



# POPULISM, IDENTITY POLITICS AND THE EROSION OF DEMOCRACIES IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

A REFLECTION FROM BALI CIVIL SOCIETY  
AND MEDIA FORUM 2018

Edited by Dinna Wisnu, Ph.D



**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT  
STIFTUNG**



COORDINATING MINISTRY FOR  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE  
REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA



INDONESIAN MINISTRY OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS





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## Remark from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

It is my pleasure to welcome the publishing of this book on *Populism, Identity Politics and the Erosion of Democracies in the 21st Century*, which is written with passion by the authors who participated in the Bali Democracy Civil Society and Media Forum 2018 (BCSMF 2018). The book documents not only what was shared during the BCSMF 2018 but also the existing concerns alive in Indonesia and in some other parts of the world. Indeed, an invaluable record on and demonstration of what Indonesia cares about, which is the promotion of stable peace, security and democracy in the world.

Indonesia cares about addressing global concerns. Bali Democracy Forum is one of the embodiments of Indonesia's commitment to contribute solution to global concerns. We believe that democracy promotes peace, tolerates differences, and gives attention to what people cares about. With Bali Democracy Forum, Indonesia hosts a platform of dialogue wherein countries across the world could learn about how democracy work, support democratic initiatives and formulate cooperation to promote democracy across the world.

We know it all too well that democracy is not one-size-fits all. Hence democracy must be developed upon homegrown values in order to create good effective government, which ultimately would bring prosperity to the people. Indonesia is confident that democracy aligns with what Indonesia need, especially given the tough decades of living under authoritarian regimes. And for this reason, we want to inspire other countries to see how democracies grow or regress, and then do something about it.

In the 2018 Bali Democracy Forum Indonesia responds to democracy in regress. We would like the world to stand alert as several countries have chosen to turn a deaf ear on the voice of the people, the press is being undermined, the social media is being used to spread hoax and hate speeches for narrow political interests, while democracy and democratic institutions are being misused to spread anti-democratic values that shift governance to illiberal democracy. Not only this is a reminder that democracy requires nurturing, it also suggests that democracies that have failed to be inclusive, to be responsive to the marginalized, and ensure equitable prosperity for all would not be appealing anymore. Erosion of democracy happens for some reasons and Indonesia cares about addressing the causes of such erosion together.

The opening of Tunisia and Berlin chapters of Bali Democracy Forum, in 2017 and 2018 respectively, gives us a bigger space to make all voices concerned about democracy be heard. It is our hope that the two chapters nurture the spirit of democracy even more to farther corners of the world.

On behalf of the Indonesian government, allow me to thank everyone who made the spirit of democracy alive. To the editor, writers and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, we are deeply grateful for the passion and dedication to make the publishing of this book possible.

Jakarta, November 2019

**Dindin Wahyudin**

Director/Head of Centre for  
Policy Analysis and Development on  
Multilateral Affairs Policy Analysis and  
Development Agency

## Remark from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Indonesia office (FES) felt honored, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia invited FES to become a co-organizer of the “Bali Democracy Forum Berlin chapter” in September 2018 and of the “Bali Media and civil Society Forum” in December 2018.

Following the “Bali Democracy Forum - Tunis Chapter” of 2017; the Bali Democracy Forum - Berlin Chapter (BDF Berlin chapter) was only the second event in the outreach series, and the very first held in Europe. The focus of this 1,5-track event, that was opened by the Indonesian and the German foreign Minister, was the interconnection of *Democracy and Migration*. Given the ongoing controversial debate about the human refugee crisis in Europe, which peaked in autumn 2015, and the repercussions for the political landscape in Europe and particularly Germany, the German capital – Berlin - seemed to be an appropriate location. Since in both host countries and around their respective regions there is an interest to address questions like; What is the impact of mass migration for sending countries?; Do the pressures resulting from irregular migration affect the ability to defend democratic and welfare structures at home as well as a rule based global order?

The BDF XI of 2018, which took place in December 2018 in Bali, addressed the theme “*Democracy for Prosperity*,” while it was enriched by the preceding Asian-European discussion on Migration and democracy of the BDF Berlin chapter. The Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF), which has been for the very first time conducted in parallel with BDF XI, addressed as well related issues like the worldwide rise of populism, identity politics and hoax.

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Retno Marsudi already highlighted in Berlin: [...] *No democracy is immune to the risk of backsliding - even mature democracies face the danger of setbacks to their practices.* [...] [...] *Migration had added complexity to social and economic inequality, which potentially leads to imbalances in voices, representation, opportunity and access that divides the population. This kind of alienation can increase support for populist and extremist views and violent conflict - particular among young people.* [...]

This statement illustrates quite clearly how the quality of democracy is affected by the level of wealth and income distribution, migration policies as well as the risk of populism and identity politics and finally people’s desire for inclusion and recognition.



Since across the globe there is empirical evidence, that the current surge of populism and identity politics – based on ethnicity, religion, culture and sexual orientation – is encouraged, if people feel economically and/or culturally excluded and therefore not recognized in their dignity.

Globalized and unleashed markets have led to the split of societies and divided the citizens in those, who profit and those who are or feel neglected. The global economic and financial crisis in 2008 has resulted - with some years of delay - in a widespread feeling, that politicians have lost control and fail to represent citizens interests. This loss of control feeling has been confirmed again by the human refugee crisis from 2015 onwards. Claims to take back control within national borders is one reaction to this. Another phenomenon, which can be observed in a lot of countries worldwide, is scapegoating those, who allegedly don't belong to the group of identity. In Europe as well as in the US rightwing populists blame "the migrants" for the social neglect of the "native citizens". In some Asian countries either Christians, Muslims or Chinese are made scapegoats for different reasons.

And unfortunately, there are groups of people, who are very sophisticated to capitalize from the ethnic or religion-based polarization, by re-interpreting social conflicts (rich vs. poor) into identity conflicts (we natives vs. the foreigners). Instead of social goods, these "identity entrepreneurs" offer recognition, moral, and group identity to those, who feel neglected. Political entrepreneurs also tend to further nurture such cleavages through hoax/fake news in the "Social media", in order to maximize their own benefits.

So, against these global trends what is needed to guarantee the acceptance and preservation of a democratic system?

According to the famous scholar Prof. Thomas Meyer, a democracy – apart from the pure electoral process - can only be sustainable, if basic human rights are guaranteed. Negative as well as positive human rights. Or to put it another way; if all five major groups of human rights as listed in the two 1966 UN Human Rights covenants are guaranteed; the political and the civil, as well as the social, economic and cultural human rights. According to this international law, the mentioned five groups of human rights are mutually dependent and should not be played off against each other. The violation of human rights of the one group inevitably bears consequences for the realization of human rights in the other.

Furthermore, a functioning and independent legal system is absolutely necessary.

Last but not least, a Civil Society, which is the sum total of all initiatives, unions, associations, organizations and networks in which people are voluntarily engaged with the objective of pursuing the welfare of the community apart from their own, is an indispensable basis and precondition for a strong and effective democracy.

And based on the European and German experience in the last four years; a cosmopolitan legitimization of national state borders is also inevitable. Because apart from the negative effects

the exodus of the fittest has on the sending countries, it will inevitably erode welfare systems and strengthen political entrepreneurs, respectively right-wing populists, in the receiving countries. And as a direct consequence challenge the social contract and therefore implicitly also the democratic system.

The German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas stressed at the BDF Berlin Chapter; [...] *the migration debate is threatening to split our societies. We're seeing that around the EU and also right here in Germany. The divided camps seem irreconcilably opposed. Some even want to see migration as the source of all political problems. Migration is being misused as a means of polarizing debate. People are stirring up and misusing anxieties that only indirectly have anything to do with migration - fears about pensions, care for the elderly, jobs, security, education, and anxieties about the consequences of globalization and digitalization in general. [...]*

On a global level, right-wing populism and identity politics find their expression in a call against all forms of multilateralism. The desire to take back control from multilateral or supranational bodies is gaining tractions around the globe. Mefirst-policies are challenging the multilateral order, which has been painfully build since World War II.

In conclusion, the exchange at the BDF Berlin Chapter 2018 as well as BCSMF 2018 in Bali showed impressively, that the functioning of democracy has preconditions and as soon as it is established, needs to be defended every day. The Asian-European dialogue also illustrated evidently that democracies are currently challenged worldwide. Amidst these national, regional and global challenges of democracy, it is certainly laudable that the Bali Democracy Forum has been continuously strengthened by the Indonesian government and civil society to promote democratization and has now also been further internationalized through outreach events outside of Indonesia. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is proud, to take part in this endeavor.

Jakarta, November 2019

**Sergio Grassi**

Resident Director

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Indonesia office

# 1. Democracy and Its Challenges

Dinna Wisnu

## Introduction

The morning was bright and humid in Bali on December 6-8, 2018 yet some five-hundred participants crowded the *Nusa Dua* Convention Center. Three hundred of them came from eighty-eight participating and observer countries at the level of ministers, vice-ministers and diplomats, plus the representatives of six international organizations. One hundred were representatives of civil society activists, academicians, media professionals, whereas one-hundred-thirty-seven of them were students from various universities in fifty-eight countries from around the world. Dressed formally, these participants of various ages, experiences and backgrounds mingled, exchanged greetings, shared tables during breaks and taking pictures of each other. The energy level was high, and the tone was friendly. The theme of the dialog however was tough: “Democracy for Prosperity” in the era where populism, identity politics, hoaxes, and sensationalism are rising.

These people gathered for the eleventh Bali Democracy Forum (BDF), a forum hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia as Indonesia’s contribution to the advancement of democracy, pluralism and modernization in the world. With BDF, the government of Indonesia intends to demonstrate the liveliness of Indonesian democracy, the commitment of Indonesian government to democracy, and the willingness to share the values, as well as the way-and-means to support democracies to other nation-states.

When BDF was established in 2008, the then Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda was determined that there must be a comprehensive dialog among states and societies on democracies for better democracy for future generation. That year was nearing the end of the first term for President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and he did draw international attention for this initiative. High-rank officials from thirty-two countries attended the birth of BDF, and some pledged financial support for the initiative. President Yudhoyono highlighted the desire to make democracy a strategic agenda in the region, aligning perspectives of democracies to bridge differences of views among countries.

It is important to note that from the beginning BDF is not meant to be exclusive only to democratic countries but rather an inclusive forum for countries in the region to share the experiences of living under democracy and develop the best trainings to strengthen democracies. BDF have seen the Head of States and Prime Ministers of various countries, including the neighboring

ones, participating. But initially, and more recently kept that way, BDFs are held at the ministerial level. Many countries have participated, from Afghanistan, Australia, Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, Germany, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Timor Leste and the United States to North Korea, Lao PDR, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Syria and many more. Indeed, in practice BDF has been inclusive not only to countries in Asia but from around the world. The tradition is to hold BDF near the international day of human rights in early December. Human rights to Indonesia are inseparable parts of democracy.

The next Foreign Ministers Marty Natalegawa and Retno Marsudi continued this legacy of Indonesia providing a platform for democracy dialogue among Asian governments. The Prime Minister of Japan as the co-chair of the 2nd BDF in 2010 applauded the forum, referring to the spirit of *yu-ai*, or fraternity, where diversity is respected, and people coexist in dignity. Other countries agreed that democracy is a strategic agenda to strengthen national capacities, deliver social and economic progress for the people; a way to ensure that voices of people can be heard by their leaders, an avenue to promote nation building, gender equality, peaceful societies and economic prosperity.

Indeed, a lot has been expected from democracies. Back when BDF was born, Asia was *the* hope in time of severe global financial crisis of 2007-2008 that sent many economies in Europe and America to the tank. Asian economies were surprisingly resilient, partly due to prudence supervision of the financial sector, their relatively high productivity of labour and strong consumer demands from intra-regional trade (Keat, 2009), but also thanks to the gradual rise of China and the downfall of Soviet Union that have caused widespread decline in the bargaining strength of labour unions in the industrialized world in its influence on price and the innovations in the IT industry that changed some nature of market competition (Ramskogler, 2015). There was a discourse of "Asia looking away from the West" because of the crisis. Asian economies are seeking new frontier for growth and investment, making the issue of democracy, democratization, and democratic practices challenging because China is determined to keep being in its path as non-democracy and never put democracy as prerequisite to be its partners.

The unintended consequence of this trend is the growing challenge to democracy. In 2010 the Economist Intelligence Units issued a report about "democracy in retreat", listing less numbers of "full democracies" than the "flawed democracies", "hybrid regimes" and "authoritarian regimes" from around the world (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2010). The EIU report saw authoritarian regimes more entrenched in Middle East, much of the former Soviet Union, parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, also the rise of discontent to democratic transition in east-central Europe, erosion of democracy in Latin America and parts of Asia. The US and UK were cited as near the bottom of "full democracy", due to its erosion of civil liberties related to the fight against terrorism, low level of political participation across voting turnout, membership of political parties and willingness to engage in and attitudes to political activity. Freedom House in its 2019 issue also took the theme of "democracy in retreat"; disclosing its conclusion that for thirteen consecutive years there has been a decline in global freedom, where authoritarian countries apply banning of opposition groups and tightening the screws on any independent media that remain, democracies regressed in the face of rampant corruption, antiliberal populist movements and breakdowns in the rule of law, rejecting

separation of powers and target minorities for discriminatory treatment (Freedom House, 2019). Freedom House also cited a crisis of confidence in some societies that democracy still serves their interests.

Indonesia's take on democracy is therefore highly critical. During those years, Indonesia was consolidating its democracy, expanding the practice of democracy to not just electing representatives in the parliament but also to directly elect the President and Vice President at the national level and the Regents, the Mayors, and the Governors at the provincial and district levels. Democracy is understood in Indonesia as more than just holding elections on regular basis, thus not limited to the Schumpeterian definition of democracy, but as national identity and way of life. Indonesia wanted to move away from the history and labeling of being known as a country that has coerced the opposition to agree on something to persuading and consenting ideas through democratic institutions and means; from emasculation of multi-party system, oppression to freedom of speech and militarism to the restoration of multi-party system, decentralization of power and comprehensive political reform that is based on constitutionalism (Anwar, 2010) to new doctrine for Indonesian military to external defense (Rabasa & Haseman, 2002a).

Against this background, Indonesia campaigned for opportunities for nations to forge mutually beneficial partnerships that accentuated partnership rather than confrontation; "one which places primacy on the building of bridges, rather than deepening the fault lines and divisions" (Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations, 2011). Minister Natalegawa saw how the direct elections in Indonesia have attracted many countries to learn on ways to improve democratic institutions and to consolidate democracies within pluralistic society.

President Joko Widodo decided that his administration continues the BDF. In his opening remark of the 9th BDF in 2016, President Widodo highlighted the importance of democracy and tolerance. At times when conflicts are spreading, radicalism and extremism are broadening, and the willingness to tolerate differences are low, BDF is good to grow optimism. The theme of religion, democracy and tolerance marked the first BDF under Joko Widodo's presidency and participation was high; ninety-four countries attended the program.

Aligned with President's statement, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi have expressed the desire to promote democracy in Asia-Pacific. She changed the approach of BDF, outreaching to more participants to instill greater enthusiasm on democracy: to university students in the "millennial age" (born between 1981-1996) and to integrate the BDF Civil Society and Media Forum to the government forum in BDF. She wants to suppress antipathy to and marginalization within democracy. Her take is that all democracies are technically vulnerable to retreat thus continuous sharing of challenges and formulation of ways to face those challenges became pertinent.

Minister Marsudi is also aware that different regions would have different challenges to their democracies. Throughout the years democracies from outside of Asia have wished for their perspectives to be incorporated to dialogs in BDF. To address this need, Minister Marsudi opened BDF Chapter Tunis and BDF Chapter Berlin in 2017 and 2018 respectively. This way Indonesia

opened partnership with Tunisia and Germany to co-host BDF forums that could allow greater participation from countries of Middle East and Europe.

This brief introduction showed how BDF is, and has continued to grow as, one of the champion programs of Indonesian diplomacy. Indonesia expects to be accepted as a true partner for world peace, security and prosperity. As a country strategically located in Asia and being the largest archipelago in the world, Indonesia desires for multilateralism and cooperation with any countries. Indonesia's identity as a pluralistic society that promotes the principle of "Unity in Diversity" (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*) cannot be separated from its being as the world's fourth most populous country in the world with the largest Muslim population. Indonesia wants everyone to live in peace without fear, even when discussing democracy.

The 11th BDF deserves special attention for several reasons. *First*, although BDF itself is a forum of diplomacy, this 11th BDF were not limited to diplomatic activities; in fact, it felt more opened and welcomed to civil society activists, academics, media professionals and young people. Not only there were photo sessions for all to do candid expressions suitable for social media, which is a useful icebreaking mechanism for the officials to blend with the non-state participants, it also invited a broader array of non-state participants. Two forums were organized parallel to the state forum: the civil society, academics and media gathering in the Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF) and the university students gathering in Bali Democracy Student Conference (BDSC). On day two, the participants of BCSMF and BDSC were invited to join the state forum where the representatives of each forum revealed the conclusions and expectations to the state officials. For the first time in BDF history, participation of civil society activists, academicians, media professionals and young people are treated as an integral part of BDF. *Second*, this is the first BDF with sharing of perspectives taken from BDF Chapter Berlin. The representatives of civil society activists, academics and media professionals attending the birth of BDF Chapter Berlin attended the 11th BDF and shared the knowledge raised in BDF Chapter Berlin with the participants attending the BCSMF 2018. *Third*, this is also the first BDF that would link with the topic of subsequent BDF meeting in 2019. In doing so, the Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs collaborate with, among others, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung to document the points raised in the BCSMF 2018, enrich these points with the contexts of the era and a framework for analysis, so that the participants of BDF 2019 would connect any dialogs about democracy with the challenges facing democracies in 2018.

This book is the output of such collaboration. Against the greater theme of "Democracy for Prosperity", the BCSMF meeting of 2018 focused on the challenges to democracies that emanate from populism, the use and exploitation of identity politics, hoaxes, sensationalism and political bias. This topic emerged out of a greater concern that democracies around the globe are declining: democracies in established economies continue to resort to protectionism and extreme political parties, their people are becoming less tolerable to differences, resorting to sensationalism and hoaxes instead of public education about the truth, and also the disproportionate use and exploitation of identity politics that divide societies. Frictions in the society are spotted and there was a desire to discuss how such frictions emerge and grow over the years. Hearing how civil society figures discuss the issue is such an eye opening to what matters to the public when practicing democracy.

Against the topic of delivering prosperity, there is no easy answer for any democracy. Would democracy deliver the promises of prosperity that their political leaders have campaigned for? In Europe, such promise to deliver prosperity to all is challenged with populism tendency across various political parties. The waves of migration from outside of Europe have taken many countries in Europe resistant to migrants; bringing the consequence of a growingly stable trend of sharp divides among political streams in countries across Europe. The rising dominance of right-wing political parties in many democracies such as Germany, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Hungary, Finland, Denmark, Austria and France triggered questions on what to do to support democracies under such challenging circumstances.

This book wishes to enrich dialog on this matter. The editor, who wrote for chapter one and chapter five of this book, has spoken at BDF Chapter Berlin and shared the points raised in Berlin at the BCSMF 2018. This chapter provides background on why democracy becomes central in Indonesia's diplomacy and what kind of concept of diplomacy were discussed in BCSMF 2018. Andreas Ufen, writer of chapter two, spoke at the 11th BDF and he is one of the prominent experts on populism and democracy. He focused on the concept of populism and how it has been practiced over the years, which explains the framework of the dialog among civil society activists, academics and media professionals at the 11th BDF. Andina Dwifatma, writer of chapter three, and Indrasari Tjandraningsih, writer of chapter four, were invited to join the 11th BDF and their writing in this book represent the civil society and media perspectives.

We combine popular writing style with theoretical framework on democracy and prosperity to reflect on the points raised at BCSMF. In chapter five, the way forward for democracies were discussed, including the points raised at the BDSC and the state meeting. The points from BDSC and the state meeting are taken from the official closing statements.

The book centers on this main question: What can populism do to democracy? How dangerous is populism to democracy? How may populism and the use and exploitation of identity politics erode democracy? What kinds of impact populism may bring and the exploitation of identity politics may do to prosperity? How are hoaxes, sensationalism, and political bias affect democracy? What are the ways and means to mitigate hoaxes, sensationalism and political bias in democracy? What can the media and civil society do? The starting point of these issues were the experience and puzzles coming out from the mind of the Indonesians today. When expressed in the forum of diverse nations, however, the take home points were optimistic.

## **Democracy as a Concept**

Democracy is central to contemporary politics of the end part of 20th century and the 21st century. Schumpeter (1942) understood democracy as a political regime in which rulers are selected through free and contested elections. Schumpeter's defense to democracy grows in his analysis of (Cold War) tension between capitalism and socialism where he believed that the regular change of power would generate competent and creative political leadership that could bridge the two "ism". So long as the process is competitive, the most competent leaders would emerge out of democracy and deliver what the society needs.

Against this “minimal definition of democracy”, Przeworski (2004) identified how democracies are more likely to emerge as countries become economically developed but would more likely to survive in developed countries. Przeworski focused on the actions of people that shape the outcomes of democratic and non-democratic regimes, noting how different political forces reap benefits from enjoying being a dictator without any active opposition. Przeworski (pp. 7) then argued that in order for democracy to work, “different groups must agree to disagree: they must accept a framework of institutions within which they would process their conflicts....To establish a lasting democracy, they (a group of people) must first find if, given the historical conditions, there is a game that all players would continue to play even if they lose. If there is such a game, they must agree to play it.”

During the BCSMF meeting, however, democracy is understood beyond having regular election to find leaders. The opening remark of Foreign Minister Marsudi highlighted the importance of citizens’ participation in democracy, the youth included, as well as the private sector. Having support and legitimacy from citizens, therefore, is seen as critical to a democracy. Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were also on the table. Session three of BCSMF discussed how having accountable, transparent institutions would support the achievement of SDGs in democracies. The word “inclusive” was mentioned numerous times suggesting how democracy is expected by the attending participants to leave no one behind or make anyone marginalized. Civil society groups, academic institutions and media were expected to disseminate information that would raise awareness on SDGs, corruption, discrimination and other things needing attention from the society (not just the voters!).

Given such emphasis, a minimal definition of democracy could not fill the expectation of BDF dialog. After all, a democracy can only work when the voters participating in the elections have some degree of understanding on the differences between the contesting political parties and the candidates. For this, a democracy must operate fully throughout the years, including in between elections, to spread information about the perspectives of various political parties and candidates without fear and oppression, to engage the voters in participatory programs that would generate their interests to vote for certain political parties and candidates, and to nurture the public beliefs that whoever win would not enact tyranny of the majority.

Owen (2003, pp 107) highlighted the importance of having “equal consociates” with “collectively effective capacity to govern, either directly or via intermediaries, matters of common interest (or concerning the common good) *qua* membership of this unit of rule”. He underlined the importance of having the commitments to ensuring the political equality of citizens and to facilitating “collective self-rule” beyond the simple right to the periodic selection of one’s rulers by way of competitive elections. Owen quoted the five ideal standards of normative commitments of democracy raised by Robert Dahl (1988, pp. 38): effective participation, equality in voting, gaining enlightened understanding, exercising final control over the agenda, and inclusion of adults. Of course, the complexity is in the aggregation of votes and the interests they represent.



## Democracy is a Choice

Against this theoretical framework, we learn why Indonesia see the topic of democracy, prosperity, populism and identity politics as critical for BCSMF 2018. The time of BDF birth was the year Indonesian economy was finally showing its consistency in growth. But it was also the year that the middle-income trap haunts its future growth. Newer emerging economies in the region, such as Vietnam and Cambodia have been proven attractive to investments due to its lower cost of labour and other resources. Being middle-income countries cut most chances of getting financial support from donor countries, pushing Indonesia to experiment on models of partnerships for developments. Questions loom on whether Indonesia could surpass the challenge of being a middle-income country given that income inequality remains a serious internal issue needing attention from any ruling political parties. Solving such puzzle is not only important internally as a way for political parties and candidates to offer programmatic approach in the newly consolidated democracy, but having a platform to discuss the matter is also a way to ensure broader global support to its continuous effort to consolidate democracy. After all democracy needs internal as well as external support.

The developmental aid approach that ties in economic growth support to democracy, good governance and human rights is one reason for communicating democracy at diplomatic level. When partnering countries understand the importance of constituent service, cooperation would not be solely seen from the profit-earning perspective but rather from the caring perspective. Working together to grow the economies of democracies would bring greater benefits to the world. There is a growing belief that democracy nurtures peace; that democracies don't fight each other (Hobson, 2015) and with the global spirit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), democracies would endorse promote inclusive growth and protection of vulnerable groups. Such belief needs continuous support to materialize. Otherwise what happened, for instance in the 2003 Iraq war, when US President George Bush Jr. justified invasion to Iraq on the basis that the authoritarian regime of Iraq housed weapons of mass destruction that threatens the United States and other democratic countries, may repeat itself.

Indonesia believes that while democracy is benevolent and important, the use of aggression, violence and military measures to promote democracy is out of the question. This is why engagements with non-democracies as well as democracies make sense to endorse democracies.

Indonesia remembers vividly how some other countries may perceive a country so negatively that their ambition becomes to impose ideas instead of cultivating ideas, and thus advancing colonial ambition. Indonesia saw many and continuous provincial rebellions when the Republic was just born; back then one of the many reasons for external powers to distrust the Indonesian government was the capacity of the government to govern. Negotiating for the Western powers to refrain from dividing Indonesia was no easy diplomacy but Indonesia chose to host forums and dialogs, organizing shuttle diplomacy and courtesy visits in order to attract the attentions of other newly independent countries and the more advanced countries to appreciate Indonesia's view of itself and of the world. An article written by Vice President Muhammad Hatta on Indonesia's

foreign policy depict the beliefs that cooperation with other countries is essential if the ideals of sovereign, independent, just and prosperous Indonesia are to become a reality; pursuing a policy of peace and friendship with all nations on a basis of mutual respect and noninterference with each other's structure of government is a must, while not aligning itself with the American bloc or the Russian bloc in the Cold War conflict was an act of counterpoise to the two giant blocs (Hatta, 1953).

In the dynamic global politics where countries fought to expand its sphere of influences, the values attached to every engagement may mean compromises and an acceptance to certain practices, even if it is considered controversial to the opposition party. In the early years of Indonesia as a Republic, the form of such compromises was politically sensitive. The multiple political parties that joined the 1955 first liberal election had different perspectives on who to work with to grow the Indonesian economy and society. Given the geostrategic location of Indonesia, the United States pumped \$681 million in economic and technical aid into Indonesia (Foreign Policy Association 1964, 60) while Soviet Union supplied Indonesia with 789 million rubles' worth of assistance, which was more than one-fifth of the total amount provided by Moscow to all non-socialist developing countries (Bogden 2008, 116). All grew internal reactions that destabilized politics. The military and the Islamic parties were fearful of Soviet influence and were weary about Sukarno's leniency to Soviet Union (Bogden 2008, 113). Sukarno's worldview, which was known as Marhaenism, combining Islamic elements with nationalism and Marxist socialism (Bernhard Dahm 1969) was not convincing internally, which ended up motivating Sukarno to retreat from democracy in 1959 and applied Guided Democracy. Guided Democracy was his "solution" to the unfamiliarity of Indonesian political parties to with governmental institutions borrowed from the West, and with to parties conflicting to the point of invoking political instability (van der Kroef 1957, 113). The practice of 1955 democracy was perceived as destabilizing and non-conductive to development, at least by Sukarno and the supporting elite. Authoritarianism went deep under Suharto's New Order regime for thirty-two years.

Since the beginning of the Republic of Indonesia, democracy is a complex concept to practice. When the New Order regime was toppled in May 1998, Indonesia needed constant reminder that democracy is the best governing system for the country. Golkar as the ruling party of the New Order era was divided into three camps, especially after Habibie's initiative to allow East Timor to its independence was condemned nation-wide; thus the vacuum created on the Islamic side of the Muslim/non-Muslim political divide was filled by the traditionalist leader Abdurrahman Wahid, known by his nick-name Gus Dur, who later became an Indonesian President (Liddle 2000). This is a reality that was hard to chew by Megawati Sukarnoputri, whose party won the majority in the parliament, but her presidential nomination was rejected by nearly all religion-based political parties on the ground that a woman could not be "an imam" a.k.a. leader.

Indeed, religion as political identity has been a challenge in Indonesia's democracy. There has been piling discourses of Indonesian vulnerability to religion-based identity: from the communal conflict in Moluccas that spread to other parts of eastern and central Indonesia, where Christians blamed Muslim radicals seeking to advance a national Islamic agenda and the involvement of Laskar Jihad fighters were spotted (Rabasa and Haseman 2002b), the network of Jemaah Islamiyah that is a

jihadist movement inside of Indonesia (Barton 2005), to the shariatisation of society as found in parts of Indonesia (Kolig 2005) and the rebellion of the past such as the Darul Islam that never quite die (Temby 2010). Although the majority might elect secular political parties, namely the political parties which prefer to be identified as adhering to *Pancasila* (means literally Five Principles in Sanskrit), just as Mujani and Liddle showed (2009), extreme radical Islamist inside of Indonesia never quite die. The webs of international terrorism do bring consequences to Indonesian politics. The use of religion in Jakarta's election of governor in 2017 was a stark reminder that having good governance performance may not at all guarantee election result especially when the opposition was using religion sentiment to garner support. Despite widespread satisfaction for improving public service and facilities when rising from vice governor to governor to replace Governor Joko Widodo who became President, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama was jailed for accusation of religious blasphemy. The challenge then was not just about tolerance or intolerance, or how a leader respond to campaign pressures; there was also the element of Islamic radicalism, hate speech, and mass mobilization to the streets to secure (election) result.

While theories of democracy discuss about the tendency of swinging choice for voters, namely how allegiance to political parties may change, not much is being said on how dissatisfaction to the outcomes of democracy and the choices made by democratically elected leaders translate into a consolidation or an erosion of democracy. Studies show that across the world democratic system may be proved unable to provide a framework for effective government, either performance was perceived as mediocre or just so-so or there is a disgust to politics, politicians and political parties (Emerson 1960). When people speak about dissatisfaction to the ruling party or to the heads of governments, many things could be pointed as the reason: from not treating an issue satisfactorily, having incompetent minister or bureaucracy, or failing to transform the corrupt ecosystem into a clean one.

A populist leader may give an appeal to such frustration, offering a once-and-for-all solution to the rule of corrupt elite who have "kidnapped the will of the majorities" (De la Torre 2019, 1). Populism surge when democracy is in deficit of trust from the populace.

Vedi Hadiz (2016) shows that in Islam majority countries populism has specific nature that appeals the public. He differentiates the historical development of populism in Indonesia, Egypt, Turkey and to some extent also in Iran to show that using religious identity in populist mobilization does not necessarily entail displacement of the idea of the "nation" by religious identity. Hadiz claim that the idea of homogeneity of interests of the people is often just a claim which does not reflect the diversity of forces that are not happy with the ruling party or politician or politics. How the youth recruited and associate themselves with the established politicians also matter to the outcome of populism. Hadiz took note of studies on deep-seated anxieties about the social and economic effects of globalization not least among the working class but also the struggling middle classes in society.

## Perspectives on Challenges to Democracies

The opening remark of BCSMF 2018 was given by Dr. Siswo Pramono (Head of Policy Analysis and Development Agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Ahmad Djauhar (Vice Chairman of the Indonesian Press Council) and Dr. N. Hassan Wirajuda (Founder and patron of Institute for Peace and Democracy). The moderator was Dr. Ketut Irawan of the Institute for Peace and Democracy. The speakers talked about disruption of democratization given the moves of some individuals and groups in imposing non-democratic practices and norms to public. Ahmad Jauhar called this “a seizing of public space” in democracy, a moment that he said could disrupt public trust, create collective opposition and legitimize the domination of certain minority groups that are not friendly to democracy. He called for counselling for the younger generation so that they are more alert, more aware, and more cautious in sharing and processing information through social media.

Who to engage? Dr. Siswo spoke about the millennial generation and how important it is to engage these youth group considering that more and more of them are more interested to work in the private (and profit) sector rather than in the government or social sector. Dr. Siswo urged that maintaining the interest of youth to democracy is critical to sustaining democracy. Dr. Hassan Wirajuda remind the audience that there is a strong relationship between democracy, human rights and development; “there will be no human rights protection in the absence of democracy” and that the international covenants on civil and political rights as well as on economic, social and cultural rights contain democratic values. He further highlighted that securing civil and political rights is the prerequisite to free, fair and democratic elections. “It is called elections with integrity”, Wirajuda added. This shows that minimal definition of democracy is not sufficient when dialoguing about handling challenges of democracy.

When populism was put on the table, Wirajuda raised concern over the rise of disrespect to humanitarian principles, anti-Islam, anti-migrant that is growing in Europe and the United States. But Wirajuda would rather think that eventually those countries would reconcile the current development with the values of human rights and democracies that they have been preaching globally. Populism to Wirajuda is a protest vote, a temporary phenomenon, that democracies must pay attention to. After all, he argued, many democracies have witnessed bad governance. Proving otherwise would promote democracy.

The editor chaired session one where PD. Dr. Andreas Ufen (German Institute of Global and Area Studies), Henry Thomas Simarmata (The Center for Islam and State Studies ) spoke and get first discussion from Luky Djani (Institute for Strategic Initiatives) and Donal Fariz (Indonesian Corruption Watch). The session started with a reminder from the editor that democracy bring good connotation, “a word of hope”. What can erode such hope?

Bringing the points from BDF Chapter Berlin meeting in September 2018, the editor, Dinna Wisnu, located different hopes for different groups of people. Migration was raised extensively in Berlin and there different societies look at migration in different ways. In Asia, migration is part of civilization and identity as archipelagic nations, a way to increase prosperity. With such background, speaking about migration from the perspective of problems would easily divide

countries, but the perspective of vulnerabilities to migrants has more potentials to unite countries. In Europe, migration is generally seen as taking away prosperity from what could be exclusively the locals' rights. Reconciling these views require an appreciation of human rights, of just treatment, and the sense of equality in the increasingly connected world. German Minister of Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas thought that the problem is not migration but nationalism, and that having more international vision and multilateral cooperation would change such narrow-minded perspective. The Berlin BDF forum urged protection for vulnerable migrants for a better integration and acceptance within with local communities.

Andreas Ufen responded to the points raised about the emergence of populism as negative forces against democracy. To him populism has multiple and often ambiguous understanding. When populism is defined as political mobilization of mass constituencies by personalist leaders who challenged established elites, Ufen argued that politics would always mobilize constituencies, challenging established elites, and there are instances where populism rise without personalist leaders. Putting populism as non-ideology is also not accurate because Ufen saw how some elements of populism deployed nationalism, fascism, or some elements of socialism. Looking at populism as attaining only short-term goal is also inaccurate. In Europe, the Right-wing party is serious about stopping migration at all cost and to them this is not a short-term goal. Do the populist only thin about personal goals? Ufen also say it is not always the case. Again, the case in Europe shows that the end goal of the Right wing parties is to bring collapse to the European Union, starting with stopping migration, and this effort may take many years rendering the argument of personal interest void.

The biggest impact of populism to democracy is polarization and conflicts, which may be dangerous for democracy because populist politicians usually despise intermediating institutions. Ufen mentioned about the longing for "strong man" and to some degree this can be suppressed when the civil society and media respond through counter protest. When hoaxes inundate the public, there should be systematic revealing of such fabrication of information.

Simarmata highlighted the importance of improving the learning capacity of organizations and entities of democracies. This is critical, in his view, because democracy must be articulated in appealing way to the generation of consumers, the group of people who knows well how to consume than to produce information. Having *Pancasila* as an ideology helps, Simarmata said, to bridge aspirations.

Djani challenged Ufen given the context of welfare state that is declining in Europe and the US whereas welfare state is growing in Asia. European and US governments are in the position to cut back assistance and benefits whereas in Asia participation is enlarged and benefits reach the usually unreached groups. Djani noted that it may might be the middle class that are suffering most in such circumstances because they are challenged to enter the workforce given the digital disruption. He quoted a research finding showing how in the past three years people can purchase house, cars, motorbikes and multiple smartphones but they say their economy is declining. Djani called this "inward-looking ideology", a very limited way of looking at prosperity.

Fariz also focused on the perspective of prosperity, saying that politicians definitely “prospered” under democracy. The context of Indonesia is his proof. Corruption have increased and 60.9% of the cases are done by politicians. The Indonesian Corruption Commission (KPK) became opponent to politicians for such reason. He mentioned the need for revision on election rules and political party rules so that politicians would refrain from doing money politics and corruption.

Exclusion in society, the classification of people as “us against them”, was raised in the question and answer session. Such is a sign of rising right-wing populism. In the context of Europe and America, it is much easier to differentiate political parties orientation in such spectrum of Right and others but in Asia, and specifically in Indonesia, most political parties are not really different with each other ideologically. In both cases populism can rise. The politics of blame is often used to mobilize support under unfortunate circumstances that certain group is facing. All it takes were the feeling of becoming marginalized and they could practically blame anything and anyone.

Given this flow, in the next chapter two, PD. Dr. Andreas Ufen provides a summary of how populism is defined and has been seen across the world, both in the past and in recent times. He shares cases of populism and how they affected the rise of identity politics. The chapter includes discussion on the political divide, the competition and the cooperation among groups within democracy when populism and identity politics apply. The chapter draw on the experience of Indonesia and Europe as the point of departure. The chapter enriched the points raised from the opening session and session I of BCSMF.

In chapter three, Andina Dwi Fatma discusses the terrain for media today, both the traditional and the new media, and how hoax, sensationalism and political bias have affected democracies. Given the points raised in BCSMF on the desire to promote media as watchdog and instrument to educate public in democracy, Andina shares some best-case-experiences to trigger further discussion on the positive contribution of media in democracies where populism and identity politics take place. Andina pulls in the dialog points from Session II of BCSMF that was facilitated by Uni Lubis (Chief editor of IDN Times) where the speakers were Nezar Patria and Ratna Komala, both are members of the Indonesian Press Council and the discussants were Fadli Ramadhani (*Perkumpulan Untuk Pemilu dan Demokrasi/Association for Election and Democracy*) and Purwani Dyah Prabandari (*Tempo English magazine*).

In chapter four, Indrasari Tjandraningsih engages the readers on debates about the role of civil society organizations at time where hoax, sensational politics, and political bias becomes prominent daily political topics. She too shares some best-case-experience to trigger further discussion on the positive contribution of civil society under the pressing time of divisive politics within democracies. She enriches the points made in Session III where Robert Schwarz of the Bertelsmann Stiftung and Prof. Dr. Carl Henrik Knutsen of University of Oslo served as speakers while Al Khanif from Center for Human Rights, Multiculturalism and Migration and Priyanga Hettiarachi of WFD in Sri Lanka served as discussant and I Ketut Erawan of the Institute for Peace and Democracy served as facilitator.

In the closing chapter five, the editor connects the chapters with a note on way forward. It highlights the take home points for readers as well as identifies future issues to explore.

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# 2.

## Populism and its Ambivalent Economic and Political Impacts

Andreas Ufen

### Introduction

In recent years, a worldwide surge of populism has become evident. It signifies major shifts with reference to economic globalization, the role of political parties, the decline of “classical” ideologies, and the politicization of religion. The global rise of identity politics, nationalism and populism is, to many, discomfiting because they sense democracy to be in danger. Others stress the ability of populists to widen the political spectrum, to bring to the fore new issues and to politicize an otherwise “silent majority”.

The most blatant US American case of populism is Donald Trump. In Europe, a right-wing nationalist variety is becoming ever more important: examples are leaders such as *Jarosław Kaczyński*, *Andrej Babiš*, *Viktor Orbán*, *Geert Wilders*, *Marine Le Pen*, and political parties such as the AFD (Alternative für Deutschland) in Germany, the SVP (Schweizerische Volkspartei) in Switzerland, the FPÖ (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs) in Austria, Fidesz in Hungary, the UK Independent Party in the United Kingdom, and the Front National (now: Rassemblement National) in France. Most of these populists campaign against immigrants, Muslims, and allegedly corrupt, degenerated elites (often symbolized by European Union bureaucrats in Brussels) in order to fundamentally transform the political landscape.

Left-wing populism is only partially successful in Europe, i.e. in Spain and Greece, whereas in Latin America it is often seen as prototypical. The classic case of Peronism has built a strong legacy until today with Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia, but there were also neoliberal versions of populism in the 1990s (e.g. Fujimori).

In Asia, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey, Narendra Modi in India, Prabowo Subianto in Indonesia, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, and former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra are often mentioned as prime examples. Whereas Erdoğan and Modi mobilize their followers primarily by referring to Islam and Hindu nationalism, respectively, Thaksin, Prabowo and Duterte are rather strongmen promising decisive reforms, but are not legitimated by religious credentials. Northeast Asia (Japan, Korea, Taiwan), surprisingly, is not a region where populist leaders or parties are influential.

Across the world, there is thus a big variety of populist leaders, movements and political parties with very different policy objectives. But what exactly is populism, how does it connect with identity politics, and are there economic factors behind the phenomenon? Finally, what does all this mean for the development of democracy?

## Populism and Identity Politics

Broad definitions of populism interpret it as a set of strategies used by politicians who promise more than they can actually realize, or who try to raise their popularity by demonstrating their closeness to the common people and by speaking their language. Populism can be understood as a specific style of communicating with voters, or as the outgrowth of personalist leadership by charismatic politicians. In most definitions, anti-elitism or a marked and critique of the establishment is included. Yet, an impressionistic catalogue of characteristics or very broad notions of populism are not very helpful and rather obfuscate the debate.

In this chapter, the so-called ideational approach is employed. Cas Mudde, for example, defines populism as “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people” (Mudde 2004, 543). Likewise, Müller understands populism as “... a particular *moralistic imagination of politics*, a way of perceiving the political world which places in opposition a morally pure and fully unified people against small minorities, elites in particular, who are placed outside the authentic people” (Müller 2015, 83).

The concept of a homogenous people is always (since no existing society actually is homogeneous) connected to the exclusion of others. These could be religious or ethnic groups, criminals, migrants, drug users, homosexuals, etc. Populists usually do not clearly define their terms – Laclau (2005) even speaks of “empty signifiers”.

“The people” are portrayed as virtuous, homogeneous and as victims of an elite that feels no attachment to them. With the help of manipulation, fake news and controlled mass media, the people is tricked into believing that the current regime is not legitimate. Trumpian or Duterte-like “bad manners” (Moffitt 2016) may be helpful, but are not necessarily part of populist mobilization strategies.

A politician who distributes all kinds of benefits and promises heaven and earth in order to win elections, who pretends to know what the “common man” thinks and feels and who frequently attacks corrupt elites – is not necessarily a populist. The constructed antagonism has to constitute a moralistic divide between “good” and “evil”. The “evil” elites are going to lead the whole country into an abyss if the populists do not take over and rescue “the people”. To Trump, Hillary Clinton was not just an opponent in a political competition. She was the impersonation of the “evil” and therefore he demanded her imprisonment (“lock her up”).

Populism is always anti-elitist. The populist might have come from this elite, but he/she is now close to the people and presents himself/herself as an outsider. Billionaire Donald Trump, for example, portrays himself as being part of a kind of super-elite independent from the allegedly crooked Washington politicians. The opposite of populism is elitism that considers the elite to be true and virtuous.

But how is populism related to the upsurge of identity politics? To Fukuyama, identity issues have dominated politics in recent years (Fukuyama 2018, 14). It is somehow paradoxical that the political right “has adopted language and framing from the left: the idea that whites are being victimized, that their situation and suffering are invisible to the rest of society, and that the social and political structures responsible for this situation—especially the media and the political establishment—need to be smashed” (Fukuyama 2018, 14).

One might see all the talk about identity and identity politics as a diversionary tactic, since ethnicity and religion, for example, are often only used to divert and disguise class interests. The identification with “the people” against obscure, often unnamed enemies is a welcome opportunity not to talk about human rights violations, systematic corruption, and oligarchies.

All in all, populism is connected to a polarization, dramatization, and moralization of politics. Populism is always a sub-type of identity politics. As a „thin ideology“ it is combined with additional ideational fragments from traditions such as liberalism, conservatism and socialism aiming at establishing or re-establishing a culturally and ethnically homogeneous society. At the same time, elites are frequently not excluded because of their ethnicities, but on moral grounds.

## **The Political Economy of Populism**

The classic Latin American populism from the 1930s to the 1960s was based on a strategy of import substitution industrialization and expansive fiscal policies in order to redistribute wealth by state intervention. Getúlio Vargas, for example, nationalized the reserves of oil and natural gas, and Juan Perón the railways, the central bank, and the electric and telephone companies. In contrast, the neoliberal populism of the 1990s combined export-orientation with pro-poor policies (Weyland 2001). Subsequently, in Latin America a predominantly economically motivated left-wing populism has been salient, because the region was affected negatively by “rapid trade opening, financial crises, IMF programs, and entry by foreign corporations in sensitive domestic sectors such as mining or public utilities” (Rodrik 2018, 25). Left-wing populists target the wealthy and large corporations and thus stress the income cleavage. The ability to do so depends on the salience of these issues in the everyday experience of voters.

In contrast, right-wing populists tend to emphasize the identity cleavage (ethnicity, religion, immigrant status) and to target foreigners or minorities. In Europe, they still prevail because economic anxieties are easily directed towards immigrants and refugees who “can be presented as competing for jobs, making demands on public services, and reducing public resources available for natives” (Rodrik 2018, 25) leading to an erosion of welfare state benefits. Left-wing populism is mostly confined to parts of Southern Europe (Greece and Spain) where globalization

and the Euro crisis have had much more intensively felt effects and where austerity policies were demanded from the IMF, the European Central Bank, and the European Commission.

Thus, the type of populism and the favoured policies depend on different factors such as the strength of organized labour, the impact of local oligarchies, the role of immigration, the dependence on the globalized economy, and the way national identities have been crafted, especially with reference to ethnicity, religion and colonial legacies. Most importantly, all these various issues need to be politicized in order to gain salience at elections. This is what Rodrik (2018) calls the supply side of populism.

Since the populist knows and feels what the “true people” thinks, solutions are relatively easy. Hence, policy-making is not perceived as a complex process informed by expertise and involving different interest groups who try to find common ground and arrive at a compromise. With respect to economic policies, this could easily lead to misallocation of resources and, at least in the long term, to crises because populists perceive independent agencies such as central banks, anti-corruption commissions, courts, etc. as hindrances to implement policies effectively.

It has to be underlined that both left-wing and right-wing populist policies may have positive effects on poverty alleviation or on sharing the benefits of economic development. They can be socialist or neoliberal or inspired by nativism. Moreover, since populism is essentially based on a “thin ideology” a shift of emphasis from one major, defining issue to another one is possible. The Front National in France was once pro-European; the AFD in Germany was for a time quite successful as a party fundamentally opposed to the EU, especially during the Euro crisis. When this issue lost its salience, the party quickly shifted to politicizing immigration, especially in 2015. Today, the party is so far unable to find common ground with reference to pension policies. An extremist faction favors a form of welfare chauvinism, and a neoliberal faction tends to favor privatization and limited welfare expenses.

## **Is Populism a Threat to Democracy?**

As explained above, populists are always anti-elitist and anti-pluralist. If there is only one “authentic, real people” and not a plurality of groups with different identities within one society, it implicates that there is only one truth. Only the populists represent the “real people”, they do not simply speak on behalf of the people, but they see themselves as the “chosen” ones who embody the wishes of the people and know what the “common man” thinks. As such, they are “principled anti-pluralists” who “cannot accept anything like a legitimate opposition” (Müller 2015, 85). Hence, populist parties often define themselves as movements, because they pretend to represent much more than only parts of the people. They prefer names such as Alternative für Deutschland (AFD, Alternative for Germany), Podemos (We can), Forza Italia (Forward Italy), MoVimento 5 Stelle (Five Star Movement), Thai Rak Thai (Thais love Thais), etc. which indicate a fundamental opposition towards the traditional or established political parties.

The idea of an essentialist antagonism and of an “evil” ruling elite is linked to the belief that the whole country is in a state of fundamental crisis and a takeover of the populists is urgent. If those

in power are immoral, it is only logical to assume a conspiracy of mainstream media, the state apparatus, economic elites, etc. The elite-controlled media, according to this reasoning, spread fake news, and research institutes and pollsters forge results.

If populists lose elections, they often question their legitimacy and interpret the results as caused by manipulation and fraud. This means, elections are not mechanisms to offer different options to voters and to finally find out what these voters really want, but are means to prove that the populists, and only the populists, are right. According to Urbinati (2019, 20) "populism consists in a disfigurement of the democratic principles, the majority and the people, in a way that is meant to celebrate a part through its leader, who uses the support of the audience to purify elections of their *formalistic and procedural character*."

Elections are, thus, highly ambivalent to populists. In Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto for weeks claimed victory in the aftermath of the presidential elections in April 2019. He did so even when confronted with highly reliable quick count results by serious pollsters showing that he had indeed lost by a huge margin (in contrast to the alleged "real count" by his own campaign team). In Turkey, around the same time, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan did not accept defeat in elections in Istanbul.

Once populists have won elections, they tend to cement their hold on power. The results are the unravelling of checks and balances, the undermining of established institutions such as Constitutional Courts, Human Rights Commissions, political parties, and parliaments, the rise of charismatic leaders with authoritarian leanings, and the slow enforcement of a Schmittian discourse of "friend" versus "enemy". Under Viktor Orbán, changes to the Hungarian constitution curtailed the power of the Constitutional Court and restricted civil rights. In Poland, comparable reforms with regard to the Constitutional Court in 2015 led to a prolonged crisis involving subsequently even the EU. Rodrigo Duterte, president of the Philippines since 2016, attacked Parliament and the Constitutional Court, and even warned of declaring martial law (Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs 2016). Thaksin Shinawatra dismantled the fragile Thai democracy and undermined human rights. His „war on drugs“ led to numerous extrajudicial killings (one estimate speaks of at least 2,800 dead); military operations against Muslim rebels instigated further bitter resistance in the deep south of Thailand.

But populism is also a corollary of liberal democracy. Under certain conditions populists can devise and implement measures with positive effects. Left-wing populism, for example, has expanded the rights of ethnic minorities in Latin America. In this vein, Mudde and Kaltwasser (2013) see as prototypical an inclusionary populism in Latin America (in contrast to the predominant exclusionary right-wing populism in Europe) that encompasses material, political and symbolic dimensions. In many Latin American countries the *populus* is widened with the inclusion of indigenous groups, in Europe the construct of a homogeneous people frequently leads to the exclusion of immigrants (even if they were born and raised in a European country) and asylum-seekers.

Populists in power may undermine the position of elites that are indeed corrupt, and they may widen the spectrum of political issues discussed among large parts of the populations. Even the breaking of taboos can have a liberating effect. Duterte has undermined democracy by instituting

terror and intimidation, but some of his plans are supported by pro-democracy activists, such as the introduction of federal structures, reforms with reference to birth control and the opening up of the economy for foreign investors. Thaksin Shinawatra started with expansionary fiscal policies such as a universal health care scheme, a farmer debt moratorium, cheap credits for more than two million households, and supported small and medium sized enterprises especially in the villages. Stavrakakis et al. (2016, 52) also show that specific policies of Hugo Chávez were not anti-democratic. As a response to the post-democratic closure of liberal democracy in Venezuela, he tried to build a participatory democracy of “popular protagonism” and introduced different local-level social programs (*misiones*) in the fight against poverty and illiteracy. He gave voice to the voiceless, served as a unifier for the excluded, introduced recall mechanisms, referendums, widened indigenous rights, but it all ended in the disfigurement of democracy up to the current crisis under his successor Maduro. Thus, the effects of this “caesaro-plebeian populism” were highly ambivalent.

It needs to be stressed that populism rests upon a relationship between leaders and followers. Often, the people is conceived of as passive and manipulated by the populists, but the recent rise of populist has been to a large extent triggered by the adroit use of social media such as YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and Whatsapp. Therefore, it would be much too easy to understand the people as mere audience. Populism does not simply emanate from above with charismatic leaders building support through persuasion and by manipulating enthusiastic crowds. At least as important is the demand side of populism (Stavrakakis et al. 2016, 64ff). Social movements, sometimes well-organized, sometimes existing mostly uncoordinated in cyber space, create their own leaders. Populism, then, is more like a complex interaction.

Some analysts like Chantal Mouffe (2018) plead for populist mobilization in order to activate formerly excluded parts of the population. But, it has to be added, this is possible without constructing the core antagonism between the “pure people” and a “morally corrupt elite”. One can legitimately attack corrupt elites and conjure up the need for fundamental reforms in the name of the people, but one has to make clear at the same time who exactly belongs to the elite, that the people is essentially heterogeneous, and that pluralism and liberal democracy are principally not questioned.

Finally, what can especially young democracies do to restrain specific forms of populism, that is the spread of fake news, identity politics, black campaigning etc.? They can ban the hiring of foreign consultants (“spin doctors”) for campaigning, strictly monitor electioneering, especially on social media, and regulate party and candidate financing in order to curtail the role of oligarchs. High quality journalism and political education could help to improve the awareness of voters. Because well-institutionalized political parties are often able to check on extremist challengers, party and electoral laws have to be designed to strengthen party organization and political platforms (see Levitsky/Ziblatt 2018). But most important are policies addressing the repercussions of neoliberal, globalized markets and in channeling different forms of migration.

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### 3.

# Media, Populism and the Post-Truth Era

Andina Dwifatma

## Introduction

Populism can be interpreted as a communication style in which a group of politicians consider themselves to represent the interests of the people, which is then contrasted with elite interests. Such approach can be misleading because it is actually never clear who the people and the elite are, and which interests they actually represent. Nevertheless, populism approach is gaining momentum in politics across the world today.

Donald Trump, for example, clearly uses this strategy when he expressed a real dislike for immigrants and colored people during his campaign and claimed that it was they who caused the people of 'native' America to be marginalized. With this technique he succeeded in becoming the president of one of the superpower country which had always been associated with having rational voters—something that was previously very difficult to imagine. In Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto also uses the same technique to win the hearts of voters by stating that the biggest failure of the Indonesian government is in the economic field. The Indonesian government, said Prabowo during his campaign sessions, has sold this nation to the interests of foreign businessmen, especially to the Chinese. Prabowo argued that President Joko Widodo accommodates Chinese business interests at the expense of the people. Such populist narrative is repeated over and over by Prabowo and his team. Populist strategies are also used by other world leaders, such as Duterte in the Philippines, Le Pen in France, and Bolsonaro in Brazil.

Although populism is legitimate in democracy as part of freedom of expression, this approach clearly has negative consequences on society. At the very least, the society becomes rigidly polarized. In the United States, the society is divided between anti-immigrants and those who accept migrants. In Indonesia, the community is divided between those who are okay with cooperating with the Chinese and those that are anti-Chinese. This kind of polarization has the potential to endanger tolerance level within society and may translate in aggressive behaviors to attack those whom they think are enemy. This chapter tries to see how populism thrives with media support. The media blurs the line between politics and entertainment. Politicians who use populism approach need the media to spread their anti-elite ideas, whereas the media need sensations to accumulate greater revenues that could help them survive in the highly competitive media realm today. This is a symbiosis of mutualism that occurs between populism and the media (de la Torre, 2018).



To better understand the relationship between populism and the media, this chapter will be divided into three parts. First, the phenomenon of hoaxes, misinformation and disinformation. Using the case of Indonesia, we shall see how the trend of internet and social media use, when not accompanied by media literacy skills, could lead to high rate of hoax, misinformation and disinformation. Second, political sensationalism in media. There will be a number of examples of cases as an illustration of how media, especially online media, prioritizes sensations rather than accuracy and balance. This is largely due to the online media business model which still relies heavily on click-based revenue. Again the chapter gives examples from the situation in Indonesia.

Finally, the chapter also discusses the challenges in fighting hoaxes and sensationalism that have fostered populism in the era of post-truth. This discussion is important because media are no longer the only parties who control information. Today's audience is very active; they are not only free to choose what platform they want to consume, but also they have the freedom to comment and even to correct media content. This inevitably changes the pattern of relations between the media and the audience, making it increasingly complicated with the coming of a post-truth era where people no longer consume news to find the right information, but merely to confirm the truth they have already believed in. People no longer read the news to gain knowledge, but rather to justify their personal beliefs.

## **Hoax, Misinformation, Disinformation**

Of the total population of 262 million Indonesians, 54.68 percent or 143.26 million are connected to the internet. There are 44.16 percent of users access the internet via smartphones/tablets, 4.49 percent via laptops, and 39.28 percent use both. As for the types of services that are most accessed, chatting application is a favorite (89.35 percent) followed by social media (87.13 percent) and search engines (74.84 percent) (APJII, 2017). From this data, it is clear that the internet is used on frequent bases in Indonesia. More than half of Indonesia's people are connected to the internet, and this number is said to increase to 215 million users by 2020. Not wanting to miss the momentum, the government is also preparing a technology infrastructure called 'Palapa Ring' to connect 440 cities and regencies across the country. During the BCSMF 2018 meeting, one of the speaker, Nezar Patria from The Press Council (*Dewan Pers*) an independent institution in Indonesia that serves to develop and protect the life of the press in Indonesia, dubbed Indonesia as "the republic of social media" given the ubiquitous use of it.

The majority of internet users in Indonesia use internet to chat with each other. This is in line with subsequent findings on the hoax distribution survey carried out by the Indonesian Telematics Society (*Masyarakat Telematika Indonesia* or Mastel) in 2019. A total of 87.50 percent of respondents claimed to receive hoaxes through social media and 67 percent through chat applications. The hoax themes that are most often accepted by respondents are social politics (93.20 percent), SARA or ethnic religion and race-based discrimination (76.20 percent), and government (61.70 percent) (Mastel, 2019).

The Mastel survey also revealed that the majority of respondents defined hoaxes as intentional hoaxes, inaccurate news, inciting news or news that vilified others. This finding is interesting

because people actually still equate the term hoax with fake 'news'. In fact, the International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC) of UNESCO has appealed to no longer use the term fake news as news should not be fake. The term fake news injures the principle of journalism and is often used by the authorities to delegitimize coverage that are not in their favor. Whenever an article attempts to criticize them, the authorities can easily dodge a bullet and simply say the article is 'fake news'.

To avoid ambiguity, UNESCO offers three terms with a clearer definition, namely:

- a. Misinformation; information that is wrongly distributed without the intention to harm the other party. It usually occurs in cases of breaking news where people compete to be the first to spread the information in their peer groups.
- b. Disinformation; false information distributed with the intention to cheat, incite and divide. Usually in the form of artificial, manipulated, or fabricated content.
- c. Malinformation; personal information disseminated to the public with the motive of bringing down individuals or groups of people. (Ireton & Posetti, 2018)

In Indonesia, there are at least two important things noted regarding the misinformation and disinformation. First, the media and civil society have collaborated to fight the spread of misinformation and disinformation, for example through the formation of *cekfakta.com*. The platform is a fact checking cooperation project developed by MAFINDO (*Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia*) along with a number of online media members of AJI (Alliance of Independent Journalists) and AMSI (Indonesian Cyber Media Association), and supported by Google News Initiative, Internews and FirstDraft. Some of the media that joined in this effort were the largest and most reliable media in Indonesia, including among others detik.com, kompas.com, tempo.co, tirto.id, and The Jakarta Post. This means that there is already some collective awareness among the media and civil society that misinformation and disinformation is a critical issue (the Mastel survey even calls it a 'hoax outbreak') that must be solved together. This is of course a positive indication that the problem of misinformation and disinformation can be resolved by not only relying on the role of the state as a regulator. While the role of the state in doing law enforcement is important to prevent misinformation and disinformation, the role of media and civil society is no less important. Spreading media literacy helps to suppress misinformation and disinformation.

Second, misinformation and disinformation that emerged in Indonesia turns out to benefit political figures that use the populist approach. One example is the narrative about anti-Chinese. The Chinese was narrated in such a way that it was portrayed as destructive to Indonesia, both in terms of economy and politics. In August 2018, for example, it was reported that millions of foreign workers from China invaded Morowali Industrial Park, a newly-opened industrial park in Central Sulawesi. This news circulates through the WhatsApp chat application in the form of videos and text, and, of course, also in Facebook. It turns out, PT Indonesia Morowali Industrial Park only employs 3,291 foreign workers from a total of 25,000 workers there, a number that is way less than the millions claimed. Another example is disinformation about the arrival of Chinese workers in Batam and Soekarno-Hatta airport. It was said that those workers were given a number of fake Indonesian IDs (called E-KTPs) and a manual for voting Jokowi-Amin. Before voting, so the post said, those workers watched a campaign video made entirely in Chinese

language. This information was shared on Facebook by the Andesbell Alkampani account on February 23, 2019. Until February 26, 2019, the upload was shared 43,000 times on Facebook and was commented 1,500 times. It turns out that the E-KTP and passport photo was taken from the news on merdeka.com dated May 28, 2018 regarding the proposal by one political party to destroy the damaged E-KTP with paper shredder. Passport photos came from even older news, March 21, 2014 at tempo.co regarding the smuggling of 9 Indonesian citizens to China. The videos that were said to be in Chinese also turned out to be in Indonesian, although there was a statement from Jokowi's presidential campaign team that they had never produced the video (Ningtyas, 2019).

Typically here are a number of actors in the ecosystem of misinformation and disinformation spreading (Zannettou, Sirivianos, Blackburn, & Kourtellis, 2018):

1. Bots; parts of networks that controls fake accounts
2. Criminal/terrorist organizations; exploiting social networks to diffuse false information to achieve their goals
3. Activist or political organizations; use social networks to defend their organization and/or to demote their rival, especially during elections
4. Governments; to spread propaganda and to manipulate public opinion
5. Hidden-paid posters and state-sponsored trolls; certain individuals that are hired to disseminate false information
6. Journalists; to fabricate events in order to get more news value
7. Useful idiots; regular internet users that share false information because they are being manipulated by organization leaders
8. "True believers" and conspiracy theorists; individuals that share false information because they actually believe it is true
9. Individuals that benefit from false information; personal gain by spreading false information
10. Trolls; regular internet users that spread false information for their own enjoyment

In relation to populism and the media, it is interesting to look at actors number 3, 6 and 8. Political parties and populist political figures (actor number 3) will be very comfortable using strategies to disseminate false information to bring down their opponents. In the 2019 Indonesian presidential election, Prabowo Subianto's team often spread false information about Joko Widodo and his administration, including that Joko Widodo was a descendant of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which is illegal in Indonesia. On the other hand, Joko Widodo also uses the same strategy. Instead of taking counter-discourse approach by raising some new narratives, Joko Widodo's team was busy counteracting the PKI issue and attacking Prabowo by saying that he, too, was not Islamic enough. In this case, Prabowo and Jokowi did populist approach, they divided the community into binary opposition: anti-Chinese vs pro Chinese; anti-communist vs pro communist; anti-Islam vs Islam. This polarization is endorsed by media who happily publish sensational news as it is good for gaining revenue (actor number 6). The people, confused by too much information without adequate media literacy skills, tend to disseminate information that matches their initial beliefs (actor number 8). The three actors together make populism increasingly strong and have undermined the ideals of democracy: an inclusive and tolerant society.

## Media Sensationalism

During the second part of the panel session, Ratna Komala Sari from Dewan Pers talk about media sensationalism. Sensationalism is the tendency of the media to dramatize or focus on aspects of sensation when publishing news. Sensationalism is dangerous because it risks media's ability to fact-check and verify. The media, that should play the role of watchdogs, are very likely to be dragged into a vortex of misinformation and disinformation. To understand why the media tend to practice sensationalism, we need to look at the landscape of the latest media business in Indonesia.

In the authoritarian New Order era (1966-1998), President Soeharto tightly controlled press freedom. In addition to monitoring news content which led to self-censorship, the New Order also required the existence of a Press Issuance Business License (SIUPP) for anyone who wants to establish a media. If the media publishes news that is somehow not conducive to the government, the New Order regime can revoke the media's SIUPP, shutting down said media once and for all. This action is often referred to as *breidel*.

During the 32 years of the New Order government, only around 600 SIUPPs were issued. After the reform era, the number of SIUPPs issued doubled to 1,200, before finally the SIUPP policy was revoked during the B.J. Habibie's administration because it was considered violating the spirit of freedom of expression. This surge in the amount of mass media has made media owners and journalists struggle to be noticed in highly competitive environment. One of the fastest and easiest ways is to practice sensationalism. Horrible news will be more in demand by the public, and by focusing on this aspect of 'excitement', the media do not need to invest too much in reportage and investigation. The rise of the digital era is increasingly fostering this. In 2015, there were an estimated 47,000 media in Indonesia, and 43,300 of them were cyber media. However, those who were verified at the Press Council as a company that fulfilled the requirements of the Press Company Standards were only 168 cyber media. This raises many problems, from journalism ethics, media name, journalists behavior, to clickbait journalism to get as much revenue as possible. (Dewan Pers, 2017).

Clickbait journalism is the practice of giving horrible, interesting, and sometimes misleading news titles for the sole purpose of making readers click on the news. This is done because the media business model that is most commonly used by media companies is click-based advertising. Just as with conventional media where companies will advertise in the media with the highest circulation, in online media companies will also advertise on the most clicked pages. For this reason, click is the only currency. However, there are various choices of business models that can be conceived and might be solutions to media businesses, such as paywalls (requiring readers to pay for content), crowdfunding (ask people to fund the media projects), micropayments (ask readers to spare their money while visiting media website), membership (scheme which offers member benefits) or collaboration with tech companies like Facebook, Apple or Twitter (Khalil A. Cassimaly; Este, 2016).

Relying too much on the click-based advertising model can plunge the media into a hoax swirl. One example that occurred in Indonesia was a hoax about activist Ratna Sarumpaet who claimed

to be beaten until her face was battered in October 2018. Ratna, who was then joined in the Prabowo-Sandiaga Uno campaign team, said that she suffered serious injuries to her face due to persecution in Bandung, Java West by allegedly political opponents. Various national media reported the incident by quoting statements from political figures who were concerned and angry at the government for failing to protect their people regardless of their political choice. One day later, Ratna Sarumpaet said she was lying: the injuries were actually not due to persecution, but the side effects after liposuction surgery (Ramadhani, 2018). This was not only ridiculous but also sad. Ratna's case is a perfect illustration of how the media deviates too far from its most important natural character, which is being skeptical. The audience should be able to rely on the media to distinguish false information from the truth. In the name of sensationalism, media use hoaxes, not as something that needs to be suspected but as a news material which needed to be published as soon as possible to generate clicks and views.

## The Post-Truth Era

Hoax is widely spread through the chat application and social media platforms, and the media, which are supposed to be the last resort for audiences to find the truth, instead use hoaxes as a source of news—what can be done to counter this alarming trend? The ideal answer is media literacy. Communication academics and media activists continually strive to improve the audience's ability to consume media critically, question the media motives behind each news, and distinguish false information from truth, whenever they receive it.

The *truth* is, it may not be that easy since we live in an era of post-truth. The Oxford Dictionaries named *post-truth* as 2016's word-of-the-year after the word experienced an increase in usage of more than 2,000 percent over the previous year. Post-truth, according to the Oxford Dictionaries, is "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief."

Post-truth is fueled by ego, exactly the same as populism. When Trump said immigrants make Americans suffer because they get all the jobs, Geert Wilders dubbed mosques as palaces of hatred, and Prabowo Subianto said the results of the 2019 Indonesian presidential election were a form of massive fraud, they knew exactly those who sympathized with them and their values, will trust their bombastic claims without bothering to check the facts. Even if these people were to be presented with the facts explained, they will still more likely remain in their opinion. In the era of post-truth, the truth itself is no longer important because people will believe anything they want to. Post-truth practitioners persuade audiences to believe in something even though there is no clear evidence, and this is the easiest way to achieve political domination (McIntyre, 2018).

It is interesting that a number of researchers in the field of communication and media openly object to the terminology of post-truth. The term 'post-truth' suggest as if truth doesn't exist anymore. The fact is, the use of language is very important because language determines human consciousness, not vice versa. The more often we use the word post-truth (to the point of being named as word of the year), the more we as the public doubt the existence of truth, and the more truth become not important anymore.

People will believe whatever they want, and if the populism practitioners take advantage of this condition, polarization and hatred will be increasingly inevitable. Another possible problem that we as society face now is the lack of critical thinking skills. When mis/disinformation is so easily shared, it means that our judgement is clouded and our analysis capability is miserable. This could be a result of education curriculum that does not focus on critical thinking aspect (Levitin, 2017). In Indonesia, the reality is not much different. Students are accustomed to memorizing since elementary school without focusing on critical thinking skills. When receiving information, students are asked to memorize, not to question whether the information they received is correct, why things are they way they are, etc. Things like this continue to be carried over to the public domain. We are so used to taking information just they way it is, rather than questioning it.

There are two things that need to be done in overcoming the problem of misinformation-disinformation, media sensationalism, and how populism uses both. First, there needs to be clear law enforcement when disinformation goes too far to become hate speech or threaten individual safety. The state must be present for security reasons. This should not conflict with the principle of freedom of speech, because even in the spirit of democracy, one's freedom must not hurt others' rights. In other words, if there are politicians who lie on behalf of the people in the spirit of populism, they must deal with the law. Second, there needs to be a long-term and comprehensive effort to improve critical thinking skills in society. The education curriculum needs to be totally changed with emphasis on critical thinking rather than memorizing stuffs. Media literacy course needs to be included in the curriculum starting from elementary school since we have been exposed to the media from a very early age.

A lot of what is raised in this chapter is from the experience of Indonesia. And indeed that was the case during the BCSMF 2018. The danger of mis/disinformation also happened in Mexico where Ricardo Flores, 21, and his uncle, Alberto, 43, were burned to death by angry mob in a small town of Acatlan. Ricardo and Alberto were falsely accused as child abductors who then sold the kids' organs in black market. Even though the police already confirmed that the information was not true, people still believe the rumour they got from WhatsApp messages. The narrative was, "... *In the past few days, children aged four, eight and 14 have disappeared and some of these kids have been found dead with signs that their organs were removed. Their abdomens had been cut open and were empty.*" Ricardo and Alberto were spotted at an elementary school in San Vicente Boqueron, and they became the child abductors brought up by the collective fear. The news of their arrest spread just as the rumours had. (Martinez, 2018). The same thing also happened in India where viral WhatsApp messages were triggering mob killings. The narratives were almost similar; child abductors, dead kids' organ sellers, the kind of messages that drove parents into panic mode and forward everything they received on their phones without really checking first. In Malegaon, northern Maharashtra state, five people (a couple, a toddler, and two relatives) were almost beaten to death by angry mob (Frayer, 2018). On July, 2018, a 32-year-old Google engineer was beaten to death in in the southern Indian state of Karnataka. The engineer reportedly offered imported chocolates to students and was immediately accused of being child kidnappers, again, over WhatsApp viral messages (Pandey, 2018).

Various examples of the cases above prove that technology is a neutral thing. Technology can empower, but it is also very detrimental when users do not have enough literacy. For example, the disinformation circulating on WhatsApp and other social media has proved dangerous, not only dividing the community because of differences in political views but also causing riots and deaths. Indonesia, with its dense population and growing number of internet users, continues to make various media literacy efforts, such as collaborative efforts from civilians such as Cekfakta.com and MAFINDO, and media literacy workshops as part of community development programs by universities. Even though the results will not be instant, this can be an example that is useful to generate ideas for cooperation to support democracy in the era of sensationalism, hoaxes, and populism. \*\*\*

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# 4. Whither Civil Society Organizations?

Indrasari Tjandraningsih

## Introduction

*“In more and more countries, government leaders are deliberately undermining the checks and balances designed to hold the executive accountable – thereby securing not only their power, but also a system of patronage and the capacity to divert state resources for their own personal gain. At the same time, protests against social inequality, mismanagement and corruption are growing (Bertelsman Stiftung 2018:6)*

*“Even in democracies, some groups – women, social groups, and the poor – are systematically disadvantaged from access to political power” (V-Dem 2018:6).*

The above quotes set the global landscape of countries' governance that has much to do with the erosion of democracy. The participants of BCSMF 2018 shared the concern about the erosion of democracy and the rise of populism, identity politics, sensationalism, hoaxes and political biases. The quotes are taken from two large-scale study by Bertelsmann Stiftung based in Germany and by V-Dem Institute based in Sweden. The Bertelsmann study focuses on the global governance transformation and assess the quality of democracy, market-economic systems and governance in developing and transformation countries. The study found among others that the quality of democracy has declined around the world and the voices of opposition forces and civil society are increasingly undermined in the political process (2018:7). Another large-scale study with similar tone on the declining quality and practice of democracy was produced by V-Dem Institute. The V-Dem study in particular focuses on the main question: how democratic is the world today? Some answers to that question justify the reason why BCSMF picked its 2018 theme. The study says that while the majority of the world's population lives in a democracy, one third of the world's population – 2.5 billion people – live in countries with declining democratic traits and where media freedom, freedom of expression, and the rule of law are undermined. The study also found that there is more severe exclusion due to socio-economic status that affect poorer groups involving significant number of people (V-Dem 2018). (V-Dem Annual Report, 2018).

Two presenters during the BCSMF 2018, Robert Schwarz of Bertelsmann Stiftung and Carl Hendrik Knutsen of Oslo University, shared the study findings to the forum's participants. The study findings are consistent with the observations from Indonesia's civil-society activists that

see both that democracies in the North and South of the globe are under threat; the growing inequality and insecurity and the lack of public participation has allowed for populism to thrive.

During the BCSMF 2018 there was also discussion on the role of civil society in tackling the situation in the forum. Luky Djani of Institute of Strategic Initiative warned that one of the contributing factor in the weakening democracy particularly in the South is the inability of CSO movements to promote social justice agenda. The main questions in the discussion are: what is the role of civil society to defend today's democracy and what are possible new approach and strategy that could be taken by CSOs to stay relevant in the changing contour of democracy?

The chapter runs in the following flow: the current civil society terrain which discusses the changing ecosystem for civil society groups, challenge and possible actions that civil society can do to maintain liberal democracy and pluralism, and thoughts about cooperation that the state can facilitate or endorse to enhance the support of civil society organizations for democracy.

## **The Current Terrain of Civil Society**

To begin with, let us be clear about the definition of civil society. According to the United Nations, civil society is "the third sector" of society that works along with the government and business sector. Civil society is understood here as the entire range of organized groups and institutions that are independent of the state, voluntary, and at least to some extent self-generating and self-reliant that includes non-governmental organizations, independent mass media, think tanks, academics from universities, trade unions, and social and religious groups. Civil society organization has the duty to perform checks and balances in democracy and hold government accountable for their policies and actions. However, civil society is known to face various threats, even under democracies. The typical challenge for civil society under democracy are laws restricting the autonomy and funding of NGOs, lack of quality and quantity of human resource vis-à-vis the growing complexity of the ecosystem, decreasing citizen's political and social awareness.

Under populist regimes, the space for civil society is further shrinking. Study and observation show that both in the North and the South, in Europe (Euroactive 2017) and Asia (Kingston 2017) in particular, there is changing ecosystem for civil society. In Europe as stated by the director of EU Agency for Fundamental Rights the changing ecosystem includes the regulatory sphere where the anti-terrorism law 'creates problems for the gathering of civil society groups like legitimate demonstrations in the streets', alongside with the limited access to decision making process and uneven quality of consultation process and prolonged weak capacity both in skills and wellbeing (Euractiv 2017:4-5).

Various reports among others are V-Dem's report (2018) and Kyle and Mounk (2018), reveal that the wave of populism has posed a threat to democracy and to groups and organizations of civil society in fighting for the rights of threatened citizens ranging from ethnic and religious minorities, women, farmers, workers, indigenous people, and the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex (LGBTQI). The threat basically leads to delegitimation and the decreasing efficacy of civil society. Another threat is the termination of funding sources and the limitation of civic space

through regulations that limit the movement of CSOs in conducting advocacy and in providing political education.

In Asia, there are two trends that shape the new ecosystem for CSOs: the spread of neoliberal economic policies, that tend to accentuate disparities and polarize society, and the rise and consolidation of illiberal democracies with its features: cronyism, corruption and a lack of transparency. Kingston (2017) also note the emergence of several measures like stifled political debate, media censorship, intimidation and limited space for political contestation, intolerance, and encouraged bigotry as serious challenge to civil society.

Indonesia as Asia's champion of democracy is also facing similar threats. Although Indonesia has undergone a significant democratic transition from the authoritarian regime of Suharto, "the country faces many of the same challenges today that it faced 20 years ago -- An entrenched elite who benefited from years of association with the Suharto regime, including those with ties to the powerful Indonesian military, remains in place" (McWilliams 2018). The regime in power have enacted law (Law on Electronic Information and Transaction – UU ITE number 19/2016) with vague terminology known as "*pasal karet*" or ambiguous article, that end up restricting the freedom of expression. An activist of Institute for Criminal and Justice Reform (ICJR) mentioned that some articles in the law such as article 27:3 and article 28:2 have multiple interpretations and have the potential to be misused and threaten freedom of expression (*Merdeka.com* 30 January 2019).

The very recent controversy was the formation of *Tim Bantuan Hukum* (Legal Aid Team)- a special team with the authority to review the speech of a figure that is considered unlawful (*Tempo.co*, 10 May 2019). While political stability is important, especially in the era of hoaxes, sensationalism and political biases, the formation of such special team could curb freedom of expression.

Of course, not all challenge to civil society is coming from external sources. There are also endogenous threats facing civil society such as their limited human resources who can advocate change on consistent basis and the lack of expertise in addressing issues (EESC 2019). Allegations as foreign agent when CSOs' work considered as too critical towards the government is also a challenge to the legitimacy of CSOs.

Amidst the changing political landscape and the government populist stance, civil society is not fully ready to engage the new ecosystem and its threats to civil society being. Hence it seems that CSOs has not yet armed with alternative strategy. At least there are three important aspects identified as hinders CSOs readiness in dealing with the new ecosystem. Those are lack of an enabling environment for CSOs operation, limited human resources both in quality and quantity, lack of expertise and reduced funding.

In the era of internet and social media, the CSOs are making use of it too; online advocacy and information distribution is now the norm since internet media become a very important news distributors. Fake news that spread on the internet by populist movement become a challenge for these CSOs to deal with. The Indonesian experience shows that the spread of hoaxes and fake

news are becoming very intense and have reduced the critical thinking of the community with the potential to cause horizontal conflicts among civil society.

Such changing landscape for CSOs has led to various initiatives to strengthen CSOs capacity in defending citizens' rights and to realise a more equal world. The ideas and initiatives that have been carried out in various part of the world will be discussed in the following sections.

## **Exploring Ways and Clarifying Role: Empowering CSOs to Support Democracy**

Challenges for CSOs across the world is responded. There have been international and regional CSOs meeting in Asia, Europe and Latin America aimed at finding solutions. Broadly speaking, the meetings concluded that CSOs must change their strategy that is by improving resources, knowledge, expertise, know-how and communication skills to handle challenges in more empowered ways.

A study on the role of CSOs in countering populism in Europe presents some measures on what CSOs should do in tackling populism. That is by, among others:

- raising awareness of the specificities of the populist phenomenon and devise effective strategies to address its roots and manifestations;
- giving voice to and advocating for those who are underrepresented or in an underprivileged position;
- leading the development of a public sphere for debate at local level;
- monitoring and challenging the policy solutions proposed by populists;
- supporting the elaboration of policy solutions to citizens' problems and concerns that have not, to date, been addressed by mainstream politicians and are exploited by populists;
- implementing initiatives related to informal civic education and active citizenship;
- tackling online disinformation (EESC 2019).

The report also provide examples how CSOs tackled populism. Italy and France's CSOs developed youth initiatives to counter the negative aspects of populism. The initiatives are summarized in the following Box 1 and 2

### ***BOX 1: Italy CSO Countering Hate Speech and Disinformation***

*Agenzia di Promozione Integrata per i Cittadini in Europa (APICE), based in the Reggio di Calabria region of Italy, is a youth organisation with members all under 35 years old, mostly based in the central and southern parts of Italy. APICE's actions are aimed at preventing, combating, and reporting hate speech online and offline as a contribution to tackling populism.*

*They initiated the Italian campaign and coordinate the national network of young people, which is active in promoting human rights online and combating the different forms of hatred and discrimination that lead to violence, radicalization, and violations of human rights.*

*It began as part of the Council of Europe's "no hate speech" campaign, but is now youth-led and active in different countries. As a corollary, APICE is addressing the related phenomenon of online disinformation, which, according to their observation, "initially was an isolated way to create disinformation, but is now becoming a systematic organized way to manipulate information. The closer the European elections of 2019, the more serious issue this is becoming".*

*APICE's actions include:*

- **Prevention:** human rights education, media literacy through educational tools and specific educational activities to combat disinformation: how to recognize them, how to react to them online and how to build a positive and reliable narrative online.*
- **Reporting** online hate comments to the national authorities and advocating for a clear codification of the phenomenon across borders as hate speech is subject to different legislation in different countries.*
- **Producing** counter narratives online against hate speech and disinformation. The organization produces content, such as videos, that can reverse the oppressive narrative found in hateful comments. By developing alternative narratives, they aim to change the approach to stereotypes in general discussions and pursue changes to public discourse.*

## **Box 2: Youth CSO tackling negative aspect of populism**

Les Jeunes Européens France (Young Europeans France) is the French national branch of the Young European Federalists. *They target the negative aspects of populism by addressing Europhobic or Eurosceptic speeches, especially of political parties or candidates. They also organize street actions and they plan to take positions and argue against populists during the 2019 campaign for the European elections. The organization has witnessed an increase in new members and activity in recent times, especially after Brexit, which served as a shock for young people, who realized that the EU is a benefit that is under threat from populists. Examples of their initiatives are:*

*-**The campaign** "Europe en mieux" (Better Europe) launched in 2015 in France, a joint initiative of the Young Europeans, the European Movement and the Union of European Federalists through which they challenged Eurosceptic positions, including through carrying out conferences and debate-café.*

*-**Their programme** "Europe par les Jeunes" (Europe by the Youth) is the most important initiative in tackling Euroscepticism and populism in general. It involves public awareness and educational activities. "Europe par les Jeunes" (formerly called "Europe at school") is an educational programme that consists of presenting Europe and the European union to pupils and students in schools at all levels (primary school, middle school, high school), as well as in extracurricular structures (e.g. social and recreation centres). More than 300 interventions were carried out last year among 10,000 young people in France.*

A recent publication that document various responses from human rights actors and civil society at large to populism in various countries of Hungary, Turkey, India, Venezuela, South Africa and Egypt also provide ideas and initiatives. Some interesting ideas to confront populist moves to delegitimize human rights activists and civil society include: developing powerful contesting narratives against populist's, deeper engagement with public values and emotions, building a local constituency and strong ties with communities beyond urban centers, creating coalitions and alliances with other NGOs as well as other non NGO sociopolitical actors, combine offline and online activism in collaboration with young activists who are digital natives to support the traditional analog civil society (Rodriguez-Garavito & Gomez, 2018).

Civil society in Indonesia at some level has the experience in combining offline and online activism and work with young and talented multi-media expert. *Instagram* and *Twitter* are the dominant media to spread the CSOs activity and to engage with the digital-native youth. One particular experiment in carrying out advocacy work that gain big success in spreading words through social media is the *Ekspedisi Indonesia Biru*. *Ekspedisi Indonesia Biru* is an advocacy work among others on indigenous people, environment and energy supply that intensively make use the internet technology to engage with communities.

The EESC study already mentioned above also provides in detail steps on how-to develop strategy for example on restoring the public sphere of dialogue and discussion, supporting civil society and tackling online disinformation. The strategy would need concrete actions and help identify the actors involved in the disinformation (2019:155-158).

The extensive spread of populism around the globe and the civil society's moves to tells us that civil society is highly important to defend the disadvantaged groups. However, as experienced by civil society elsewhere an urgent need to shift strategy is imperative. Given that we live in a non-stop internet connection and a fast development of communication technology any strategy need to utilize the technology and involve the young digital native activists. On the other hand building an intense and meaningful communication and engagement with communities who disconnect from are not connected to the internet is also needed. Another prerequisite for the new strategy is to involve as many as possible people with various relevant expertise and outreach to reach out to business and youth community. In short, the new CSO strategies need to be inclusive.

Referring to Civicus' Enabling Environment Index, in the effort to prepare to survive within the changing ecosystem CSOs need to strengthen themselves by applying principles of transparency and accountability, collaboration and solidarity, anti-corruption and independent. Civil society groups should make efforts to be transparent and accountable to their stakeholders, to derive their legitimacy from endorsement by their stakeholders. There should be multiple connections and collaborations between different civil society groups and individuals, and collaborative platforms and coalitions at different levels. There should be no tolerance of corruption amongst civil society personnel and CSO should be able to define their own activities, rather than have these defined by funding opportunities. The efforts would need the government political will to provide legal and political environment that recognise civil society as a legitimate social and political actor and provide systematic opportunities for state and civil society institutions to work together.

As a closing it is worth to keep in mind the following quote: "The fundamental challenge is enhancing civil society's credibility and effectiveness as a progressive force for good" Vijay Poonoosamy (Etihad Airways).

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# 5. Way Forward

Dinna Wisnu

The chapters have discussed the ideas behind Bali Democracy Forum (BDF), the Indonesia's perspectives about democracy, at the government as well as civil society and media levels, also about populism, the exploitation of identity in politics and the use of hoaxes and disinformation in democracies today. The take-home points include the following.

*First*, democracy is a universal theme to discuss between sovereign nation-states. BDF is an example of how an inclusive dialog about democracy is attractive and desired by the world, both to those whose countries are practicing democratic principles and those who aren't. The development of BDF new chapters, Tunis and Berlin, indicates the interest to develop support for and dialog about democracy. The global market integration does create demands for countries to stay connected to what is going on in other parts of the world. Not only because their economies depend on anticipating trends in other economies, but also because there is a growing tendency to protect the economies from inflows of products and services from abroad. Nationalism brings ramification to international relations, international and regional stability. Failure to deliver prosperity at home or to react to injustices abroad could bring questions about the effectiveness of a government. While democracy may not automatically shift to non-democracies, dissatisfied constituents could erode the quality of democracy at home. The Pew Research Center notes that despite growing concerns about democracies and their performance to deliver what are expected by their constituents, as of the end of 2017, there are 96 out of 167 countries with the population of at least 500,000 (57%) that were democracies of some kind, and only 21 (13%) were autocracies.

*Second*, democracies need civil society and media engagement for practical reasons. Democracies that give room for civil society and media engagement would grow their internal mechanism to respond to hoaxes, disinformation and any tendency of political suppression, especially when there are signs of politicians longing to be a "strong man". Hoaxes, disinformation and an emphasis of identity in politics, as Andina in chapter three discussed, do affect how society receives and respond to information. Polarization of perspectives on what the government is doing is the most immediate impact and it might endanger tolerance within society, leading to horizontal frictions among groups.

*Third*, there is no single model of populism. There are those emphasizing ideology, from Neoliberal to the Left-wing views, but there are also those invoking nationalism and those clinging to strongmen promising decisive reforms. Thus, the impact of populism varies from country to country. The bottom line, as Ufen raised in chapter 2, populism is "a set of strategies used by

politicians who promise more than they could actually realize, or who try to raise their popularity by demonstrating their closeness to the common people and by speaking their language". And populism is always anti-elitist; it communicates distance to those who has been in power. The biggest impact of populism to democracy is polarization and conflicts, which may be dangerous for democracy because populist politicians usually despise intermediating institutions.

*Fourth*, the use of identity and identity politics is a diversionary tactic, a way that is often used to divert and disguise class interest, or other unnamed enemies. For this reason, populism involves polarization, dramatization and moralization of politics.

*Fifth*, populism is a challenge for democracies, but it is not necessarily an imminent threat. Populism is a challenge because those who practice it believe they embody the wishes of the people and cannot accept anything like a legitimate opposition. They would invoke various reasons to say that those in power are immoral, doing various kinds of conspiracies to undermine the wish of the people. If this is combined with hoaxes and misinformation, the risk of political instability becomes imminent. In a country where those in power is indeed corrupt and vicious to the populous, populism is supported by pro-democracy activists. Populism shows new dimensions of issues needing attention from those in power, civil society and media; the new groupings and shifts of support to certain cause. Populism also debate about who are the true democrats, thus provoking the "opposition" to rise as autocrats, tempted to react with non-democratic measures to deter such moves.

*Sixth*, technology may be useful for democracy but may also be detrimental to those not having enough literacy about technology. Disinformation is circulated through WhatsApp and other social media and having collaborative efforts from civil society groups help educate the public on ways to differentiate disinformation from the true information.

*Seventh*, civil society is playing a central role in ensuring that democracy does not get weakened by populism, or spiraled into a broader misuse of identity in politics, hoaxes, and disinformation. As noted by Indrasari in chapter four, there is a great expectation that civil society movements could bring up social justice agenda so that democratic competition remains true to what is needed by the society. This may not be easy given that the space for civil society may shrink in the presence of populist regimes.

Indeed, these are only a few of the aspects of democracy under the pressure of populism. Populism does not work in a vacuum. We learned from the bulk of studies on democracy that democracy is also about access to power. Some studies show how power works in divided societies, especially when ethnic identity severely exclude one or more groups from accessing power with the risk of being identified as the enemy of the state (Horowitz 1993). Studies about opposition have also been quite robust, digging further into how the state reach the people, relate with the public, certain groups or with certain movement (Brown 1994, Smootha 2001, Yashar, 1999), how the ruling parties maintain democratic practices, especially when one party has been dominant for a long time (Mutalib 2000, Scheiner 2005) and how democracy also has dark-sides (Mann 2004). The word term "play by the rule" is much easier said than done at times (Liddle, 1999).

In other words, as much as democracies spread rapidly as the Cold War ended, they need much support to stay true to the principles that democracy is known for. And for those living in democracies, no one could disagree that democracies need constant nurturing. The forums of Bali Democracy Forum (BDF), Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF) and the Bali Democracy Student Conference (BDSC) capture the recent development and challenges that democracies must be aware of. A precious platform indeed to discuss the values, the expectations, the dissatisfaction, the fear, and the efforts that can be enhanced to support democracies.

At BDF 10th the theme was “Does Democracy Deliver?” A difficult question to answer because in 2017 there were various discourse on why democracies doesn’t deliver. Dambisa Moyo (2018) noted that in America only 19% of the people trust their (democratically elected) government to do what is right. The ability to protect the interest of the people, even under short-term cyclical period of democracies, and the competence to ensure economic growth along with the provision of dependable public services, competitive economy, sufficient infrastructure, high-quality education, healthcare and living standards are in the heart of the questions about whether democracy delivers. Somehow the prerequisite to effective government became important to discuss, such as separation of power, multi-party election, inclusive civil society participation, women’s empowerment, strong education system, rule of law, good governance, effective peaceful crisis management and freedom of press cannot be denied.

There are two levels of engagements discussed thus far on democracy: the state-to-state level and the state-to-people level. BDF as a diplomatic means is primarily a state-to-state level engagement, a way for the government of Indonesia to reach out to other governments by discussing ways to address governance issues, especially in democracies, which would affect the livelihood and direction of countries. However, the elaboration in of the previous chapters shows that discussing democracy cannot exclude or suppress the concerns or issues emerging out of from the state-to-people level of engagement. The wave of information and technology revolution has broadened the engagement of non-state actors such as the CSOs and the media professionals, which may end up good for democracy but could also lead to tensions and the curbing of democracy itself.

Since the earlier chapters have touched upon the complexity of state-to-people level engagement inside a country, particularly when populism is used as a means to garner political support and win the election (or to distract the populace from the winner of the election), in this last chapter it is also important to highlight the relationship between governments of sovereign countries.

There is a classic book on democracy of the late twentieth century, that is *The Third Wave* by Samuel Huntington (1993). In the book Huntington discussed how democracy have actually lived for centuries even before modern years although those democracies did exclude women, slaves, resident aliens and some other categories of people. The hallmark of democracies was the *wave*, or and the *reverse wave*. Democracy as a mode for ruling doesn’t come and stick but instead it come and may go away. But it never come and go in solitary mode; democracy come and go as a collective phenomenon.

For years democracy has grown controversies as much as it opens space for civil society activism and freedom of expression everywhere across the globe. The controversies are related to how democracy and the principles embodied in democracies must be practiced in international relations. Do democracies have the right to push nondemocracies to adopt democracy? Do all democracies practice the principles in similar ways? What if democracies differ in views on what action to take globally? What to do if some countries chose to ignore democratic principles altogether?

There is no conclusion yet to those questions. But these are serious questions begging attention as there are already precedence of countries going into conflicts with other countries, in fact also war, following the desire to topple another nondemocratic regime or to prevent certain nondemocratic leader from continuing to rule over his/her populace. One may recall the tragedy of Libya, Syria, Iraq, Iran as example how nondemocracy is seen as a liability in international relations. One also recalled, however, that throughout the Cold War and the era of capitalist expansion in the post-Cold War era that a non-democracy may appealed to the richer countries to invest their money in their economies due to certain levels of political stability and certainty needed to run business. Indonesia under Sukarno and Suharto's nondemocratic regimes witnessed this directly. Democracy and its principles were undermined for the sake of gaining the most investment from the most promising market.

The question today is about the shifting power relations among nations. The rhetoric's of the United States to beware of China, the expansion of Chinese projects across the globe, the series of trade threats in between countries and the rapid advancement of warfare industries is among those indicating de-concentration of Pax Americana that we have known when the Cold War ended. Under such shifts, the models of government may become less of a focus in global politics, as more and more countries would be driven more by the urge to outcompete others, to secure safe places in global economic growth, and to avoid talking about issues that may invoke disagreements. Where could dialog on democratic principles, including human rights, could get be placed into this new situation? Hopefully the Bali Democracy Forum has can offer a breakthrough for this.

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