

Preface

Policy-making in developing countries has been constrained by both external and internal factors ever since their political independence. The degree of state autonomy has varied extensively from country to country as well as across policy areas, but the decision-makers' room for manoeuvring has generally been very limited and their powers and capabilities to *implement* policies even more so.

The aim of this volume is to revisit theories which focus on state formation, embedded autonomy and the constraining influences on decision-making and policy implementation - with a further view to discuss their contemporary relevance and validity, particularly considering the impact of increased economic globalisation and the pressure on developing countries to conform to common international standards for economic transactions and state interference with such transactions. International pressure to conform to good governance standards and environmental protection standards will also be considered in this context.

In addition to investigating the impact of global change processes, the idea is further to look at changes with respect to internal (sub-national) constraining influences, including the strengthening in many countries of religious and ethnic political movements. In sum, these perspectives will reveal how political decision-making processes in developing countries tend to become increasingly squeezed between (a) global processes and actors who are imposing conditionalities and 'rules of the game'; (b) alliances formed between internal and global actors that bypass and even oppose the nation state; and (c) internal conflicts and actors signalling a weak embeddedness of state institutions in the national society.

The papers included in this volume are based on presentations at a researcher training course organised in December 1998 by the Graduate School of International Development Studies at Gilleleje. Included are papers by

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