

11. Movement Politics and Development: Preliminary Theoretical Notes on Some Concrete Cases in Kerala and Indonesia

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This is a preliminary attempt to recall and carve out some arguments related to the discourse on movements and development – on the basis of a not yet concluded programme during the nineties on popular movements, development and democracy, based on repeated case studies in the very different contexts of Kerala, Indonesia and the Philippines.¹ I will mainly draw on the work in Kerala and Indonesia.²

Most movement studies stress socio-economic conditions, political opportunities, mobilisation structures, and/or the cultural framework in terms of collective identities. My general argument is that we should give more importance to movement politics. While mainstream movement studies ask for the rise, extension and form of movements, and thus primarily seek knowledge about the combinations of conditions, opportunities, vehicles and framing, my own main interest is in the democratic potential of movements, and in whether they will give birth to the "Next Left". This may be more related to their own strategies and practices, given the conditions. However, the structural preconditions is the point of departure for me as well. So let us begin with those and then proceed with

¹ This paper is primarily based on my presentation to the Stockholm conference "Civil Society, Authoritarianism and Globalisation", September 18-20, 1998, and a draft paper read at a workshop on Social Movements and Development, Yale University, March 24-25, 2000.

² Two rather short summaries of major parts of the studies are available, one on "New Popular Politics of Development: Kerala's Experience", in Govindan Parayil (ed.) *Kerala. The Development Experience: Reflections on Sustainability and Replicability*, London and New York: Zed Books, 2000, and another on "Dynamics of Indonesian Democratisation", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2000, pp. 383-423. And those interested in the general comparative perspective related to a critique of the civil society and social capital discourse, might have a look at chapter 13 in my *Politics and Development: A Critical Introduction* Sage 1999 (a somewhat earlier version is also in Törnquist, O.; Rudebeck, L.; Rojas, V. (eds) *Democratization in the Third World: Concrete Cases in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective*, Macmillan & St. Martin's Press, 1998); and for a (not yet updated) summary of some results on the Philippine cases, see my chapter in *People's Rights: Social Movements and the State in the Third World* edited by Manoranjan Mohanty, Partha Nath Mukherji with Olle Törnquist, Sage Publications, 1998.

why I became more interested in the movements' own politics, how I think one should go about studying it, and what kind of tentative conclusions regarding movement politics and development, that one may draw.

The structural points of departure

Having spent most of the seventies trying to specify what theoretical and strategic problems of Marxism that contributed to the destruction of the third largest Communist Party, the PKI of Indonesia,³ and then most of the eighties analysing, in comparative perspective, whether those problems were specific to Indonesia or were of a more general nature,⁴ there was suddenly – by 1989 of course – some interest in one of the conclusions: that mainstream political Marxism had come to an end in not just Eastern Europe but also in the third world. Theoretically and strategically the universal aspirations of Marxism had proven just as disastrous as those of the old liberal version of the modernisation school. (The fact that the latter – by default and in a normative sense only – gained new momentum after the fall of the Wall is quite another matter). However, as I had added from 1984 and onwards,⁵ the results also indicated – in complete contrast to the "end of history" thesis – that there were interesting indications of partly new contradictions and conflicts that were likely to turn radical and class based democratisation into a major issue and, therefore, give rise to many new movements with a potential of both merging and going beyond the old conflicts between socialist and communist paths and generate a new radical development project, the "Next Left". This called for a closer study; and because of the ill-fated universal theories, one had to start from the basics and with rather exploratory perspectives.

Of course, this grounded explorative approach and positive thesis on democracy and the "Next Left" were not nearly as favourably received within mainstream social science as was the negative conclusion about old political Marxism. But for other reasons, both formal academic and the bad fate of rival perspectives on Indonesia, it has nevertheless been

³ Törnquist, *Dilemmas of Third World Communism: The destruction of the PKI in Indonesia*. London: Zed Books, 1984.

⁴ Törnquist, *What's Wrong With Marxism?* Volume I: *On Capitalists and State in India and Indonesia* and Volume II: *On Peasants and Workers in India and Indonesia*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1989 and 1991, and Törnquist, "Communists And Democracy In The Philippines", in *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay) Vol. XXVI, No. 27-28 and 29, 1991. Also with the title "Democracy And The Philippine Left", in *Kasarinlan* (University of the Philippines) Vol. 6, No 1-2, 1990.

⁵ Törnquist, *Struggle for Democracy - A New Option in Indonesia?* The Akut-series no. 33, Uppsala 1984.

possible to carry on the research for a decade. So while the concluding comparative book is delayed – because of the transition in Indonesia but also the exciting developments in Kerala – I wish to discuss some tentative conclusions.

The development and democracy arguments

First the argument. The established thesis, which I challenged, suggested that the rise of democracy is closely connected to the social and economic development of capitalism in general; and to the capacity of middle classes to organise and communicate within a civil society⁶ of “good” citizens with increasing trust in each other (social capital), more specifically. In this perspective, moreover, the current dynamic growth of late capitalism in the third world and, related to this, increasingly independent and astute citizens, would undermine the old kind of class contradictions that, it was claimed, generated “threats against democracy and development” in the shape of “overpoliticisation”, oversized and authoritarian states, and “top-down” traditional leftist parties and unions.

In authoritarian Indonesia, this thesis translated into the predictions that the rapid socio-economic development from the late-sixties and onwards would either generate middle class democracy through a stronger civil society, or demands from above, “within the system”, for more efficient regulations, rule of law and meritocracy, and less corruption. In basically democratic Kerala, (besides the fact that its underdeveloped economy should not, as it were, have produced a democratic polity in the first place) one implication would be that the long and outstanding importance of Leftist politics would decline after the land reform and that further democratisation would primarily occur in the southern areas where market and middle class and civil society driven modernisation was most important.

Against this (and beyond the fact that most democracies have actually come about much “thanks” to “enlightened” top-down leaders, war, and other catastrophes), my initial general argument was that while it was true to point to the dynamic nature of capitalism, third world late capitalism could be expected to generate other characteristics that might actually spur another political Left – and radical democracy at that.

⁶ For the present purposes it is not necessary to discuss various definitions of civil society. What I have in mind is nothing more and nothing less than this: relatively independent associational life among citizens and public space(es) for their communication which focus on self-governance among and between various segments of the population rather than general public governance among a clearly defined citizen-demos.

Why would that be? First, “real” capitalist development meant that there was no longer any solid basis for the communist argument about the need for authoritarian shortcuts to progress. While the old Left would diminish in Kerala and not return in Indonesia, radical movements would instead become more interested in gradual and democratic pathways from below, and abandon enlightened authoritarianism.

Second, there would also be less fertile ground for the old third world social-democratic middle class coups against “threatening radical masses” – as dynamic capitalist development would now produce a critical mass of middle class and “educated workers” that might be more easy to mobilise in peaceful elections. Hence, western oriented socialists in Indonesia and centre-leftists in Kerala would become more interested in political work among “the masses”, and also to engage in joint projects with groups and people that previously were looked upon as communist-pariah.

Third, while it may well be that this third world late capitalism generates less unified subordinate classes than did early European capitalism, the increasing number of movements that emerge around the many different conflicts would instead have to give more emphasis to various institutional arrangements to promote co-operation in order to reach reasonable results – which in turn might promote democratic methods. If this proved right, there would in both contexts emerge concurring and even unifying tendencies among different movements, NGOs, and so on.

Fourth, and probably most important, the special kind of politically dominated symbiosis between politics and economy in third world late capitalism, I argued, would make it necessary for subordinate classes to not just stand up against private capitalists but also against the monopolisation of politically controlled resources. Hence, there might be preconditions for a powerful combination of interests of class and radical democratisation against political-cum-economic rulers, similar to the previous alliance between nationalism and the struggle against landlordism and foreign capitalism.

In Indonesia, if this proved right, demands for democracy would not be restricted to some middle class civil society groups and reformists “within the system”. In fact, most of them would rather be co-opted and isolated. Despite the lack of the liberal conditions and opportunities that most theorists saw as necessary, potentially powerful democratic forces would instead emerge among broad sections of the population, including peasants and workers, who were all suffering from political and state promoted primitive accumulation. Corruption and human rights violations, for instance, would not only be a middle class question but also something that related to the ways in which capitalists and managers con-

trolled the economy, subordinated their workers and appropriated the surplus. Within the extremely authoritarian framework of Suharto's "New Order", therefore, the issue of democracy in terms of popular control and governance of common resources could be expected to generate radical systemic critique – or set off extreme privatisation and deregulation.

In less extreme Kerala, on the other hand, the tendencies would be of a similar kind, but of course not as drastic. One likely trend following the land reform⁷ would be an increasing focus on the control of various resources (such as inputs) other than land as such, through which it would be possible to appropriate surplus indirectly through the market. This would then spur co-operation among producers in terms of joint management of, for instance, irrigation, the purchase of inputs, and marketing. There would also be more need for co-operation among fragmented labour against mobile capital – which called for democratic political co-ordination among the former and negotiations and pacts between the two. Finally, therefore, democratic governance on both local and central levels would become a new main issue after the previous struggle over fixed resources such as land.

The "pro-democratic conditions" are not enough

It is not possible to go into the details of operationalisations, indicators, and empirical results here, but with a few important exceptions my above hypotheses from the mid/late-eighties have proven reasonably correct.

Initially, in *Indonesia* the middle-classes, a somewhat expanding civil society and – with a few exceptions – the NGOs did not play a particularly important role in the democratisation process. With the clampdown on the democracy movement in 1996, the reform minded groups and individuals, such as sections of the Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), who wanted to change the system slowly from within, proved even less successful. Meanwhile, democratisation became an increasingly important rallying point even among "non-political" development dissidents. For the first time there were signs that people simply didn't accept the attempts of the regime to explain its crackdown by accusing "communists" of masterminding the protests. Rather, there was more co-operation between so-called communists and liberal journalists, Muslim democrats and human rights activists, among others. Reports of conflicts between broader sections of the population, including peasants and workers, and the state, with related businessmen, continued.

So after the mid-1996 debacle of instigated riots and the crackdown on the democracy movement, it was possible to conclude that it was only a

matter of time before any kind of destabilisation would fully reveal the incapacity of the system to handle and regulate conflicts within the elite as well as between state and society and open up for massive popular demands for democracy or at least an end to the authoritarian regime.⁸ Moreover, it became crystal clear that market related constraints did not help much. Despite the fact that the destabilising factor turned out to be the drastic financial crisis, and that the world market, the IMF, and the World Bank suddenly stood up against Suharto, the crisis and the popular suffering just grew worse while Suharto remained in power. By April 1998 IMF & Co. even conceded. Actually, it was only the cock-sureness of Suharto, the political stupidity of his economists – in relying on repression and reducing food and fuel subsidies to an even greater extent than the IMF had asked for – and, most decisively, the massive student protests that opened the floodgates and forced the elite to dump Suharto. Once the students, even if only temporarily, substituted for the lack of an organised broad popular political movement, people en masse came forward. So only within a few hours after Suharto was gone, the surviving elite and all the previous international supporters of his regime realised that there was absolutely no other alternative to a popular revolution but to declare that they themselves would immediately turn into good guys and instantly transform Indonesia into a democracy.

However, the foreseen convergence among different movements around the issue of democratisation was shallow. There was a potential for radical popular democratisation, yes, – but there never was (and still isn't) any reasonably unified democratic front with a substantial agenda. Much of the radical democratic potential of the struggle against the authoritarian and corrupt symbiosis between state and private business that so clearly existed was captured instead by the new pact between domestic moderate reformers and international neo-liberal creditors and investors.

So the main remaining scholarly (and political) problem is, that even when most of our hypotheses about structural and institutional preconditions regarding movements and democracy proved generally right, they were far from enough to explain the outcome. In fact, the most exciting puzzle remains: why it is that movements, despite rather favourable conditions, are more or less successful in their efforts at democratisation? It is quite possible that additional structural and institutional factors could add some explanatory force. But it is even more obvious that we also have to pay more attention to the movements' ability to handle and read various conditions and to transform the opportunities into successful politics.

⁷ The least inconsistent in India and mainly concluded in the seventies.

⁸ "From New to Human Order in Indonesia?" in *NIAS nytt*, (Nordic Institute for Asian Studies) no. 3, October 1996 and *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 5, 1996.

In this respect, the *Kerala* picture is basically similar. The weakness in the mainstream modernisation argument is perhaps here best illustrated by the results from one of the world's most impressive campaigns for democratic decentralisation and alternative popular planning and development work from below, the People's Planning Campaign since 1996. We shall come back to those efforts later. The interesting fact is that generally speaking the campaign has been least successful, in terms of democratic development projects, in the areas most marked by market – and middle class civil society driven modernisation – contrary to the conventional arguments on democratisation. Rather, success seems to be more related to less market modernisation, the presence of knowledgeable radical activists, and well organised co-operation among voluntary organisations, as well as between these and the local public administrators.

This, however, is a still ongoing process. Generally speaking the alternative hypotheses have been confirmed from about 1987. When the Left Front managed to get voted back into power, its policy had become less focused on the already at that time rather outdated conflicts over land reform. Instead, minority reformist sections began responding to new challenges in terms of development of production, mismanagement, corruption and, thus, the need for more democracy.

Much of the reforms have grown out of broad voluntary and non-party political co-operation among centre and left oriented activists in the educational People's Science Movement (KSSP). With the successful struggle against a huge power plant in Silent Valley in the seventies, the KSSP became increasingly mass based. And when the Left Front got back into power in 1987, the KSSP became a vital basis for those trying to adapt and revitalise Kerala's radical development project on the basis of local popular democracy and environmental sustainability. The first of the celebrated campaigns concerned literacy. While this was then attempted in other parts of India as well, additional campaigns followed in Kerala on group farming and local resource mapping. The basic idea was to engage all people in joint productive and sustainable efforts going beyond the social, economic and political conflicts during the struggle for land reform. Democratic co-operation between people and various civil society organisations at the local level became increasingly important in order to handle the new productive tasks and to be able to mobilise people, socially and politically, in accordance with the new conflicts related to them – rather than old ones related to land reform and specific union issues.

Despite the presence of such positive conditions, the outcome was rather frustrating. Like in Indonesia, there was little spontaneous convergence of various groups and interests in favour of actual productive co-operation and democratisation. Special interests and diverging views of

specific issues often persisted, which sustained the dominance of old political and at times communal loyalties. Moreover, several established, and especially trade union based, sections of the Left Front parties were very sceptical of the new initiatives. In fact, many of the initiatives depended on the support from well-wishers within the state government. When the Left lost the next election, the campaigns lost steam. By the early nineties it became increasingly clear that if an effective new social movement (beyond the land reform movement) would stand a chance, this would require a more decentralised democratic polity in order to create a framework for dynamic developmental work, democratic co-operation, and fresh political mobilisation for alternative development. The major problem, however, was how to create enough popular pressure to influence the still dominating centralist politicians to implement such a decentralisation and such more favourable conditions.

One of the most exciting developments among radical popular movements that I am aware of is that the Kerala activists actually managed to get out of this trap. In 1996 the new People's Planning Campaign that was mentioned in the beginning of this sub-section on Kerala was launched. And even more interesting, this was much due to very skilful activist politics: by assuring preserved hegemony in terms of presenting the only exciting and realistic ideas about a new popular political development project – including through a huge conference; by effectively campaigning for political decentralisation to the extent that Left front politicians committed themselves to such policies for the future; by contributing to the 1996 electoral victory of the Left; and by then rapidly gaining dominating influence within the State Planning Board for a clear cut and ready made development strategy – the People's Planning Campaign. This, of course, doesn't mean that all problems were solved. Far from that. In the late-2000 local elections, for instance, the reformists were not strong enough to make a real difference in the face of the narrow tactical considerations among the established politicians in the Left Front, including in the selection of local candidates, which seems to have been a major reason for the poor results. But as in Indonesia, the latter problems testify once again to the vital importance of movement politics – and calls for a conceptual framework to analyse it.

First conclusion

Before we proceed, let me summarise. Much of the expectations about structural and institutional development in favour of a social movement driven radical democratisation and the emergence of a "Next Left", due to the symbiosis of politics and economy within third world late-capitalism, have proven reasonably correct in contexts as different as Indonesia and

Kerala. It would be possible to add explanatory factors in terms of contextualised opportunity structures. But in the same different contexts – and no matter whether the fashionable variables of civil society and social capital signal high or low propensity for democratisation – we would need to find other explanations for the common general problem, running against our initial optimistic hypotheses about lack of substantial convergence on democratisation among various fragmented interests, ideas, groups and actions, *and* the large variation in terms of their contributions to democratisation. In order to grasp this, let us also take a closer look at how the movements themselves read the conditions and choose to operate; let us discuss popular politics of democratisation!

Popular politics of democratisation

To begin with, we have to ask for the significant actors' more elaborate perspectives on democratisation. Even if they agree on many principles, they do disagree on how and what to use them for. For instance, any reasonable understanding of Indonesia's future presupposes more knowledge of why certain forms of democracy and new political institutions suddenly make sense to many of Suharto's old followers. Movements differ in their views of to what extent citizens' actual capacity to make use of democratic institutions needs to be present before they are prepared to seriously bet on democracy. For example, are guarantees for free and fair elections sufficient, or is substantial knowledge of political alternatives and the presence of ideologically and socially rooted parties also necessary? Finally, there are debates over the proper extension of democracy, including the fundamental question of for how long and to what extent the armed forces should retain political and economic privileges. In other words: movements differ in their views about the preconditions, the forms, the operation, the utility, and the extension of democratic institutions and processes.

It is even more important to know *how and in what way* the actors would like "their" democracy to become real, i.e. how the process of democratisation should take place. On surface this is well understood. After the fall of Suharto, for instance, the radical students argued that democratisation presupposed the replacement of the incumbents and thus aimed at radical mass mobilisation in favour of a transitional government.

This, however, is very general and almost like asking for the actors' ideal scenario of what contending parties should be doing and what the general process of democratisation should look like. We all know, for instance, that the students failed and that the moderate opposition managed instead to both draw on the activities of the genuine democrats and stage a compromise with the doves within Golkar and the army (who tried to

transform the old system), whereby it was possible to "transplace" the system from Suharto's "New Order" with Gus Dur's "Pact Order". However, while this elite game could easily be made more complicated, and filled up with the conventional hard-liners and soft-liners, we also need to go beyond the catchy political theatre in Jakarta. How could we get below the elitist surface and analyse the ways in which the actors themselves really try to fight for their ideal models when confronted with the harsh realities, and in some cases really try to increase people's ability to make use of democratic institutions when up against the resourceful elite? How shall we, in other words, analyse the actual politics of democratisation?

Let's start by asking for the most vital factors or dimensions of movement politics. What would be the vital criteria in a descriptive analysis? And what would be the decisive characteristics and relations in an explanatory analysis? Only in face of the myriad of fragmented layers of Indonesian dissidents that had developed over the years, did I, by the mid-nineties, realise the need for some formalised, systematic, and square-shaped point of departure. The old kind of left-right dimensions or attempts at establishing clear cut links between movements and socioeconomic interests or clientilistic relations, or simply movement by movement analyses did not make much sense. Rather, I began thinking in terms of how one would go about a descriptive analysis of conflicting and supplementary ideas over time (the explanatory part would have to come later). How would one identify and make sense of the major conflicts within the movement discourse on what they should do, and what they actually did, with regards to promoting democratisation?

At least, the first attempt at such a framework in early-1996 did not become obsolete already after a few months of new movement alliances and the crackdown on the 27th of July, but continued to serve as a comparatively reasonable basis for predicting and reading the political transition. And after years of revisions, new studies, and critical discussions with scholars and activists (primarily in Indonesia, Kerala and the Philippines) on whether the proposed framework is inclusive of the most important discussions and arguments, the current version, I hope, might prove fruitful. Three factors, space, politicisation, and mobilisation, seem to be central.

Political space

Given that the movements aim at some kind of democratisation, the first major question in any discourse on how they try to reach this aim concerns the preferred terrain of struggle. In the main, this rests with the way in which the movement activists read the political opportunity structure. A more fruitful analysis situates and discusses the implications of the ac-

tivists' reading of the conditions in relation to a wider discussion about the opportunities.

The political opportunity structure refers to the relative openness or closure of the political system, the stability of alignments among dominating groups, the possibilities for movements to associate with sections of the elite, and the risks of harsh repression. The very essence, then, is about the location and extension of political space. The question where to carry out pro-democratic work, may be discussed in terms of the following aspects.⁹

The first aspect relates to the often overlapping ways in which societal activity is organised on and in-between different levels (central and local): (a) collective and binding government and administration (state and local government); (b) self-government and management (e.g. voluntary neighbourhood management associations and non-profit foundations or co-operatives, but also more or less non-voluntary units such as ethnic and religious communities, clans, and families); (c) business units (even small ones). (See the big circles, on the central and local levels, in figure 1!).

While actors work in and in-between these spheres, they may also be active within a relatively autonomous public space. (See the space within the triangle in-between the big circles in figure 1!) A public space where actors come together to affect, directly or indirectly, the various activities in society (i.e. in the three spheres mentioned as well as in the public space itself). Within the public space, the actors tend to form different societies (i.e. movements, organisations, clubs). One may distinguish three main tendencies – on different levels as well as in-between those levels: (a) Political societies, which mainly attempt at directly influencing collectively binding decisions and administration (e.g. political parties, political pressure groups, lobbying groups); (b) Civil society groups, (actual asso-

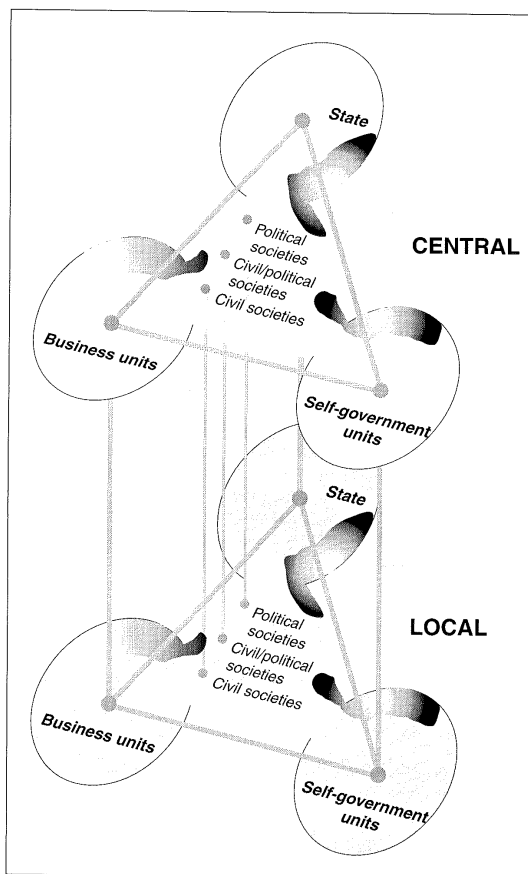
⁹ This is in order to avoid confusion among readers of some of my earlier writings: Due to constructive critique, I have altered earlier attempts at discussing the issue of political space in terms of two dimensions only. The major critique was that previous presentations and figures could be interpreted to mean that there was an *a priori* separation between state and society (even though this was not intended). Moreover, there were unclear distinctions between state and society, on the one hand, and political and civil societies, on the other. Neither was the distinction between the latter two (political and civil societies) clear enough, and it was difficult to read the important combinations and linkages into the figure. Also, changes over time could be handled by filling in replications of the figure, one after the other (at different points of time), and then compare. But the geographical dimension, central-local, could not be handled in a similar way. Hence then the absolutely vital discussion of the (often lacking) combinations and linkages would be set aside. Finally, politics of democratisation in relation to business units (large and small) might be ignored if (as previously) lumped under action related to civil society or politics.

ciations, not just ideal "free and non-primordial" ones) which relate to either business units (e.g. trade unions or peasant organisations) or to self-government and management (e.g. volunteers in support of victims of violence that turn to an independent legal aid bureau, study circles that relate to a collective library, religious movements that relate to various churches, or women's organisations against domestic violence) which only indirectly may affect collectively binding decisions and administration; (c) Civil-political societies that combine or link the activities that relate to state/local government on the one hand and self-management on the other, (e.g. labour movements with a party plus broad popular unions, youth and women groups and co-operatives; human-rights groups that both support victims of violence and try to influence related state policies; peasant movements that do not just fight landlords on their own but also campaign for public land reforms).

Another aspect is that the actors may choose or have to be active in non-authorised forms – with regard to state, business and self-managed units as well as within the public field, (indicated with shades in figure 1). To get this all included in a figure is a bit difficult. But the draft in figure 1 might give some hints on what we are talking about.

In the context of *Indonesia* before mid-1998, the radicals were in the "non-authorised" shaded parts of the figure in the matrix. The explicitly politicising activists aiming at the state and the political system – including the students who did away with Suharto – tended to work in political or civil-political societies and focused almost entirely on the centre of the political system. They had few links with either the local levels or those focusing on civil society groups. Other radicals gave priority to more indirect democratic work, for instance by promoting human rights and alternative development; being less focused on the centre of the system. Most of the activity related to self-government, not to production/business units (such as trade unions).

Figure 1: The political terrain for action



In the "authorised" parts of the politically oriented societies, on the contrary, were the less explicitly democratically oriented persons who tried to work through the two recognised "opposition" parties at the time, as did Megawati before she was ousted, or within various state apparatuses and the pro-government ICMI (Association of Muslim Intellectuals), though the latter was already at that time getting increasingly associated with the regime. Still almost everything related to the centre of the political terrain, but there were more links with the local levels than among the outright dissidents and closer links between politically oriented societies and civil society groups than in the case of the radicals.

In the legalised civil society there were many semi-autonomous NGO workers but also the Muslim leader Gus Dur. The latter did not link up with the government but stayed within the established part of the widely defined political terrain and tried to affect it indirectly with the kind of self-restrictive actions in support of a more autonomous civil society that we know from the 80's in Eastern Europe and which inspired Gus Dur, among others. Again, most of the activity related to self-government; very little to business units.

A lot of this changed with the stepping aside of Suharto and the disintegration of the "New Order" regime. The major change here is that the extremely influential Gus Dur and his pragmatic and primarily rural East and Central Java based Nahdlatul Ulama movement (NU), which claimed more than 30 million followers, began to supplement his previous civil society based activities with explicitly political action, including the forming of the National Awakening Party (PKB). This is again similar to some Eastern European dissidents with the fall of the regimes in their countries – thus also establishing links between the central and local level in the political system. Similarly, the initially more radical and extra-parliamentary oriented Muslim leader Amien Rais of the more modernist, widespread, and urban based Muhammadiyah movement, which claimed more than 20 million followers, also gave priority to politics, including the forming of the National Mandate Party (PAN) – and adjusted to the established system.

Until the end of 1998, large sections of the radical democrats who stressed political change remained outside the legal terrain, basically arguing and demonstrating in favour of a transitional government to replace the existing regime. The radical democrats who used to give priority to more indirect political work in civil society, through action groups and NGOs, could now also exist within the more open system. Some activists turned to explicitly political work, joining political parties. Many, however, continued their previous NGO activities which remained important as such, but began to lose steam and were less influential than during the

struggle against Suharto – just like in other third world countries after the fall of dictators. A few activists were able to connect their associations to the radical political opposition. In general, the previous problem of linking work in the political and civil societies persisted. Among many of the civil society related groups there was still very little contact with the more or less spontaneous radical demands at the local level. The problems of linking central and local activities also continued.

Finally, many pro-democratic groups remained on the fringes of the legal framework. Only rarely was it possible, for instance, to run in elections, even at the district and local levels, as the activists were lacking resources to establish the required national presence. This made it difficult to develop political constituencies from below and on the basis of shared ideas and interests. Moreover, local and regional issues, and demands for autonomy, were swept under the carpet or subordinated to the local patrons and bosses of “national” parties. Many people in West Papua, Aceh, and of course East Timor, did not feel that their problems and democratic aspirations could be handled within this restrictive Indonesian framework.

The Kerala picture is very different and has been more stable. It is characterised by a non-repressive and open system but also by a deep-rooted bipolar party-politicisation of various socio-economic as well as caste and religious pillars, within which movements and their leaders can relate to factions of the elite. Unrecognised avant-garde politics is now (with hardly any Naxalites left) limited to a few action groups, while certain NGOs promoting community organisation continue work in non-established parts of civil society, but most of the democratisers are within the established political forces of the Left Front and/or associated with movements like the autonomous KSSP in civil-political society and out-right civil society. In the latter case they try to complement and reform progressive parties and party-politicised popular organisations, as well as government and *panchayat* politics through relatively independent actions related to self-government, constantly benefiting from close contacts with sections of the political and administrative elite.

In comparison with Indonesia, of course, politics in Kerala is less centralised, especially in the sense of encompassing more vital and dynamic local organisations. When it comes to local government and administration, however, and leadership of local political organisations and struggles, it has remained centralised, despite a lot of rhetoric and efforts by civil-political movements – at least until the dynamic and forceful campaign on decentralised popular planning began in 1996.

Politicisation of interests and ideas

Having discussed where movements consider it meaningful to carry out pro-democracy work, the second major issue concerns why democracy makes sense to them. What kind of issues and interests do they choose to bring up on the political agenda in order to promote democratisation?

On the basis of a Marxist-oriented understanding of civil society and democracy, Peter Gibbon has suggested that modern civil society primarily reflects the “bourgeois” social division of labour with its individualised and privatised entities. The plurality of groupings created is not likely by itself to promote general interests and democratic forms of government. On the contrary, the associations may turn into prisoners of the process through the deepening of civil society, and become unable to combine single issues and specific interests by way of politicisation.¹⁰

This way of conceptualising politicisation, however, is both too normative, and therefore narrow, as it is not problematised, and too general, as it tends to include all aspects of politics. We should not rule out politicisation through, for example, development-oriented civil society organisations. And just like pluralism, of course, politicisation is not a sufficient recipe for democratisation, as recently demonstrated in the former Yugoslavia, and earlier when carried out with the very best of intentions within the framework of various socialist projects. Hence there is a need for qualifications. Moreover, we have to be more precise.

While the interests and issues as such are fundamental of course – and also signal what kind of propelling social forces such as class that various movements relate to – politicisation may primarily be analysed in terms of its basis. First, the kind of ideas and/or interests around which people come together and which they consider in a societal perspective. Here we may distinguish between on the one hand single issues and/or specific interests, and on the other hand ideologies and/or collective interests. Moreover, I previously thought that at least when analysing pro-democracy movements it would be possible to avoid a special category for ideological thinking on the basis of moral and spiritual values and principles with attached communal loyalties and symbolic personalities. But Gus Dur and others in Indonesia revealed my naivety, so now that category has been added.

In addition to this, of course, one must analyse the basis of politicisation within the previously discussed framework of where in the political

¹⁰ Gibbon, Peter, “Some reflections on ‘Civil Society’ and Political Change”, in L. Rudebeck, O. Törnquist and V. Rojas (eds), *Democratisation in the Third World. Concrete Cases in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective*, Uppsala University 1996. Second revised version with the same title published by Macmillan (London) and St. Martin's (New York), 1998.

terrain that the actors position themselves – for instance in relation to the state or self-management. (Later on we shall also add how they try to mobilise support.)¹¹

In *Indonesia*, the years before 1998 were characterised by the lack of politicisation on the basis of collective interests, especially, of course, in terms of class. While religious and ethic values, and general ideas about nationalism and “good leaders”, were important, ideologies on how societies work, should work, and could be changed were not significant, beyond rather small groups (like the PRD, People’s Democratic Party).

Most pro-democratic actors focused directly on various single issues and specific interests. For instance, explicitly politicising activists aiming at the state and the political system often picked up sensitive questions such as corruption and nepotism, the repressive role of the army, or the closing down of newspapers. Many stressed the key role of Suharto and his family. Likewise – but often independently – radical democrats giving priority to work in civil-political societies or outright civil society (for instance within human rights and alternative development groups) addressed separate problems like environmental destruction, expropriation of land for “development” purposes, harassment of women, or the imprisonment and torture of political activists. While the explicitly politicising activists focused on the state and demanded radical change, the more civil society oriented activists supplemented advocacy with the promotion of various associations and self-help activities to strengthen their vulnerable positions.

The pattern was a similar one among pro-democrats working within the established system, though they often focused on the specific interests of people associated with formally recognised socio-religious reform movements such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.

It is true that increasingly many pro-democrats engaged themselves in the directly political efforts, and that civil society activists sometimes related to their actions. But the major tendency remained one of either flocking around the from time to time hottest issue and “most promising” leader, or relating to communities on the basis of moral and spiritual values and “trustworthy leadership”.

In *Kerala*, on the contrary, there is a long tradition of strong institutions and broad and mass based politicisation related to collective inter-

ests and ideology, quite frequently in terms of class. Moreover, and in many ways like in Scandinavia, there has been a rather unique combination of demands for various government policies (such as the land reform and the welfare schemes) and self-management of, for instance, co-operatives and pension programmes (often with partial government support). However, interests and issues are frequently associated with special caste and religious group interests, and the “old” class and ideology based Left Front organisations have been affected by privatised and atomised activities and interests as well. So even though many now talk of “over-politicisation”, this is only true in the sense that private economic actors often make selfish and unproductive use of state and conventional politics.

Those tendencies have been fought most decisively by the new generation of civil society organisations with the People’s Science Movement in the forefront. Initially, their campaigns for civic action and community co-operation to produce sustainable development started as conventional NGO-cum-action group single-issue ones. But over the years they have become more and more comprehensive. Already, the famous massive literacy campaign in the end of the eighties involved a broad perspective on social and political change. Even more so, of course, were the following efforts at resource mapping, which formed the basis for collective multi-purpose development actions. More recently, with the campaign for decentralised planning, the activists have even co-ordinated most of their initiatives with those of the empowered local governments and the State Planning Board. The activists continue a tradition of combining popular pressure politics and popular self management. But while the old organisations used to start with the demands, the new generation often begins with people’s own practical initiatives. A serious remaining problem, however, is that the materialist-reductionist perspectives of the movement activists, and/or their political considerations, have prevented them from speaking up about what kind of new basic class or other interests they are promoting and fighting with their campaigns as the land reform (in particular) has been carried out. While one obvious aim, for instance, is to promote sustainable productive use of land, even that may mean a problem as so many Left Front voters are also involved in petty rent-seeking.

Political inclusion (mobilisation)

Politics, essentially, is about people coming together over what should be held in common by all citizens (not just by members of various associations) and how this should be governed jointly. Given the chosen arenas of operation for the pro-democracy work of the movements, and the kinds of politicisation of ideas and interests that they give priority to, how do

¹¹ Again, to avoid confusion among some readers, the categorisation has been somewhat altered and adjusted to the new figure 1. There simply was no need to continue to discuss what I used to call “the forms of politicisation” when the question about where in the political terrain that the actors choose to position themselves had already been expanded to include work in relation to the major spheres in society, including in relation to state and self-government.

they try to bring people together, "politicise them", by including them into politics through mobilisation and organisation? We may label this final dimension political inclusion, which is related to Sidney Tarrow's "mobilisation structures". In my experience, and especially in third world contexts, we should start with a wider perspective. First – and in general accordance with Nicos Mouzelis¹² – it is possible to distinguish historically between the *integration* of people into politics on the basis of relatively autonomous broad popular movements generated by comprehensive economic development (like in many parts of Western Europe), and the elitist *incorporation* of people with less solid organisations of their own into comparatively advanced polities in economically late-developing societies (like in the Balkans and many third world countries).

Second, and again following Mouzelis, one may distinguish between two ways of incorporating people: clientilism and populism. The concept of clientilism is not confined to Weber-inspired ideas of patrimonialism but is more general and is associated with what one may call patrons or bosses on different levels with a capacity to deliver protection in return for services and votes.¹³ In many cases, I would add, clientilism is "modernised" in the form of state-corporatism. Populism, on the other hand, generally goes with charismatic leaders who are able to express popular feelings and ideas, and sometimes, but not necessarily, interests, and whose positions are essential to the stability of adjoining leaders and their ability to patronise followers. Political leaders aiming at integrating people into politics have often tried short cuts by adding elements of clientilism and populism – thus usually ending up with strong elements of incorporation – which we may label alternative patronage.

Third, one may distinguish, and now in accordance with Sidney Tarrow,¹⁴ between two basic methods of trying to integrate people into politics: one emphasising autonomous collective action and another focusing upon the internalisation of actions and movements in organisation with some leadership. The key-factor is the "mobilisation structure" that helps movements to co-ordinate and persist over time by linking the "centre", in terms of formally organised leadership identifying aims and means, and the "periphery", in terms of the actual collective action in the field. Historically, according to Tarrow, there have been two kinds of solutions:

¹² Mouzelis, Nicos, *Politics in the Semi-Periphery. Early Parliamentarism and Late Industrialisation in the Balkans and Latin America*. London: Macmillan, 1986.

¹³ The main difference between what I call patrons and bosses is that the former may still, to some extent, be related to patron-clientelism and more reciprocal and benevolent relations, while the bosses' patronage may even be protection against some of their own repression.

¹⁴ Tarrow, Sidney, *Power in Movement. Social Movements, Collective Action, and Politics*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

to trust people's natural and spontaneous willingness and ability to resist repression and exploitation through linked networks and federations of autonomous associations (in reality, however, with organic leaders as spearheads), or to stress the need for political ideology, organisation and intervention through integrated structures of parties, unions and self-help organisations (which in reality may hamper dynamic collective action). In the West those have often been rooted in anarchist and democratic socialist thinking, respectively.¹⁵ To avoid biased connotations, I shall instead talk of networks and organised integration.¹⁶

Figure 2: Key ways of including people into politics (in relation to politicisation)

Ideas/interests	Mobilisation		
	Incorporation	Alternative Patronage	Integration
Single issues and/or specific interests	Populism – Clientelism	Incorporation – Integration	Networks – Organised integration.
Ideologies and/or collective interests	Populism – Clientelism	Incorporation – Integration	Networks – Organised integration
Values and/or communal loyalties	Populism – Clientelism	Incorporation – Integration	Networks – Organised integration

We need to analyse the inclusion of people, as well as the politicisation of interests and issues, within the spaces that the movements have given priority to within the political terrain. Then we would get an answer to both "where" and "how". So please recall figure 1, imagine that the actors (and their transformation over time) are identified within the political terrain, and then apply figure 2 to put a stamp with regard to characteristics on each and every actor (at different points of time).

In *Indonesia*, the populism that was so important during the Sukarno period returned in the mid-nineties to the explicitly political level with his

¹⁵ In the "anarchist" solutions Tarrow also includes, e.g., syndicalism and guild socialism; in the second he adds, e.g., European Christian Democracy – and one could add reformist communist patterns.

¹⁶ I used to talk of federative and unitary forms of integration, but with the Indonesian debate about disintegration those also seemed to generate biased connotations.

daughter Megawati and to civil society with Gus Dur. Meanwhile certain Muslim insiders tried to turn pro-government ICMI into a forum for the modernisation of clientilism into Malaysian-like state-corporatism and to use politics to promote Muslim developmental NGO work.

The most consistent and outspoken democrats, however, were found among the myriad of groupings that aimed at integrating people in politics. Ever since the liberation struggle, much of the activism in Indonesia, especially among students and then also in several NGOs, has been and still is based on radical, courageous, often personalised, and sometimes moral leadership and networking that is supposed to ignite people's spontaneous ability to resist. In the late eighties, a new generation of activists began staging daring demonstrations, trying to give voice to subordinated people. Networking "action maniacs" constantly hunted for new issues attracting media attention, demonstrating that there was more space for radical action than most "established" dissidents thought.

In the same basic category were grass root groups and supportive NGOs trying to "empower" civil society – though still primarily in the urban centres – harnessing people's own protests but staying out of explicit politics and leaving it to "people themselves" to organise.

Among those engaged in organised integration, we find groups who agreed on the need to change state and government but drew instead on two other different political traditions: middle-class, and Western oriented socialism, elite organising and attempts to incorporate the masses through conventional, including communal, loyalties; and the reformist communists who also made use of some conventional loyalties but still managed to build in the fifties and sixties a comparatively "modern" party with some 20 million people in attached popular organisations. What remained in the mid-1990's were basically leaders from the elitist tradition who first supported Suharto but then turned critics and were deprived of their organisational bases. The reformist communists, on the other hand, are no more – but instead there is a new generation of mostly young former "action maniacs" who since 1994 bet on ideology and organisation to build a new socialist party by mobilising from above workers, urban poor, some displaced peasants and especially frustrated students. Here are, thus, the roots of the PRD (Democratic People's Party) that was made a scapegoat after the riots in Jakarta in mid-1996, and then faced repression. Finally there were also some a few innovative movement organisers who tried to co-ordinate and integrate more from below, for instance among labour activists and those initiating (in the mid-nineties) the independent electoral watchdog KIPP.

None of those major ways of integrating people into politics, however, proved markedly successful. The outcome in 1996, as we know, was that

the activists who sensed a political opening and shortcut in the conflict over Megawati (when the regime did not accept her as elected leader of her Indonesian Democratic Party, PDI) bet on alternative patronage and ran offside, while the long term potential of the civil society oriented work and local political efforts was left behind.

What are the major new trends after the fall of Suharto? First, populism has increased. But perhaps more importantly: clientilism is getting even more decisive, both on the explicitly political level and in civil society. As already noted, Gus Dur and NU formed a major new party, PKB, and several minor parties were also drawing on the NU community. The general tendency is to move up from civil society to the explicitly political level and to include people into politics by drawing on religious (and to some extent ethnic) communities and their local leaders and associates – in exchange for ability to gain future political positions and benefits. This is affected by the new major tendency of more localised politics as the central organs of the state are crumbling.

Among the outright democrats, on the other hand, the networking activists really managed to do away with Suharto and later on to prevent at several occasions the *reformasi*-process from total collapse. During the first months of 1998, students' protests gained momentum all over the country. This was not just a continuation of the Indonesian history of intellectuals and students who from time to time come out as a "moral force" against abusive rulers and ignite people's anger. The new student movements were also, basically, continuing along the same track as our previously discussed networking avant-garde catalysts who in the late-eighties began to focus on a series of "hot" issues and staging daring demonstrations. A major difference was that there were no longer a few hundreds of "action maniacs" only, but hundreds of thousands, including on provincial campuses, and sometimes links with NGO activists. Yet the students were in many ways up against similar problems as yesterday's avant-garde catalysts. They had problems of co-ordination, they represented people's grievances but were as isolated from their more concrete views and interests as from their urban poor and remote villages, they were skilled at protesting in the streets but unable to develop more refined institutionalised politics and policies. So as soon as the elections were put on the agenda, the students and other extra-parliamentary networkers became almost irrelevant. And meanwhile, the restrictive electoral and political laws added to the weakness and weak local base of the more ideology- and organisation-oriented democrats, for whom it was thus almost impossible to try to form independent and mass based parties and slowly make a difference in elections.

Finally, of course, something similar also held true for the many out-right democrats who continued their less explicitly political but important NGO work for human rights or co-operatives among the poor. They simply drowned in the new mass politics; as did most of the pro-democratic general organisers who tried party building without giving priority to conventional loyalties.

In Kerala, on the other hand, populism and clientilism were also found among the pro-democrats on the Left and some of the radical civil society oriented organisations. But generally speaking this has more been confined to the Congress-led front and the many civic associations related to caste and religion. As compared with the alternative patronage of their leftist comrades in West Bengal, the Kerala communists are subject to many more checks and balances. Their party grew out of popular organisations and their land reform was more consistent in turning downtrodden people into comparatively independent citizens. The Left Front and especially the leading CPI-M party¹⁷ still dominates politics and general organising. The "leftist-clientilism" of today is mainly a question of commerce and semi-privatisation having crept into political and interest organisations as well as co-operatives, though the official picture remains a clear-cut one of historical traditions of focusing upon collective interests and ideology. Party-politicisation, by now, is often associated with the favouring of special interests and vested interests related to political-cum-socio-economic pillars (occasionally shaped by caste and religion as well), and with the setting aside of broad societal interests in promoting both human and economic development. When, therefore, civil society based movements like the KSSP oppose this and proclaim the need for "de-politicisation", the latter expression is in fact misleading since the reformists favour local organisation for common societal aims instead of private and groups specific ones.

In Kerala, thus, those activists are far from Indonesia's networking instigators and rather constitute a new generation of "integrators" that build from civil society and local level politics. Till recently, their major problem was the mobilisation for democratic decentralisation – which was deemed necessary to implement their otherwise rather scattered initiatives. This task was mainly left to the authorised parties and the special interests that they harbour. And when little happened the alternative development politics only proved possible in isolated showcase villages.

During recent years, however, there has been a decisive gradual shift of many KSSP members and actions from developmental, "independent" grass-roots work to greater promotion of local organising and co-

¹⁷ Communist Party of India-Marxist

ordination among the people. The aim is thus to promote both universalistic popular politics (as against particularistic politics related to separate pillars) and to change from below the established parties and their priorities. In the recent process of decentralisation and popular planning from below – with the synchronisation of forceful work from above, pressure from below and movements' capacity to really get campaigns off the ground and projects implemented – one can visualise ways of tackling these dilemmas. But there remain the uphill tasks of specifying what collective interests are really at stake as well as handling bureaucrats and politicians with vested interests, and pushing for the institutionalisation and actual implementation of the plans and projects. The latter was clearly indicated by the poor results for the traditional Left Front politicians in the recent local elections who thought that they would be able to harvest what the consistent reformists had sown.

Second Conclusion

The analytical point, of course, is that the character and combination of the factors discussed above regarding space, politicisation, and mobilisation would both help us describe movement politics of democratisation and explain some of its dynamics. Time and space only permit us to point to two processes and one policy conclusion that seem to be vital for an understanding of the general lack of substantial convergence (despite "our" pro-democratic factors) between fragmented interests, ideas, groups and actions, and the very different outcome of pro-democratic politics.

1. *Single issues and special interests.* In Indonesia, no sphere of activity and way of mobilising people proved especially favourable with regard to democratisation. The students were very important but "only" did away with Suharto. Rather, the common problem seems to be the focus on politicising single issues and special interests, within explicitly political activities, civil-political organisations and in civil society work; and both centrally and locally. There were similar but not as serious problems in Kerala.

Further, when attempts were made in Indonesia to deepen the politicisation by picking a strategic issue like corruption and then broaden it to other areas, many vital questions and social forces could not be included anyway. Alternatively, when explicit attempts were made to bring together issues and special interests, they were mainly added, but not integrated or prioritised within an ideological and collective framework. Therefore, there was no focus on an alternative project in terms of government, governance and development of the society as a whole at different levels – only on promoting or resisting this or that.

In Kerala, however, the reformists were explicitly up against special interests, made increasing efforts to integrate single issues in general frameworks of "popular sustainable development" and "decentralised democratic governance", and finally, co-ordinated it all in relation to the local societal problems and new institutions of democratic government through the "People's Campaign". A remaining key problem is instead the identification of what collective interests to fight or favour without causing divisions in a hamlet or a village or an electoral front – in addition to the need to implement and institutionalise efforts and plans and especially to handle traditional bureaucrats and politicians.

2. *Civil vs. political society; central vs. local levels:* A fundamental problem in both contexts was the lack of co-ordination between actions in the civil, civil-political, and explicitly political society, as well as between the central and local levels. Even at times of intensified pro-democratic work – as when trying in Indonesia to form a broad front in early-1996 or going ahead from the fall of Suharto, or when trying in Kerala to proceed after the literacy campaign; even then was it possible to see how political and civil society activists at various levels, usually perfectly understandably, tended to follow different logic and agendas, not combining each others strengths and compensating for each others weaknesses.

This remains a major problem in Indonesia. Actually, while the democracy movement was and is unable to link work in political, civil-political, and civil society, and between the central and increasingly important local level, this was and is done quite "efficiently" by so called moderates through populism and clientelism, and on the basis of, on the one hand, religious, and to some extent ethnic, communities and, on the other hand, political clout. The result, of course, is even more divisiveness, dangerous conflicts between various communities, patrons, bosses, thugs and followers – and an even weaker democracy movement.

The typical way out, therefore, has been for the activists to look for shortcuts as alternatives to the seemingly hopeless attempts at integrating people by way of alternative, and if possible charismatic, patronage. When there is no closely organised and hierarchical party, as in West Bengal, it has mainly been a question of finding "The Leader" – or a powerful NGO – and "The Loyalties" that can be used as a node and an entry point.

E.M.S Nambudiripad, of course, was a bit of a patron, but in the main the Keralites and their movements are too independent for such a policy. This may prevent authoritarianism, but the fragmentation remains to be fought. Indeed, the political opportunities of doing this in Kerala are more favourable than in Indonesia. But the activists have also been re-

markably innovative and successful in creating links, based on concrete work and action, between various activities and levels. The KSSP has abstained from the otherwise "normal" NGO pattern of negating radical politics and the established Left. Instead, the activists have realised their own incapacity to co-ordinate, generalise, and institutionalise various projects, as well as to "enforce" a powerful local political society and civil-political movements within which this could be handled. Hence they have rather given priority to the very links between work in civil and political society, and action on local and central levels. Civil-political work as well as explicit civil society efforts related to self-government are carried out independently of but in association with local governments, political organisations, and interest based mass movements; there are many similarities with the old Scandinavian practices. Alternative ideas, good voluntary expertise, and the ability to get things done are developed locally as well as centrally in civil-political and civil societies and drawn upon to influence parties, local governments, the state planning board etc. Thus generated popular expectations and pressure, combined with influence within parties and authorities, are used to gain political acceptance and funds, to generalise and co-ordinate programmes, and, strategically most importantly, to institutionalise new practices and get the established politicians to adapt themselves and/or allow the reformists to advance, at least locally. In this respect, the major problems so far are the latter two – the institutionalisation of the positive gains of the People's Plan for decentralised development and to get the established politicians to follow suit. By now – and despite the very impressive and powerful efforts – it does not seem as if the Kerala reformists have been successful enough in these respects. The late-2000 local elections were close to a failure for the Left Front. And now it may well lose the 2001 State Assembly Elections. If so, it will again be difficult to uphold the momentum within the reform movement, though there have been substantial advances since last time, 1991.

So if there is something to these results, there should be more focus on popular movement politics – especially with regard to frameworks for single issues and special interests, and links between central and local levels, and civil, civil-political, and political societies – while international support for third world democratisation should be redirected from the inconclusive promotion of various formal rights, superficial elections, civil society and social capital, that may even spur fragmentation, to specific support of politically oriented actors in processes of substantial democratisation.