SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGES IN THE SOUTH – AND WHY THEY MATTER FOR THE NORTH TOO*

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ABSTRACT

In the 1970s, Olof Palme, Willy Brandt and others deemed market-driven globalisation a major threat against Social Democracy. Hence, they tried to build a New International Economic Order, but failed. In the 1980s, neo-liberal globalism gained hegemony. In the 2010s, the third wave of democracy faded. Today, there is not even an international alternative to xenophobic protection. The common neglected factor is the weakness of like-minded partners in the Global South. Why has Social Democracy been so difficult in the South? This chapter draws on longitudinal studies since the 1970s of Indonesia, India and the Philippines, with references to Brazil, South Africa and Sweden. It argues that after the struggle against colonialism, democratisation was neglected, along with the role of elitist politics in the rise of capitalism. As for the subsequent third wave of democracy, the prime factors were: (1) that uneven development caused further fragmentation among labour; (2) that bottom-up democracy movements were divisive and unable to scale up; (3) that decentralisation stumbled over localisation; (4) that democratic representation was avoided by internationally supported elites and civil society groups but also populist links between leaders and people; (5) that the Blairist-like efforts to combine market-driven growth and welfare were bifurcated; and (6) that transformative politics were downgraded. Fortunately, however, the negative insights also point to new

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opportunities in terms of broad alliances for social rights and welfare reforms as a basis for inclusive economic development by partnership governance. This would be crucial for Social Democracy in the North too.

Keywords: Social Democracy; globalisation; democratisation; decentralisation; the Global South; social movements

THE CRISIS IS GLOBAL

In the public debate about the crisis of Social Democracy, the major issues include how to contain neo-liberalism and right-wing populism. The leftist proposal is to advance by way of more domestic public spending and welfare, as opposed to the blueish thesis suggesting financially less expansive policies and restriction of migration to save 'national co-operation and welfare'.[1] A new addition is the greenish idea of altering the kind of economic growth that generates climate change.

In contrast, the point of departure for this chapter is that these quite national oriented arguments actually boil down to the increasing international mobility and deregulation of finance and production since the 1970s, and the intensive use of fossil energy, especially in the South, to keep the process going.[2] For social democrats, this market-driven and exploitative globalisation has been impossible to handle in the same way as the recession in the 1930s and the challenges of reconstruction after World War II.

In countries like Sweden, vital fundaments for Social Democracy have, thus, been undercut. In particular, this applies to the nationally confined Keynesian economic policies, growth pacts between employers and unions, related welfare policies and interest group participation in public governance. Employers and financiers have been able to avoid nationally negotiated regulations and agreements by expanding in global markets, beyond the reach of democratic governments and trade unions. Thereby, they have also been able to ignore, even more than 'at home', the negative effects on nature and climate. Meanwhile, social democratic governments have deemed it necessary, from the 1980s and onwards, to adjust to the neo-liberal economic priorities, including deregulation of financial markets. This increased private debts at the expense of public spending and welfare policies. Speculation was boosted, generating growing inequalities along with a major financial crisis, the costs of which was paid by ordinary people. The social democratic growth strategy of boosting productivity to 'climb the value added ladder' generated winners, who often opted for individual solutions, but also many losers, who lost trust in social democratic policies, increasingly often attracted, therefore, by rightist ideas of 'national protection'.

WEAK, NEGLECTED PARTNERS

Even worse, the northern efforts at establishing international alternatives have fallen short of sufficiently strong allies, especially in the South. The turning point was in the 1970s when progressives like Olof Palme and Willy Brandt tried to

foster a 'New International Economic Order' (NIEO) and a 'North-South Programme for Survival' towards more fair global Keynesianism, in co-operation, in particular, with the movement of countries that were not aligned to either the west or the east in the Cold War. However, the counter parts in the South either proved too weak, or were not that interested. Given the resistance of the major business interests and emerging Thatcherism, the experiment, thus, came to nothing.

Similarly, aside from international declarations, the left-of-centre groups and governments in the South that benefitted from more room of manoeuvre during the third wave of democracy, especially after the Cold War, did not manage to constrain exploitative development and foster social democratically regulated globalisation. The wave of democratisation remained dominated by elites. Civil society and popular interest based movements mushroomed but did not make much difference. It was not just their fault. With few exceptions, the support from social democrats in the North was lukewarm, mainly promoting international institutions and local elitist agreements between liberals and related social democrats.

Hence, the attempts by a new generation of'democratic developmental states' to combine market-driven growth with support for increased productivity and welfare – such as in Chile, Brazil, South Africa, India, Indonesia and the Philippines – were inconclusive and have been overtaken by, or adjusted to, right-wing populism. Left populist regimes such as in Venezuela have even imploded. We shall return to the details.

Generally, the third wave of democracy has now petered out, all too often followed by devastating conflicts, forced migration and huge numbers of refugees, such as in the Middle East and North Africa. Meanwhile, many liberals and social democrats have returned to the old idea that weak states with poorly enacted rule of law must be fixed before democratic deficiencies are attended to an updated version of Francis Fukuyama (2011, 2014), of Samuel Huntington's (1961, 1965) thesis of 'politics of order', which legitimated 'middle class coups' from Indonesia in 1965 to Chile in 1973.

SHORT OF ALTERNATIVE

Unsurprisingly, there was, therefore, also insufficiently grounded support, in the South in particular, when Swedish social democrats attempted an internationalist restart in 2012–2016 by launching a 'Global Deal' on decent labour conditions, fair trade and investments towards global Keynesianism and rights based foreign policies. In fact, even the Swedish government itself failed to combine export promotion and support for human rights and democracy, rather sustaining, for example, arms trade to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in-spite of their contribution to the conflicts in the Middle East that so many people have had to flee, including to Sweden itself. From bad to worse, the Swedish social democrats were, therefore, also short of anything like an international alternative to national chauvinism when the conflicts and crisis in the Global South generated extensive forced migration in 2015 and refugees who

even reached northern Europe. Just like British Labour under Corbyn was unable to develop an alternative European policy and was overtaken by the clear-cut demand for Brexit, the Swedish social democrats lost out to the rhetoric and positions of the previously rather insignificant populist ethno-nationalists (*Sverigedemokraterna*).

In short, social democrats in the North have failed to measure up to market-driven globalisation by internationalising their previously successful strategy to promote development based on social and environmental justice by democratic means, and the key to the crisis and renewal is stronger partners in the South to build social democratic development co-operation. Hence, the question we must answer is why it has been so difficult to build Social Democracy in the South, and whether old insights point to new options.

WHY IS SOCIAL DEMOCRACY SO DIFFICULT IN THE SOUTH?

The challenges of Social Democracy in the South are often studied in view of the conditions that enabled Social Democracy's rise during industrialisation in the North (cf. Therborn, 2012). From that angle, the conclusion is self-evident. Nothing like the historical circumstances that obtained in the North – a broad and relatively unified working class movement for inclusive democracy, welfare and growth – are feasible in the South. This is due to uneven industrialisation, huge numbers in informal sectors, ineffective and often corrupt administration, dictatorships or shallow democracies, fragmented civil societies and the politicisation of religious identities.

But this perspective is as biased as the assumption of modernisation theory that development must copy what happened in the North. Instead, Social Democracy may best be defined inclusively, in accordance with its broader classical meaning of development based on social (and now also environmental) justice, and the democratic politics it takes to get there. Thereafter, this essence may be specified, on the basis of historical evidence from various contexts, in terms of four universal cornerstones of (1) democratic popular-interest collectivities, (2) demo-cratic links between the state and equal citizens, (3) social rights and welfare and (4) economic growth pacts between the state, primary producers, labour and employers.[3] Thereby, it is possible to study how social democrats have tried to build these cornerstones in different contexts, over time.

While the fundamental cornerstones remain universal, three generations of social democrats stand out. The first generation grew out of the industrial revolution in the North. The second generation was part of the emancipatory movements against colonialism, aiming at 'democratic developmental states'. The third generation is rooted in the struggle against authoritarian regimes and extractive capitalist growth, and new efforts at 'democratic developmental states', within the wider space created by the third wave of democracy since the late 1970s.

As this indicates, Social Democracy has always been particularly difficult in the South, where the first two cornerstones were up against colonialism, feudal-like

subordination and uneven development. In-spite of this, the efforts have remained valid and proven possible. Further, the third cornerstone of social rights and welfare has been crucial in terms of self-help, such as through cooperatives and demands for public reforms, but comprehensive welfare-state programmes have been unfeasible. This is because they have historically been combined with the fourth cornerstone, dynamic socio-economic growth pacts.

It is true that the developmental states in East Asia applied elements of such growth pacts, but by authoritarian means. Efforts at *democratic* pacts, such as in Nehru's India, have typically been unfeasible in the South. The major explanation is that they have presupposed effective democratic governance and well-organised and broad unions and employers' organisations with roots in comprehensive industrialisation. This was lacking in the South. Still, the new wave of democracy enabled radicals to strengthen citizen action and popular interest organisation; and moderates made another attempt to build 'democratic developmental states', such as in Chile, Brazil and South Africa, to substitute for the insufficient societal basis for social growth pacts.[4]

What are the experiences and options? The Global South is huge; context matter and quantitative data are limited and unreliable. The best we can do is to study and contrast critical cases of the second and third generation social democrats' attempts to build the cornerstones in historical and comparative perspective. This chapter is based on the conclusions in a recent retrospective book about insights during my studies since the early 1970s of progressive democrats in Indonesia, India and the Philippines, with references to the Swedish case of first-generation partners and to some extent Brazil and South Africa.[5]

ENDURING LESSONS FROM THE SECOND GENERATION SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

The second-generation social democrats fought colonialism in countries such as India, Indonesia and Tanzania, spearheaded by tall leaders such as Nehru, Sukarno and Nyerere, and by resisting dependent capitalism in Latin America. They tried to compensate for the insufficient historical preconditions by combining democratic elections of elitist leaders and structural top-down reforms such as state planning of basic industries and import-substitution, nationalisations of foreign companies and land reforms. Social rights and deeper democracy would have to wait. Typically, however, they were not very successful economically; and in the process, many human and social rights as well as thorough democratisation were undermined too. In other cases such as in Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba and the Portuguese colonies, armed struggle was inevitable, but once victorious, the liberation movements were vulnerable and not very democratic.

In addition, most popular democratic movements suffered during the period from the 1960s until the 1980s from either the previously mentioned 'middle class coups' supported by the West, or statist 'non-capitalism'[6] supported by the East, while China was lost in its Cultural Revolution along with its worldwide epigones.

Democracy Feasible but Neglected

The first of two major enduring lessons is that unity and democracy may after all be feasible, but was undermined. The thesis that Social Democracy is doomed in the South because of divisive identities and uneven economic development, and the absence of unifying class interests, was contradicted in the south-western Indian state of Kerala as early as from the 1930s, and in Indonesia in the 1950s. In both contexts, the demands for equal citizenship and democracy against indirect colonialism, and ethnic, religious and other forms of communal representation, served as a unifying frame for interest-based struggles among scattered classes and groups. The leftists in Kerala and Indonesia built huge democratic movements for progressive reforms and were on the verge of political hegemony.

In the Philippines as well as much of Latin America, however, the issues of citizenship and democracy were not top priorities among progressives. The Americans in the Philippines and European settlers in Latin America had long since introduced elements of democracy and citizen rights. The problem was that the U.S., along with local oligarchs, entirely dominated the system. The common conclusion was, thus, that these enemies must be fought before democracy could be viable.

By the late 1950s, something similar happened in Indonesia. During the struggle for national independence and in building the new Republic, leftists of different persuasions had fought for equal citizenship and democracy. In the mid-1950s, reformist oriented communists advanced in elections but were threatened by political enemies and subordinated themselves to President Sukarno's left-populism. Massive campaigns against imperialism for 'genuine national independence' and land reforms within 'guided democracy' were deemed more important than democracy based on equal citizens and their own mediating organisations.

Liberals and moderate social democrats claimed their political losses in Indonesia and elsewhere were due to the weakness of the middle classes and communist abuse of popular discontent. The modernisation theory that liberal social and economic progress would spawn middle-class–driven liberal democracy was supplemented with the previously mentioned thesis that, paradoxically, the attainment of democracy also called for firmer political and legal institutions by way of a 'politics of order' – in the worst cases through 'middle class coups' supported by 'the only modern institution', the army, backed by the United States.[7]

Over the years, the 'politics of order' approach, theorised by Samuel Huntington (1961, 1965), spread all around the South, but the pioneering case was the overthrow of Sukarno in Indonesia in 1965–66. This was not by way of liberal middle class politics but by reviving the colonial form of despotic indirect rule through communal leaders in the form of army-led massacres of leftists in co-operation with religious and other militia groups (Törnquist, 2019). The then world's largest popular reform movement was left helpless, having abandoned the unifying focus on equal citizenship and democracy by subordinating it selves to Sukarno's left-populism and 'guided democracy'.

Developments in Kerala were less drastic but had similar effects. In 1957, the state elected reform communists to lead its first government. Soon enough,

however, this government was destabilised by rightist activists with US support, and unseated by New Delhi in 1959.

Similarly, Eastern bloc modernisation theorists were for their part worried that workers and nationally oriented capitalists remained weak. The suggestion was, therefore, that progressive leaders and army officers might try to overcome their frailty, and promote 'non-capitalist development'. This approach, which also spread around the South, legitimised, for example, Indonesian 'guided democracy' and the co-operation between the pro-Moscow Indian communists and Indira Gandhi's Congress Party, including during her emergency rule 1975–1977.

In Kerala, over the years, the dissident Indian communists in the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) regained electoral dominance, and those in the smaller Communist Party of India (CPI) returned to the fold. But after years of competition and efforts to use government positions to strengthen party-related organisations, politics continued to be based less on unifying popular demands for equal social and political citizenship and land reforms than on dividing the spoils. The coalition partners used perks to grow memberships and separate interest organisations, civil society groups and to attract business support. In short, party clientelism replaced the previous unity under the umbrella of equal citizenship, social rights and democracy. Later in West Bengal, the CPI-M even formed something close to a party-state.

Prime Importance of Politics in the Rise of Capitalism Also Neglected

The second lesson is that the prime importance of politics in the rise of capitalism was ignored. The Indonesian developments from the late 1950s, followed by those in the Philippines, were even worse than what happened in India. Increasingly Maoist-oriented leaders referred to Marx, but abandoned his historical analysis of the rise of capital by 'primitive' coercive and political means (which was particularly crucial in the South). Thus, the leftists did not effectively fight the real source of power of – as the Maoist labelled them – the 'bureaucratic capitalists' (the generals, top bureaucrats and political bosses), namely their control of public resources and the means of coercion. Such control was not deemed' a real class base in production'. Hence, most leftists concluded, this political control rested instead with landlordism and US imperialism. But fighting imperialists and landlords was insufficient. In Indonesia, most generals themselves, for example, even supported extensive nationalisation of foreign companies and gained control of them when it was pushed through. Hence, progressives should have given priority to the struggle for democratic control of public resources. However, as we know, the struggle for democracy had been deprioritised. The same characterisation applied to the Philippine oligarchs (including Marcos). For many years, the oligarchs had typically used the US-exported electoral system to gain office in local and state governments and bureaucracies in order to accumulate power and wealth for private investments. But the leftists did not really focus on democratising the control of public resources to contain this primitive political accumulation of capital until years after the democratic 'people power' revolution that, instead, the traditional elite had seized control of.

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC INTERNATIONALISATION STALLED, BUT THERE WAS A THIRD WAVE OF DEMOCRACY

This weakening of the progressive actors in the South after the successful struggles against colonialism and for equal citizen rights was, as already mentioned, a crucial factor for the crisis of northern Social Democracy. Its nationally confined models were first undermined by the breakdown of the Bretton Woods agreement on fixed currency exchange rates in 1971, followed by the oil crisis. As I have mentioned, social democrats such as Palme, Brandt and others tried to overcome the impasse with global Keynesianism through the NIEO and 'North-South Programme for Survival'. However, short of sufficient support from the South to counter the big powers, transnational companies and financial institutions, they failed. Thus, the field lay open instead for neo-liberal globalisation and Thatcherism.

There was a positive side, however. As rulers could rely more on expanding markets, the importance of imperial force was reduced, especially after the ebbing of the Cold War. One implication was more space for progressives to resist the 'politics of order' and 'statist regimes'. Another was the rise of the third wave of democracy. This served as a breeding ground for a third generation of Social Democracy. Things looked bright early on, but over the years the outcomes have been disappointing. Just as the efforts at a NIEO and a 'North-South Programme for Survival' were hamstrung not least by the setbacks for the progressives in the South, the new problems for the third generation social democrats also narrowed the field for their siblings in the North. Palme was assassinated in 1986. Even in the Swedish stronghold, increasingly unambitious social democrats found no alternative to 'social democracy in one country' – i.e. prioritising Sweden's own short-term interests in fostering growth, and at best welfare, by adjusting to market-driven globalisation of trade and production, hoping that some of the negative effects could be ameliorated within the European Union and the United Nations. Several activists, along with concerned professionals, educators and scholars sustained their solidarity and work with partners in the South, but these efforts were no longer integral aspects of social democratic priorities and politics.

INSIGHTS FROM THIRD GENERATION SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

The third wave of democracy was as potent as the fall of the wall in Berlin, but also as protracted in realising hopes for a better future. In both the Philippines and Indonesia, the pro-democrats lost out in the transition from authoritarian rule. They ended up as subordinated partners in elite-dominated democracies, with few chances to participate in elections and make a difference through participatory governance. Most activities were confined to lobbying, civil society work and doing deals with politicians in need of support.

There were similar dynamics in India. The rudiments of political democracy had stood firm, but clientelism became increasingly important. From the mid-1980s,

the drawbacks were fought through a new emphasis on active citizenship, rights and welfare, especially in Kerala but also towards the rise of a left of centre Congress Party led coalition government during two periods, 2004–2014. Yet, progressives lost ground.

What were the major problems and options? In view of the cornerstones for Social Democracy, six insights stand out.

Dearth of Working Class

There is no doubt about the first insight that the main premise for Social Democracy of democratic popular-interest collectivities cannot be based on the working class – as it was in the North – to anything like the same degree in the South. Labour and democracy activists rarely combined their priorities. Workers themselves are too few, too scattered and often divided by specific interests and demands. Some 90% of India's workforce, for example, is in the informal sector. Unity is difficult on the workplace level and between them; and higher up the system, union leaders tend to develop their own preferences, such as striking deals with dubious politicians. Informal sector labourers tend to be neglected. This happened even during leftist rule in West Bengal. Efforts at overarching demands for decent jobs and universal minimum wage, as suggested by international labour organisations, may be fine for casual and informal sector labour too. However, there must also be policies to compensate for the lack of similar conditions to those in Scandinavia during the peak of Social Democracy – low levels of underemployment and the steady growth of new jobs. South Africa, tragically, presents an example of a country where these components do not exist. Huge numbers of labourers are marginalised.

Kerala showed informal labour may well organise successfully through time-honoured methods such as closed shops. Professional associations in the gig economy might try too. Specific informal sector unions are growing and 'old' unions are trying to enrol casual labourers, but since many lack a fixed employer, demands for rights to work and welfare must be put to politicians. At best, negotiations should involve all partners.

In short, democratic popular-interest collectivities can hardly be built at the level of production, but calls for common interests in comprehensive reforms – to which we shall return shortly.

The same applies to primary producers. When Kerala's remarkable land reform was implemented from the 1970s and onwards, people did not join hands and develop production. Tribal populations and fisher folks got nothing, while plantations were exempted and former tenants gained more than their workers who asked for better pay. Hence, the beneficiaries invested elsewhere. Similarly, for example, the collapse of the huge farmers' cooperative in Tarlac in the Philippines, initiated by former guerrilla leader 'Dante' Buscayno, was not primarily because nearby Mt. Pinatubo erupted but because of scattered interests among the small farmer member households who had to find multiple livelihoods. A joint democratic-political project would have helped but proved difficult for other reasons.

Bottom-up Insufficient

The second lesson is that the major hallmark of the radical third generation social democrats of democratisation and reformist policies from the bottom-up is necessary but insufficient. One reason was that previous emphasis on citizenship and democracy was neglected. In Kerala, the successful focus from the 1930s until the late 1950s on equal citizenship and democracy as an umbrella for class-related priorities was undermined from the 1960s by leftist party–clientelism, and was not reinvented until the mid-1980s when reformists tried popular campaigns from below. The Philippines did not even have an analogous history to revive. In Indonesia, the leftists' overarching focus on equal citizenship and democracy was abandoned when subordinating themselves to Sukarno in the late 1950s. Accordingly, they could not even draw on this imperative to resist the massacres in the mid-1960s, and from the 1970s, the new dissenting civil society organization (CSO) activists certainly pitied the victims but forgot about the history of why equal citizenship and democracy had been overlooked in the first place.

Consequently, there were few exceptions in the Philippines – and even fewer in Indonesia – to the liberal view, fostered by donors, that civil society was little more than a corrective supplement to the increasingly dominant formula for elite-negotiated democracy. This may be a cause for regret, but the main challenge for progressives was how to maximise the available space and advance in a social democratic direction. Pro-democracy spearheads among investigative journalists and students were immensely important but at times ran ahead of themselves – neglecting organisation and protection of the people they spoke up for. Local organisers trying to do just that were often disowned, including when pro-democracy activists made separate deals with influential actors and politicians. Scaling up, regionally and nationally, was particularly difficult.

Cause-oriented groups – watchdogs such as for Human Rights as well as those aiding resistance among farmers, labourers and urban poor – were typically issue driven, dependent on donors' priorities and mutually competitive. Building broader alliances and wide membership was not a priority. Quick, visible results were easier to achieve by actions, media coverage, lobbying and 'good connections'. An additional effect was that the CSOs were weak outside the major cities, and that the local associations were dependent on well-connected patrons in the metropolises. For example, leftist Philippine leader Joel Rocamora, who served as a cabinet member during the first part of the 2010s in his capacity as head of its National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), found that progressive local CSOs and popular organisations were so weak that they could rarely take advantage of the opportunities NAPC provided.

A major problem was – and is – for CSOs to engage politically. This is mainly because of their fragmented and, at times, narrow priorities, but also due to the hesitance of their donors to be associated with politics. Unions also remain focused on special issues and concerns. With few exceptions such as the Workers Party in Brazil, the attempts to build new parties based on CSOs and unions were ultimately failures. This is in sharp contrast to how unions and other popular organisations built social democratic parties in the North.

Kerala was different. In contrast to the common problem in Indonesia and the Philippines, as in most other parts of the Global South – that civil society and popular groups are scattered and focus on specific issues and 'community organising' – Kerala's particular dilemma is top-down party politicisation of special interest organisations and dominance in civil society. Fortunately, CPI-M, the main left party in Kerala, was not as dominant as its sister party in West Bengal (which thus dwindled) and the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa (badly affected by corruption too). The Kerala civil society activists who also engaged politically could, therefore, initiate impressive campaigns for total literacy and popular education, village level resource mapping and participatory development. They could also launch supportive decentralised planning. Not that there were not numerous obstacles. The prime ones were the difficulty of combining representative and direct democracy as well as participatory and professional governance – in addition to providing space for not just civil society activists but also party and interest organisations. There were also problems of developing production and welfare, to which we shall return, but the Kerala campaigns did prove it was possible for civil society and government institutions to work in tandem. Moreover, the activists themselves managed to unite numerous scattered local projects towards an alternative development route for Kerala at large. This was a major factor behind the Left Democratic Front's victory in the 1996 elections, and a reason why the party leaders had no choice but to allow politically concerned civil society activists and scholars to launch the People's Planning Campaign. While it is true that bottom-up politics was brought to an end in 2001, the inbuilt challenges could have been dealt with and were not the major causes for its defeat – top-down political hijacking was.

In short, bottom-up activism is crucial but fragmented and difficult to scale up. We shall return to insights on how this may be achieved.

Decentralisation Too Narrow

The third lesson concerns decentralisation, which was important to counter authoritarian and top-down rule, and foster local democracy. The advancements for the Democratic Left in the context of Brazil's decentralisation caught worldwide attention. Its participatory budgeting attracted liberals too. Less notice was paid to the preconditions – that the Workers' Party won mayoral elections and thereafter introduced the popular deliberations from the top-down, along with trusted rules and regulations. Similarly, it took a long time before attention was drawn to the fact the local participants had not really been able to keep an eye on the central-level political corruption that generated so much distrust and lit the flame of right-wing populism.

Similarly, decentralisation in Indonesia and the Philippines was no panacea for local democracy as long as progressives in civil society and popular organisations were not strong enough to make a difference. When they were, results were tangible – such as in the mid-2000s when activists in the Central Java city of Solo managed to put pressure on then Mayor Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo, who later on became President of the country, to agree a deal for more inclusive

urban development. Equally instructive, the admirable social democratic introduction in the Philippines of bottom-up budgeting in the early 2010s was soon undermined by competing political elites, municipal and provincial bosses and the weakness of local progressives. Only in Kerala, where local oligarchic rule had been uprooted through land reform and decades of struggle for citizen civil and social rights, could progressives in civil society and government cooperate and introduce both democratic decentralisation and participatory planning.

Yet, as we know, there were major problems in Kerala too, and some of them related to the very localisation of politics. One was that since the villages were open economies, their local governments could not be expected to be responsible for all residents' welfare, including those who were active outside the villages and might have lost their jobs. Hence, there also had to be welfare-*state* programmes, similar to when local responsibility for fighting poverty in Scandinavia was supplemented by national welfare-state schemes (Sandvik, 2016). Moreover, effective local development planning would have to consider both public and private investments, as well as outside links, including the villagers working in the Gulf countries and sending money back home. Only rarely did this happen, so as in China when the regime was unable to connect the people's communes, the matter was left to the market (Shue, 1994).

Similarly, local communities are difficult places in which to combine the preoccupations of civil society activists and unions and other organisations that are not confined to the local territories, but related to production and workplaces. This was equally important in our Indonesian and Philippine cases. In Solo, Indonesia, for example, the social contracts were not feasible in the framework of territorial and community development planning. Rather, they called for discussions with people's own organisations in various sectors – from casual labourers and petty traders to sex workers – in different locales around the city.

The insight that the participation of sectoral organisations based on interests in work and production is crucial to establishing 'trans-territorial' linkages that can be verified by Scandinavian history, where these organisations served to negotiate and institutionalise many of the failing connections. This takes us to the fourth lesson about neglected representation.

Neglected Representation

For all its promise, the third wave of democratisation turned out to involve the accommodation of elites who adjusted to – and then dominated – elementary democratic rules of the game. Unfortunately, several moderate third-generation social democrats contributed to this. Scattered pro-democrats in civil society and popular movements rarely gained access to the playground, except as individual subordinates in the elite teams (Törnquist, 2013, 2017). This nourished populist reactions that turned increasingly rightist, even in 'old democracies' like India. Dedicated liberals and social democrats worry but lack alternatives. As previously mentioned, some of them have even returned to the old idea from the late 1950s that weak states with poorly enacted rule of law and rampant corruption

must be fixed before democratic deficiencies are attended to an updated version, of the old 'politics of order'.

The studies I have engaged in have arrived at another conclusion. While there are weak states and corruption, nothing suggests that returning to authoritarian rule would be better today than in the late 1950s, 60s or early 70s. The alternative, therefore, is equal citizen rights and better democratic representation of the collective actors with a genuine interest in change. State capacity rests on trust in institutions – which must be impartial. This, however, cannot be fixed by top-down administrative reforms alone (unless combined with repressive measures to enforce consent). Rather, such reforms must be allied with equal citizenship rights and partnership governance, according to democratic representative principles. This is the main lesson of how Sweden transformed its public administration, which by the middle of the nineteenth century was thoroughly corrupt (Svensson, 2016).

From this point of view, the problems are not just that elites have captured the democratic systems and the new drives for a 'politics of order'. An equally important obstacle is that social democrats of various persuasions have not been very good at improving citizen rights and representation. What are the general explanations for this failure?

Firstly, it took a long time to recall a lesson never learnt by the second-generation social democrats – that substantive democratisation of the state and governance is not just something to aim at, but the best defence against suppression, and also the best way to overcome clientelism and primitive accumulation of capital by coercive means, cronyism and even state capture.

Secondly, while the Kerala progressives had fought for centuries to gain equal citizenship rights and combine civil society initiatives with reformist politics to bring about decentralisation of public governance, the weaker attempts to this end in the Philippines and Indonesia were lost in the transitions from dictators Marcos and Suharto to elitist democracy.

Thirdly, generally, the frustrated progressives were, therefore, mainly confined to building alternatives within their own ranks, from the bottom-up. While doing this, the Kerala civil society groups were comparatively huge, and their voluntary work and internal democracy were deemed much more crucial than in the Philippines and, especially, in Indonesia. Still, relatively few of them were also engaged in organised politics. This is generally valid. In all my case studies, civil society activists typically deemed electoral participation ineffective, except individually through mainstream parties. Local organisers of communities, workers and farmers cared more about numbers and representative leaders, but internal democracy in their own organisations and movements was limited, and the attempts, if any, to engage in elections were often abortive. In Indonesia, genuine leaders without 'proper formal education' were not allowed even to run for office locally. Kerala progressives rejected alternative party building in favour of trying to reform, affect and cooperate with the actually existing leftist parties. In Indonesia, by contrast, many progressives avoided 'dirty politics' but failed to build broad enough parties of their own to make a difference, often resorting instead to transactions with mainstream leaders.

The Citizen Action Party *Akbayan* in the Philippines is the shining exception of how leftist groups, civil society activists, unions and other movements *can* join hands, but so far it has failed to make much progress. Remarkably, in 2012, anti-corruption activists in New Delhi also managed to build a remarkably successful 'Common Man's Party' (AAP) of their own. This was partly due to India's liberal electoral legislation as compared to Indonesia where it is impossible for local parties to participate in elections. The main factor, however, was that the Indian activists' focus on anti-corruption regulations, and popular participation stood out as a convincing way for the urban poor and the middle classes to do something to improve miserable public services. Nevertheless, populist politics soon overshadowed solid democratic practices and the development of broader agendas on inclusive development.

Meanwhile, reform-oriented populist leaders such as 'Jokowi' in Indonesia agreed to deals with civil society groups and popular movements. This was an opening for progressives as long as the agreements were clear-cut and based on comprehensive reforms. It soon became apparent that over time they clearly were not. A major reason behind the failure was informal individual negotiations and transactions in tandem with populist ideas of direct relations between leaders and 'the people' – instead of democratic representation in institutionalised collective negotiations.

The most promising achievement was instead the successful democratic alliance in Indonesia in the early 2010s between civil society groups, urban poor associations, unions and progressive politicians and media in favour of a universal public health reform. The alliance could not be sustained, however, as there was no forum with democratic representation of the vital partners involved that could assume the role of negotiating follow-up reforms with the government. Sadly, none of the progressives suggested such a format, rather returning to their own special issues, and transactions with individual politicians.

To make matters worse, international democracy donors also failed to provide civil society and popular movement activists with support to encourage representative democracy. Locally, pro-democrats were often used and cracked down on, even by otherwise progressive leaders and parties. Indonesian students, for example, were let down by elitist reformists in the final struggle against Suharto. Aceh reformist democrats were sidelined by the autocratic leaders of the independence movement, GAM, and international donors – including Sweden and Norway. Democracy activists in the Philippines were harassed and assassinated by Maoists. The Left in West Bengal built a party-dominated state, much like the ANC in South Africa, and their comrades in Kerala initially clamped down on the leaders of the People's Planning Campaign, before they fortunately came to their senses. Top-down politics is certainly not the answer to the problems of democratic representation. The unresolved issue is, however, what dynamics and actors might generate and promote better representation? We shall return to this question.

Welfare and Growth Bifurcated

The social democratic foundations of collective actors and democracy are hard, though not impossible, to build in the South. But what about the third and fourth pillars of rights and welfare and economic growth pacts? They have been considered almost inconceivable outside the comprehensive industrialised nations in the North. The fifth lesson is that the efforts to promote welfare and economic growth have been split.

The solution of second-generation social democrats like Nehru to prioritise state-led industrialisation and import-substitution – plus at best moderate land reforms – ahead of equal rights and welfare was inconclusive. Even the farmers who benefitted from Kerala's most consistent land reform rarely increased production, rather cherry-picking more profitable but less productive off-farm investments.

In that regard, the Kerala reformists were much more successful with their decentralised people's planning. In short, they aimed at *local* growth pacts based on rights and welfare. The farmers, however, were reluctant to cooperate. As the village plans did not extend beyond public investment, there were limited links and coordination beyond the villages, and the middle classes disengaged, as most welfare and other measures were targeted. Although there were exceptions; for example the collective labour groups (*kudumbashree*) did well, and support for local development remains crucial for all those who do not benefit from the thriving market-driven development in construction, technology, service, education etc. Compared to elsewhere in India and the Global South, Kerala's participatory government facilitated solidarity, and the coordination of resources and public health have proved remarkably adept at handling environmental disasters such as the recent flooding and the coronavirus.

In contrast, the leftist leaders in West Bengal entirely gave up on efforts at rural development and welfare-driven development in the 1990s, in favour of East Asian inspired industrialisation by outside investors and production for markets elsewhere. India, however, had enough democracy to allow citizens to resist and vote the communists out of power when this was at the expense of small farmers and informal labourers.

Meanwhile, unfortunately, the democracy and human rights activists who have been so immensely important all around the Global South by standing up for the victims of common kind of exclusionary development have had little to say in terms of viable development alternatives.

Equally problematic is that while unions commendably tried to internationalise their work, the demands remained based on the first social democratic generation growth models. Within these models, decent jobs and good collectively negotiated or regulated minimum pay (to 'compress the wage level') would stimulate productivity and generate more jobs in expanding economies. In the South, this was expected to be facilitated by a new and more democratic edition of the second-generation social democrats' 'developmental states'. This might be valid in sectors with good markets, but it remains insufficient where there is huge underemployment and poorly developed production for nearby markets, such as within

agriculture, food and clothing where many people must eke out a living. In such sectors, producers and retailers cannot survive immediate global competition. One example is social democratically oriented South Africa. Swedes, among others, did not 'export' their foundational experiences since the 1930s to South Africa. These included additional pacts (to those between capital and labour) with farmers and others in rural areas about universal welfare for them too, protection to prevent them from losing their land and livelihood, and support to create new jobs. Narrow focus on the pact between capital and labour is one reason why the northern social democratic 'road-map' is insufficient.

Raising the resources for such additional policies is not easy. Shortsighted business and middle classes rarely contribute. In some contexts, the commodity boom in the 2000s was helpful (but contributed of course to climate change). Social democratic oriented 'developmental state' governments in Brazil, for example, combined global market friendly economic growth with welfare programmes. In India too, during the centre-left Congress governments of 2004–2014, adjustment to market-driven development was combined with technological advances and impressive rights and welfare reforms. The growth nonetheless generated more inequality than decent jobs. The rights and welfare measures were typically supplementary rather than designed to transform the growth model. The middle classes said there was little in the programmes for them, and mismanagement, corruption and crony capitalism were ubiquitous side effects. In the end, the Hindu nationalist Narendra Modi gained power.

In New Delhi, progressives have certainly won elections since 2013 by connecting anti-corruption to demands for decent public services, but not to inclusive development. Moreover, populism has elbowed out the efforts at democratisation.

Meanwhile, the centre-left Philippine government of 2010–2016, in which social democrats participated, also could not renew its mandate. 'Good governance' increased productivity, but welfare measures failed to make much of a dent in the negative effects of market-driven growth, making increasingly many people more interested in a 'strong man' (Duterte) than a decent one (the liberal candidate Roxas).

The Indonesian dynamics are similarly troubling but also point to escape routes. Reformist populism with 'Jokowi' in the forefront was based on local negotiations between politicians and unions, and civil society activists facilitating popular movements among informal labourers, the urban poor and others, for improved wages, welfare measures and liveable urban development plan. Divisions certainly blossomed, including between unions and informal labourers, and scaling up was hard, but a broad alliance proved possible for a universal public health reform.

In others words, after decades of experiments of how to build democratic popular-interest collectivities that might negotiate welfare-based development, this was obviously the way forward: unity behind comprehensive rights and welfare reforms.

Yet, there were other lessons too. There was no strategy to continue work for more reforms nor was there a way to sustain negotiations between all concerned parties. No one even tried to develop this, and populist ideas of direct supposedly

democratic relations between leaders and their people only made things worse. So unions returned to their regular priorities and transactions with politicians, while informal labourers and 'freelancers' were scattered and marginalised. When challenged by conservatives, President 'Jokowi' toned down his reformist populism in favour of compromises with political elites. At the time of writing, he is even suggesting an 'omnibus law' – only negotiated with business, not labour – to create new jobs by less burdensome employment regulations without any compensation in terms of rights and welfare.

Kerala, in the context of right-wing central governance, has but limited opportunities to mobilise public resources, but can use other means. This is thanks to the history of public health and education built through decades of popular struggles. Education can be further enhanced, benefiting a wider pool of citizens than skilled individuals and well-paid émigré labourers in the Gulf countries and elsewhere, thus serving as a renewed basis for rights and welfare based development, but in order not to fall into the trap of top-down 'developmental states', it calls for negotiations with the parties concerned – just as required in Indonesia.

Transformative Politics Left behind

The sixth and final lesson is that a transformative strategy has been overlooked. It is often stated, for example by progressive political economist Daron Acemoglu (2020), that the Social Democracy which developed in Europe and especially the Nordic countries differs from 'Democratic Socialism'. Nobel Prize laureate Joseph Stiglitz even calls his social democratic oriented policy proposals 'progressive capitalism' (Stiglitz, 2019). If 'Democratic Socialism' is associated with dogmatic struggle against markets and private ownership, they are right – but if it is about the character of society aimed at, they are wrong. Because Social Democracy and 'Democratic Socialism' can be combined, it might be useful to recall how the quintessential social democrat Olof Palme linked the two concepts in his declamation 'why I am a democratic socialist' in a televised debate during the 1982 Swedish election campaign (available with English subtitles on YouTube, cf. Palme 1982). My studies suggests, in a similar vein to Palme, that while Social Democracy is certainly not about either smashing capitalism by revolution or dogmatically rejecting markets in favour of public ownership and planning, it *is* about employing democratic means to nourish development that is both based on, and supportive of, *the aims* of 'Democratic Socialism' in terms of as much equity, social, political and environmental equality and welfare as possible. When private ownership and markets can be governed to foster this, fine; when they cannot, there is a need for alternatives, by democratic means.

Further, I have also argued that from an historical point of view there are four cornerstones to get there – democratic popular-interest collectivities, democratic citizen-state relations, and rights and welfare based growth. Erik Olin Wright's last book (2019), on 'How to Be an Anti-capitalist', helpfully adds four ways to construct the cornerstones: (1) getting into office and then dismantling capitalism; (2) taming it with various reforms; (3) resisting it by protests and alternatives in

civil society; and (4) escaping it by non-capitalist ideas and ways of living. These are useful distinctions, but the probably most important social democratic method is often overlooked – transformative politics and policies. Social Democracy is not merely a Polanyian counter movement (Polanyi, 1944) to make capitalism liveable by regulations and taxation to finance better welfare, as suggested by Acemoglu and Stiglitz. There is a significant difference between taming a wolf and breeding it into a working dog. Social Democracy is also about transformative strategies of striving for public reforms and civil society agreements that strengthen the capacity of broad collectivities to fight for more advanced reforms, and then even better reforms after that – towards a system where equity, equality and welfare are both investments and outcomes.

Insufficiently transformative politics and reforms stand out as the sixth major factor behind the decline of many of the admirable openings during the third wave of democracy. One example is the post-tsunami reconstruction and 'democratic' peace accord in Aceh. Both were facilitated by a hopeful international community, but the same community (including Sweden and Norway) neglected a strategy to combine these processes and support the pro-democrats, who lost out, after which Aceh lost out too. Another is the remarkable broad alliance in favour of the Indonesian public health reform 2010–2012, which not only fell apart, as I have already explained, because of insufficient organisation for negotiating further reforms towards sustainable development. There was also an absence of ideas about what other comprehensive reforms the progressives could rally behind to embolden gradual change. It was a similar story with the centre-left coalitions in Brazil, India, Indonesia and the Philippines in the early 2000s. They aimed at combining market-oriented development and rights and welfare reforms, but were typically devoid of a strategy for what reforms might transform the growth model and how.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

In view of these conclusions, four priorities may be identified. The first is to focus on *broad alliances.* Kerala since the 1930s and later Indonesia until the late 1950s proved that it was possible to overcome the dearth of broad class-based collective actors with campaigns for equal citizenship and democracy. They served as a unifying frame for diverse interests among classes and social movements to fight indirect colonial and post-colonial governance. Such an approach remains vital, including as an alternative to ethnic, religious and other forms of communal identity politics. More recently, it has also been possible to build broad alliances for mutually acceptable urban development, non-corrupt public service delivery and universal public health. This has unified formal as well as informal labour, professionals, progressive politicians and others. And progressive movements have been strengthened. In fact, alliances beyond the core labour organisations for universal welfare and inclusive economic growth were also how social democrats came to prominence in comprehensively industrialising Scandinavia in the 1930s.

The second focus should be promotion of *democratic partnership governance*. Reforms such as for better welfare, services and urban development call for state and government involvement, and coordination with business. Aside from weak union and employer organising, a major reason why alliances for such reforms have been difficult to sustain is popular distrust in state and business. But how does one get there? This is not a new dilemma. As already indicated, trust in Scandinavian governance, for one, is no doubt due to impartial institutions. Such equitable institutions were not just the results of top-down bureaucratic reforms but also because of the development of equal citizenship and representative partners in local governments as well as in business, labour and CSOs (Svensson, 2016). In the early 1930s, Scandinavian labour movements did not tone down their own self-help programmes in favour of universal welfare-state programmes until they were allowed to participate and influence public governance on an equal footing with business and other social partners. In other words, social democrats need partnership governance in order to work effectively with states and governments and further social democratic aims, and governments need it to gain legitimacy and capacity.

In Indonesia, however, the impressive alliances withered when agreements and negotiations were not democratically institutionalised and inclusive of all concerned partners. They also disintegrated in the absence of negotiated links between public health, employment conditions, wages and economic policies. Populist ideas of direct links between leaders and people did not help, quite the contrary. As a result, actors returned to special priorities, transactions and confrontations. Later on, the 'Jokowi' administration even sought refuge by linking up with conservative political and business elites as well as with religious leaders (Törnquist, 2019).

In regard to typically elite-dominated democracies, partnership governance is probably also the best way to deepen democracy, given that representatives are appointed by, and accountable to, their own organisations rather than by political leaders and bureaucrats. It is certainly not a substitute for direct citizen participation when issues really can be handled in town hall meetings; it is needed only to address the increasingly numerous matters that cannot be solved locally. Partnership governance is also not a substitute for democratic parliaments and executive offices; its purpose is only to fight elitist democracy by widening and deepening democratic governance – and to strengthen the ability of interest and cause oriented organisations to build their own strong parties.

The third priority should be *rights and welfare based growth pacts*. Northern social growth pacts were based on comprehensive industrialisation, unified unions and employers' organisations, effective and impartial governance, favourable markets and limited unemployment. Thus, there were also resources and business interest in productivity-oriented welfare. This has not been realistic in the South. The second-generation social democrats tried developmental state-led industrialisation and land reforms ahead of welfare, but were not very successful. The East Asian Tigers added production for global markets, but were authoritarian. Moderate third generation social democrats aimed at in improved 'democratic developmental state' that adjusted to global market–driven growth combined with anti-corruption and welfare measures, but they lost their way. Growth

generated more inequality than jobs, corruption persisted, democracy stagnated and the welfare measures did not transform the dynamics. Coalition governments in Brazil, India and the Philippines fell, and those in Indonesia and South Africa beat a retreat. Meanwhile, the first-generation growth pacts and welfare states in the North were undermined by market-driven globalisation.

The studies I have been involved in suggest this may be overcome by resequencing social democratic development. The already mentioned broad alliances for transformative rights and welfare reforms, along with partnership governance, might serve as precursors to social growth pacts. Firstly, by generating the necessary collective actors among labour and capital, and through better governance. Secondly, by pressing for the following additional requirements: (1) that the rights and welfare reforms are designed to contribute to inclusive growth, and vice versa, (2) that the benefitting businesses and employees contribute to the social investments and (3) that there is more public redistribution (like the supplementary Scandinavian pacts with farmers) than in the core pact between capital and labour only, to support survival along with balanced development and decent jobs in sectors that otherwise lose out in globalised markets.

The fourth priority would be *social democratic development co-operation.* This has lost steam since the 1970s. Even the Socialist International has split, and the alternative Progressive Alliance is still in search of a clear-cut agenda, 'National internationalism' after World War II was based on support for every nation's capacity to develop its own transformative policy. This was undermined by the rise of market-driven globalisation and – as I have mentioned previously, the failure to introduce an alternative NIEO and 'North-South Programme for Survival'. Social democrats too found no other option but adjust and try to benefit, while providing assistance to the worst affected. The efforts to tame the negative dynamics under the third wave of democracy have petered out. The centre-left combinations of global market-driven growth and rights and welfare did not work well even in initially celebrated cases like Brazil. International agreements, including Agenda 2030, sound impressive but ignore how local progressives will be able to enforce them on the ground. Union driven efforts to export the old social democratic growth and labour market model ignore seminal differences between the North and the South, neglecting contradictions between formal and informal labour, the need for broad alliances in favour of not just decent but also more jobs and associated rights and welfare.

The main conclusion from the studies accounted for in this chapter is that this record of failure can be altered by international agreement on prioritising support for those CSOs, unions and coalitions that relate their priorities to broad alliances – for democratic rights and welfare reforms and partnership governance towards sustainable growth.

This is not about altruism but actual development co-operation. The revival of Social Democracy calls for the internationalisation of its cornerstones – popular-interest collectivities, democracy and rights and welfare based sustainable development. Quests in the North for more radical social democratic rights and welfare policies at home (such as advocated by dissident followers in Britain and Sweden) are necessary but insufficient alternatives to populist and xenophobic

'defence' against globalisation. There must also be an alternative internationalism. This presupposes support for progressives in the South who can overcome the enticing conditions for the super exploitation of nature and people in their countries – as this propels destructive globalisation and undermines Social Democracy in the North too. Otherwise, how will it be possible to implement international agreements on defending human rights and democracy, promote decent jobs and welfare, plus green 'new deals' and other measures to also increase the demand in the South for non-destructive northern exports and investments, hold back climate change and the numbers of refugees – and contain pandemics with better public health?

NOTES

1. Examples include the British 'Momentum' vs 'Blue Labour' and the Swedish *Reformisterna and Tankesmedjan Katalys* vs *Tankesmedjan Tiden*.
2. For this point of departure, and further references, see Törnquist (2016a, 2016b) and (2021a).
3. Törnquist (2016a, 2016b) and (1999).
4. For further discussion of various social democratic regimes, see Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller, and Teichman (2007) and Sandbrook (2014).
5. Törnquist (2021b) – which also includes further references; see also the collective and wider comparative works in Harriss et al. (2004), Törnquist, Webster, and Stokke (2009), Stokke and Törnquist (2013), and Törnquist and Harriss et al. (2016).
6. For elaboration of the perspectives, see Törnquist (1999); 'non-capitalist development' was also phrased 'national democracy'.
7. For further elaboration, see Törnquist (1999).

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