Commodum toti populo
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There are two diametric approaches towards social engagement of business and corporations in development. One approach relies on the voluntaristic aspect of business to act and operate responsibly and the other on the regulatory framework in which private sector should be held accountable for their operation. It is of no surprise to see that the proponents of the former then campaign ‘responsibility’ whereas the supporter of the latter stride for ‘accountability’. The debate of responsibility vs. accountability has certainly become more complicated at the empirical and practical level. While corporate (social) responsibility has become the jargon of the first camp, encouraging voluntary and self regulatory measures of business sector; corporate (social) accountability has certainly been a lingo for the second one, advocating regulatory framework to force private sector to comply with existing laws. To what extent can these two views reach a meeting point? Is ‘self regulatory’ and ‘voluntary’ action adequate to ensure social responsibility of business? Does regulatory framework suffice to hold private sector accountable? This presentation provides some snapshots of some business practices in Indonesia to understand the tension between these two poles. It argues that these contrasting views may have rooted deeply in the conception of power and centres of power. Power is polycentric rather than monocentric: it is emanating from one centre, given the paradoxical nature of the societal life. Power is also asymmetrical. Therefore any socially consequential exercise of power should not escape the democratic and accountability criteria –be they done by public agencies, community organisations, or business firms. The underlying reason is sound and clear: for any exercise of power, the benefit has to be for the whole society.

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Yanuar Nugroho was born in January 1972. He is currently appointed as a Research Associate (viva pending) with the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research (MIoIR) at the University of Manchester. Prior to his PhD (2004-2007), he was trained as an Industrial Engineer at Institute of Technology Bandung (ITB) Indonesia in 1990-1994 and was awarded a Chevening award to earn an MSc (with distinction) in Information Systems Engineering from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) UK in 2000-2001. He has been working with both academic world and social movement to date. In Indonesia, during 1996-2000 and 2001-2004 he was a lecturer at Trisakti University in Jakarta, Sahid University in Surakarta, and was a visiting lecturer at some private universities. He also established and has been involved with some NGOs: In 1996 he initiated and led ELSPPAT (Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development) in Bogor; in 1998 he founded and took role as the Secretary General at the Uni Sosial Demokrat, a Jakarta-based political NGO working on the political training for young people. In 2002 he set-up and directed Business Watch Indonesia, a research-based NGO in Solo focusing on the impact of globalisation-related policies and private sector involvement in development. His research concern revolves around innovation studies, ICTs and the Internet, social movement and third sector, business ethics, and sustainable development. He is married to Dominika Oktavira Arumdati and has a daughter Diandra Aruna Mahira and a son Linggar Nara Sindhunata. He is currently residing in Manchester, North West England. His full profile, research works and publications are accessible via his personal blog http://audentis.wordpress.com.