

Introduction

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"Popular Movements, Political Organisation, Democracy and the State" was the third researcher training course to be organised as part of the first year's work of the Ph. D. programme in International Development Studies on "Political and Cultural Institutions in Development". The course was a direct result of Nordic networking around researcher training and was planned in close cooperation between IDS, Roskilde, and the AKUT group at the University of Uppsala, with Lars Rudebeck and Preben Kaarsholm acting as convenors. Discussions at the course were intended to elaborate on those which had taken place on two earlier occasions where Roskilde and Uppsala staff had worked together - a Nordic researcher training course on "Government by People - a Realistic Alternative in the Third World?" Roskilde at Gilleleje in May 1989 and an AKUT conference on "When Does Democracy Make Sense? Political Economy and Political Rights in the Third World with Some European Comparisons" which took place in Uppsala in October 1989. No specific external funding was available for the course, but the University of Uppsala provided AKUT with a grant of SEK25.000 to allow participating Uppsala staff and Ph. D. students to travel to Roskilde. Professor Partha Chatterjee's participation from Calcutta was made possible by a grant from DANIDA.

The brief to presenters and participants ran as follows:

"The perspective of the proposed course requires that both the nature of the state, the role of popular movements, and the preconditions for democracy in developing societies are addressed.

The state plays a decisive role in development. This, however, is not unique to the situation in modern Third World societies. Some historical experiences from other times and other parts of the world will therefore be reviewed, before we move on to the question of the nature of the post-colonial state and the crisis it seems to be facing. Various approaches and theories dealing with

Latin American, African, and Asian development scenarios will be juxtaposed and illustrated.

Traditional arguments on the preconditions for democracy have focussed on the relationship between democratisation and capitalist development. Bourgeoisies and middle classes have traditionally been seen as the historical agents of democratisation. In this perspective, obstacles to democratisation in the Third World have been discussed in terms of the emergence of new patterns of capital accumulation and bourgeois class formation. A different view of the relationship between the state and the new capitalists in the Third World emphasises the typicality of experiences of strong bourgeoisies establishing themselves on the political foundation of authoritarian or dictatorial rule. Recently, efforts have been made to theorise the relationship between different models of accumulation and the possibilities of democracy. Alternative research approaches have investigated the consequences of different liberation movement histories and decolonisation patterns for the types of post-colonial state and forms of democratic mobilisation characteristic of developing societies in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

What is the role of social movements in democratisation? In some explanations of Western European democratisation, social movements asserting themselves against the state have been attributed an important role. The vote was extended by dominant classes to broader groups as a mixed strategy of concession and co-optation in the face of growing popular opposition to state power. It has been suggested that such modes of democratisation are often obstructed in the Third World by the effective use of clientelism to incorporate the masses. From this perspective, the strengthening of "civil society" becomes a strategy for democratisation. Foreign aid to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is often justified in such terms. Important questions remain: How successful is co-optation and control? How much autonomy is exercised by social movements? What is the role of democracy for social movements when attempting to protect their autonomy? How does the autonomy of popular social movements relate to the need for political organisation? Can a common model be established for social movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America, or do different social and historical circumstances on the three continents lead to the emergence of fundamentally different types of institutions?

Another important issue for discussion concerns the role of labour and working class organisations in democratisation. The point of departure for investigation will be the practices and strategies through which workers (and seekers of employment), collectively and individually, respond to and influence developments in the workplace, in the labour market, and in society at large. One set of questions in this field relates to workers' efforts to regulate conditions of work, the labour contract, including the rules for hiring and firing workers. Their struggles in this arena are relevant to the wider process of democratisation in that they concern the striving to place limits on arbitrary rule, introducing elements of legality in opposition to despotism within the sphere of production. A second set of questions relates to the problems of social and political control arising from the spread of industrial mass production. Elements of democratic rights and representation as well as welfare measures may for instance be traded by the state against the cooperation of trade unions in disciplining workers in the workplace.

A third area of enquiry to be addressed by the course comprises the implications of structural adjustment and economic liberalisation for the legitimacy of the state and democratic consensus in the Third World. According to one mode of thinking, economic and political liberalisation go hand in hand, and democratisation possibilities are enhanced through the unfettering of market forces. In another view, however, structural adjustment may entail the effects of the legitimacy of the post-colonial state as well as notions of democracy and nationalism in a modern sense being undermined and replaced by institutional forms based on religious fundamentalism and ethnic loyalties, as even minimal hopes for popular welfare and a better life turn out to be illusory. In this context, an increasingly important area for research becomes the prominence of cultural focuses for organisation, the co-existence and interaction between different levels of identity formation and mobilisation vis-à-vis the influence of political movements and parties, and the prospects of processes of cultural and political re-traditionalisation coinciding with economic modernisation. If such developments are becoming prominent, they then again call for a reconsideration of the theoretical and methodological apparatus required for the analysis of political and cultural institutions in Third World societies."

The papers presented in this collection are representative of the discussions at the course, but not all presentations made have been available for inclusion. Thus, the course programme featured an important lecture by Lars Rudebeck on "The Implications of Structural Adjustment: Discussion on the Basis of a Case" and one by Kirsten Westergaard on "What Movements Brought Down the Ershad Dictatorship in Bangladesh?". Also presentations by participating Ph. D. students were prominent in the programme and three of these were allowed full lecture format - Per Tidemand's "Resistance Councils in Uganda: Democracy and Development Administration", Keld Buciek's "Working-Class Culture in Ghana" and Thomas Hansen's "Theoretical Problems relating to the Study of Popular Movements in India". Shorter presentations of ongoing Ph. D.-project work were offered by Per Nordlund, Park Keung Jong, Susanne Wendt and Gunnel Cederlöf.

It is a special pleasure to be able to include a paper by Partha Chatterjee in the present collection. At the Roskilde course, Professor Chatterjee's contribution on "Communalism and Nationalism in India" was made towards the end of the programme and was a tour-de-force made without a manuscript which fulfilled an important function of summing up, relating and discussing critically the presentations which had been made during the previous days. We are grateful that Professor Chatterjee was later able to present us with a manuscript summarising his argument on nationalism, communalism and the modern state.