deregulate public resources (rather than to democratise their governance) that gained the upper hand. And at present the pro-democrats, who focused on weakening Suharto's strong state, face IMF-led structural adjustment and local and sectoral boss rule, often related to political parties, state and private armed units, and religious and ethnic networks.

In Kerala, finally, the struggle against extra-economic petty monopolisation (within a comparatively democratic and well administrated framework) has mainly focused on post-land reform attempts at getting access to a whole range of goods and privileges in addition to land (including on the market), for instance through networks, co-operatives, political and other clientelism, and interest groups. Here the pro-democrats tried a wide and impressive range of campaigns aimed at promoting democratic co-operation among small farmers, labourers, and villagers in general, to resist the new forms of monopolisation and make collective democratic use of available local resources. Yet, no broad and unified social movements have emerged behind these pioneering attempts.

(d) In fact, the mainstream argument that uneven capitalist expansion will result in increased socio-economic fragmentation, a decrease in importance of class as opposed to other identities and resultant scattered movements and organisations, often proved more valid than our prognosis about attempts by pro-democrats to promote alternative democratic co-ordination.

This situation was most critical in Indonesia and least serious in Kerala, but it was still a general tendency. Thus, one might say, against the Marxist dictum, that the dynamic of capitalism has not yet really generated its own counter force, even where many good activists have tried to pave the way.

(e) Moreover, even when various groups and movements did take up serious pro-democratic work they usually failed to transform activism of various kinds into votes, good governance, and general political significance.

The best example of this in the Philippines was the electoral failures of the broad civil society based pro-democrats. The positive but painfully slow gains made by forming limited co-ordinating vehicles like *Akbayan* testify to the serious difficulties involved. In Indonesia the radical pro-democrats were not even able to reach out and mobilise common people, but often tried elitist shortcuts (including by linking up behind popular leaders) and were so preoccupied with extra-parliamentary pressure politics and NGO-lobbying, that they were entirely marginalised as soon as, inevitably, elections and quests for alternative governance became the major issues. In Kerala, even with outstanding, broad and democratic popular activism, plus co-operation with local and central authorities, the activists were nevertheless politically in a weak 'back-seat' position. First they were in desperate need of decentralisation, but were unable to do much before being marginalised. Thereafter they returned and brought about these changes in more politicised ways but remained unable to institutionalise (politically and administratively) their impressive efforts and to alter the local political scene in the elections. Instead their unique campaigns were undermined by conventional clientelist politicians and narrow party-partisan activists.

In our model of substantial democracy/democratisation (Figure 1), then, one can point to the general tendency that while the new radical pro-democrats often (but not always) promoted people's democratic capacity and then (almost always) gave priority to the building of 'a democratic society' and/or constitutional civil and political rights, they rarely paid attention to institutional channels. Furthermore, the

two major, general problems involved in moving ahead seemed to be (a) to combat social and political fragmentation and (b) making pro-democratic societal work and activism politically significant.

10.2 Policy implications for elitist democratisation and beyond

There are four obvious policy-relevant conclusions. First, the mainstream crafting of instant democracies (by way of promoting elitist pacts, essential political and administrative rights, institutions, and mechanisms, plus civil society and social capital) has proved insufficient in terms of furthering substantial democracy; at times it has even generated instability and backlashes, and undermined more promising efforts in this direction.

Second, these more encouraging efforts have grown out of broad, popular based socio-political organisations and coalitions among renewal-oriented liberal leftists, social democrats and moderate communists for whom substantial democratisation is intrinsic to their instrumental goals.

Third, the predominant inclusive support for insufficient mainstream crafting of instant democracies that includes civil society and social capital should be redirected to specific support of more promising efforts by popular pro-democracy movements. This will mean specifically helping them in their own efforts at tackling the two major problems involved: that of combating social and political fragmentation, and that of making pro-democratic societal work and activism more politically significant (including by increasing citizens' pro-democratic capacity to use and develop more meaningful institutional channels).

Fourth, as we know too little about the dynamics of these two major problems of popular politics of democratisation, concerned scholars should direct their research in that direction.

Chapter 11.   Problems of Popular Politics of Democratisation

11.1   General conclusions

To move ahead, let us summarise and begin by returning to the elements of substantial democratisation as defined in the first part of the essay (Figure 1). Popular politics of democratisation are ways of promoting citizens' capacity to make use of and improve the reach and quality of democratic means to achieve democratic and instrumental aims. There are three kinds of means. One is constitutional rights (civil and political), another is institutional channels (including free and fair elections and open and accountable government), and the third is 'a democratic society' (in terms of the way in which we organise civil association, develop social and economic rights and so on).

In the empirical second part of the essay, then, we arrived at the conclusion that the mainstream theses about rural development and democracy had been negated in favour of our alternative propositions—with two major exceptions. The first was that it had proved difficult for democratically oriented activists to combat successfully social and political fragmentation. The second was that it had been equally difficult to transform extra-parliamentary action for various ideas and interests into institutionalised political alternatives for popular democratic governance of the society as a whole.

Interestingly, these common problems occurred despite the very different structural conditions and political opportunities in the contexts of the Philippines and Kerala. Moreover, advances and setbacks over time in each of the contexts seemed to vary less with structural opportunities than politics and policies. So in venturing into the cardinal question of why it had been so difficult for the pro-democrats to fight fragmentation and transform social action into political alternatives and change, we applied the analytical framework that had been developed in sections 4.3—4.5. This was to guide more close analysis of the special problems of promoting citizens' capacity to make use of and improve the reach and quality of democratic means to achieve their ends.

Interestingly, none of the five common, general theses about problems and options for democratic actors seemed to make sense in our contexts. The advocates of the class-party proposition (about the primacy of political organisation and class based ideology) have survived in the Philippines but lost ground and fragmented, been marginalised and mainly confined to top-down propaganda interventions in Indonesia, and failed miserably both with its own project and by undermining dynamic attempts at reform in Kerala.

The adherents of the pragmatic argument in all three contexts (of the need to work within the system to impact upon the centre of power) have largely become prisoners of elitist priorities, the institutions, and at times religious and ethnic loyalties

that they have tried to alter, even when rallying semi-independent mass support (as behind Estrada and Megawati). The only exception was the pro-democrats within the established Kerala system who were firmly backed up and disciplined by massive independent opinion and movements from outside.

The grassroots thesis (that the traditional Left's preoccupation with the state should be channelled through civil society work on the ground) has been important and dynamic in all three contexts, but generally plagued by disintegration. The partial exceptions are in Kerala (and at times the Philippines) where there have been additional involvement and linkages with politics and government.

The liberal-left political market thesis (of the need to add a realistic and aggregating catch-all vehicle in order to make sense within the mainstream political system) seems to have proved generally relevant but not very efficient in the three contexts. These problems have had less to do with the Latin American dilemma of combining radical and moderate tendencies than with the co-ordination of different levels and types of activities such as social activism and parliamentary work.

The extra-parliamentary militant network proposition has not been significant in Kerala, but vital during the 'people power' uprisings in the Philippines and the student revolt against Suharto in Indonesia. Both cases, however, testify to their limited capacity to turn from militant opposition to institutionalised representation and governance.

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So why is it that none of these common theses proved particularly helpful in understanding the problems of popular politics of democratisation? An alternative explanatory pattern emerged from the empirical material when we applied the analytical framework (from sections 4.4 and 4.5) regarding position in the political terrain and politicisation. In all the three contexts, two disturbing factors seemed to hold true for all the theses—thus, possibly, explaining much of why none of them had been fruitful, neither as explanations nor as recommendations, but had instead contributed to the problems.

The first was the commonness of single issues and specific interests; the second is the insufficient co-ordination of actions in civil, civil-political, and explicitly political society, and between central and local levels. In fact, achievements over time in each setting also seemed to have varied with the performance in these two respects.

All the arguments in all the different contexts have been negatively affected by the prominence of single issues and specific interests. It is true that the class-party thesis speaks against this, but in practice the adherents have either not reached far beyond the level of propaganda (as in Indonesia) or have actually been linked to groups with specific interests (in Kerala, for instance, with devastating effects in terms of partisan clientelism).

Furthermore, the adherents of the pragmatic argument, as we know, have usually been chained to the issues and interests that dominate the opportunist, populist, and clientelist agendas of the dominating elite. The only exceptions are mainly in Kerala

where independent popular movements served as a counterweight.

The pattern is even clearer with regard to the grassroots thesis. In the case of several grassroots advocates there has been a deliberate emphasis on single issues and specific interests in opposition against the old and exclusionary priorities of the old top-down organisations of the Left. Moreover, those who have tried to build new basic unity from below on the basis of assumed unified class or other interests have generally been up against intensive social and economic fragmentation. Even the Kerala activists who have tried to counter this by facilitating unified action through common concepts, campaigns, and institutions, as well as links with local authorities and political organisations, have not seen the emergence of any new broad social movement resembling the earlier ones, such as for land reform.

The adherents of the political market thesis, moreover, have also faced problems of aggregating issues. This is primarily for the following reasons: (a) because they have tried (from a weak position) to rally behind personalities that are prisoners of other logics (such as Megawati and Amien Rais); (b) because they (the *Akbayan* and the Kerala campaigners, for instance) have felt a need to avoid ideology; (c) (as we just saw) because there is rarely a strong unifying pressure in terms of new broad social movements from below; (d) because their own alternative frameworks (such as people's local planning of alternative development in Kerala) have not been accepted, but instead undermined by vested special interests and clientelism, including within the old Left.

The most obvious predominance of single issues and specific interests, finally, has been among the extra-parliamentary militant networks in the Philippines, and especially in Indonesia. The students were very important—but only as long as they could rally around unifying issues such as doing away with Suharto and corruption. Additional issues (such as human rights, environment, gender or special labour problems) kept up other networks. But this was primarily in terms of resistance (in contrast to alternative governance) and along separate lines. To frame the situation in an analogy: it was as if there was no spider in the web.

Similarly, all the arguments in all the different contexts have also been negatively affected by the insufficient co-ordination between action in the civil-, civil-political, and explicitly political society, as well as between central and local levels.

The class-party advocates have generally focused on the explicitly political level and usually worked from the top down. Historically there were much more elaborate links in Kerala,[88] but post-land reform civil action has never been firmly accepted and integrated in its own right. This even undermined the most promising attempts at reforming and renewing Kerala's progressive development model (and thus also generated local and state level electoral disasters for the Left).

The pragmatists in Indonesia and the Philippines have usually tried to compensate for their own isolation at the top political (and executive) levels by hanging on to populist politicians (such as Estrada or Wahid) or patronising top-driven NGO networks—with obvious negative consequences for their ability to promote substantial

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[88] As well as in Indonesia before most moderate communists were virtually eliminated.

democracy. And despite impressive and resourceful links in Kerala between mass movements and, for instance, experts working from within the system, there were immense problems with co-ordination of campaigners and bureaucrats or established politicians.

The grassroots activists in Indonesia, and to a lesser degree in the Philippines, have been confined to the local level and to civil society work. This is partly due to resistance against links to 'dirty' and partisan politics and old centralist practices. But it is also because the grassroots activists themselves have been unable to develop alternative linkages, again especially in Indonesia. The civil-political societies that have been established have usually been confined to specific issues, and thus again, in many cases have become lost in the networking process. There were similar problems in Kerala although there were also particularly impressive advances in terms of developing broader and more unified frameworks and various forms of co-operation between civil activism, politics, and administration. The activists failed, however, to institutionalise much of this. And meanwhile, as we know, their efforts were undermined by narrow partisan and clientelist practices.

The Indonesian attempts at a unifying catch-all political market vehicle were lost in isolated attempts at the elite level to hang on to equally elitist alliances, and the free ride on populist appeals by traditional leaders. Meanwhile the NGOs, with little capacity to rally mass support, seemed to focus on lobbying and pressure groups rather than popular organisation. The Philippine *Akbayan* party experiment developed exciting and impressive concepts not just for aggregation of issues and interests but also for linking the civil and political at various levels. But there is not yet sufficient organisational clout to practice this as well as handle, for instance, the lack of pressure from broad social movements and the unfavourable electoral system. The Kerala reformists stopped short of forming their own political vehicle, and instead tried innovative ways of reforming the established progressive movements as well as the historical tradition of civil action. The idea was to facilitate unified civil action from below for alternative development, through intervention on central as well as local level, which would then in turn call for and facilitate political reform on various levels. But the reformists largely remained outsiders, trying to lobby and facilitate change within the established politics, administration and interest organisations. And most of the co-operation and support that was gained remained dominated by conventional practices and vested interests, thus undermining the whole project.

Finally the achievements by extra-parliamentary militant networks in linking the civil and political and the central and local have been confined to brief periods of political momentum. Thereafter the centralist tendencies, the dependence on spearheading individuals, and the lack of democratic forms for establishing priorities and organisation have contributed to the rather rapid dwindling of those efforts.

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The remaining point to be made now, is to draw special attention to how these two roots of the problems of popular politics of democratisation (scattered single issues

and specific interests plus insufficient connections between civil and political and central and local) affect citizens' capacity to make use of and extend and improve democratic means to thus promote substantial democratisation (as in Figure 1). There are four main tendencies and one proposition.

The first tendency is that insufficient connections in combination with a class-party perspective (but usually also scattered issues and weak connections in combination with pragmatic work)[89] seem to pave the way for weak support of people's capacity to use and improve all the means of democratisation, in favour of only 'consuming' and at times even bypassing them.

The second tendency is that scattered issues and weak connections, in combination with activities in accordance with the grassroots thesis, have generally paved the way for the prioritisation of constitutional rights, and even more importantly the building of 'a democratic society', while largely neglecting the institutional channels. Hence these pro-democrats have been marginalised and at times have even become insignificant (other than as lobby and pressure groups) when the fundamental and unavoidable issues of elections and open and accountable governance have been at the top of the agenda.

The third tendency is that scattered issues and weak connections combined with extra-parliamentary militant networking activities have often been related to support for people's capacity to use and improve constitutional rights, but have neglected attempts at building 'a democratic society' and especially various institutional channels. As a result, these activists may briefly be in the forefront of democratisation but fail to sustain it and are easily turned into rather marginal pressure and action groups.

The fourth tendency is that scattered issues and weak connections cannot be aggregated and improved simply by following the liberal-left political market formula. However, there are few indications that this is because of parallels with the dilemma among Latin American democrats. In these contexts they have either opted for substantial social change and radical organising on the grassroots level, or pragmatists have seen the need for smooth transition from authoritarian rule, the need to take seats at the negotiating tables, and the need to win popular votes in general elections.[90] First, this pattern does not fit with Kerala's long and stable democratic tradition. Second, the most radical activists 'running offside' in our contexts have often been on the political level while those emphasising the more local and civil society oriented activities have been less voluntaristic and less eager to promote political shortcuts. Third, we need to challenge the in-built idea that there is an inevitable conflict between substantial and radical, on the one hand, and the vote-catching and more accommodating, on the other, and that one would therefore have to strike a balance between the two in order to promote a so-called consolidation of democracy. Whatever is meant by that consolidation, I would suggest it is wrong (and ideologically biased) to put the two up against each other.

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[89] Minus when combined with broad popular efforts as in Kerala.
[90] Cf Roberts'(1998) exciting comparative analysis of 'the Modern Left and Social Movements in Chile and Peru'.

For whatever they are worth, the results in this essay indicate instead that democratic sustainability calls for more substantial democratisation. That substantiality relates to the extent and quality of democracy, not to the output of democracy. The result (the instrumental aim of the actors) is vital, of course, but what really matters is not primarily whether the outcome is more or less radical. The bottom line is rather whether democracy makes sense to people—not because they always get what they want, but because they stand a fair chance and have actual capacities to make use of and further improve democratic rights and mechanisms to handle their common problems and conflicts.

So why, then, have followers of the political market formula not been very successful in aggregating scattered issues and bad connections? Our results mainly indicate that weak ideology and organisational clout have made it difficult to compensate for fragmentation and bad connections. But does that necessarily mean that what is missing are the kind of organisations that, in accordance with mainstream functional theory, are supposed to articulate and combine various demands and interests: political parties?

This, I think, would be a premature and normative conclusion. Parties differ and have emerged and been shaped under very different conditions. For instance, some parties have been top-down elitist formations, others have been surrounded by movements and interest organisations. In other words, there is need for contextual analyses of various forms of organisations and movements that may tackle the problems.

Meanwhile, are there any provisional conclusions that can be made on the basis of our results so far? Yes, the missing link seems to be the weak civil-political societies among the renewal oriented pro-democracy activists: (a) in addition to those which only focus on single issues and specific interests but stress instead collective interest oriented organisations with some ideological perspectives, for instance among labour, peasant farmers, teachers, journalists; (b) beyond those which are entirely dominated by ancient political formations (such as the populist and clientelist PDI-P in Indonesia and the non-reformist communists in Kerala).[91]

Of course, these are only tentative propositions that call for further studies, including those with a focus on actual pro-democratic attempts at coming to terms with the problems of finding new ways ahead.

11.2   Policy implications for substantial democratisation

As previously pointed out, the mainstream crafting of instant democracies has proved insufficient and at times counterproductive. International support for third world democratisation should instead be redirected from the inconclusive promotion of

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[91] In other words, a major restriction in Kerala is the quasi-monopolisation of the civil-political scene by established parties, mass organisations, and election fronts that are characterised by earlier struggles against colonialism and 'feudal-like' landlords, partly undermined by boss-rule, commercialism, and populism, and threatened by leaders exploiting religious and national chauvinism.

various formal rights, superficial elections, civil society and social capital (that may even spur fragmentation) to specific support of politically oriented but locally and civil society based actors, in processes of substantial democratisation.

To make it very clear, one must thus focus on exactly how it would be possible for common people to promote democratisation and make use of the available elements of democracy under specific conditions and opportunities in various settings. What are people's capacities and opportunities and how can they be improved? How can people make use of, improve and extend the reach of various means (such as constitutional rights and institutional channels) to achieve democratic and instrumental aims?

We have shown that the major problems involved in the democrats' own attempts at promoting democratisation have been social and political fragmentation and trans-formation of extra-parliamentary action into political influence and alternatives. That in turn has primarily been due to the predominance of single issues, specific interests and at times communal loyalties, and the lack of co-ordination between work in political, civil-political, and civil societies, as well as on the central and local levels.

Hence there are three obvious policy conclusions: One is to support different pro-democracy groups, no matter what formula they follow,[92] that really try to come to terms with these two major problems. The other (and more pioneering) is to give special support to pro-democrats who specifically focus on trying to establish the missing link in terms of weak civil-political societies. The third is to support further studies of such concrete attempts, in comparative and theoretical perspectives.

It may be ridiculously naive even to formulate such conclusions. Promotion of civil-political societies through the growth of, for instance, not only human rights groups that organise victims of violence and influence the state, but also federating peasant farmers, labourers or teachers with some ideological perspectives and politi-cal linkages have long been neglected and almost regarded as something vulgar. Such civil-political associations have historically often been associated with belittled reformist communists and repressed. (In Europe the social democrats also built similar movements, but in our third world contexts they have usually been elitist and lacking popular organisational clout.) Moreover, there has been a quasi-ideology in new pro-democratic circles (with the partial exception of Kerala) that calls for distance from dirty politics in general and disgusting party-politics in particular, including on the Left. Many have substituted the global and West-backed euphoria over decentralisation, the deepening of civil society, the promotion of 'social capital', and identity-based social movements for collective class-oriented movements instead of searching for new synergies. International bodies have avoided support for basic components that are part of any democracy, such as parties and interest based mass organisations,[93] in favour of NGOs, shallow elections, rule of law, and more efficient state management.

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[92] We have talked of the class-party-, pragmatic-, grass-roots-, political market-, and militant network- theses.

[93] Except when having to prevent radicals from dominating, such as in the current case of Indonesian labour organisation.

Yet, despite all this, it remains one of the main puzzles to me why northern Europeans, for instance, have fallen head over heals before such superficial and often Americanised views of democracy while simultaneously suppressing their own historical experiences (of the need for certain minimum social, economic and institutional preconditions as well as popular organisation in processes of democratisation). Currently this lack of an independent and more qualified position even nourishes the unfruitful as well as dangerous ambivalence between, on the one hand, the idealistic, post-cold war betting on minimal constitutional rights, 'dense' civil societies and rudimentary election packages, and on the other hand, the post-11th of September tendency to return to earlier deterministic perspectives that elitist rule of law and modernisation have to proceed human rights based democratisation.

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