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Movement, Politics and Development: The case of Kerala

What is the significance of the new popular efforts in Kerala at development through democratisation from below? This is an attempt to carve out some of the conclusions on the basis of a not yet summarised programme during the 90s on popular movements, development and democracy based on repeated case studies in the very different contexts of Kerala, Indonesia and the Philippines.

In the first part of the essay, I begin by by relating Kerala to the mainstream discourse on development and democracy. Next I suggest some alternative propositions, discuss their fate in the context of Kerala and relate this to the general problems of popular efforts at democratisation, including in as contrasting cases as Indonesia and the Philippines. Hence it is possible to identify how and why the Kerala activists have pioneered vital attempts at solving common problems, but yet have some way to go. The second and main part of the essay, then, is to substantiate these conclusions. After some critical notes on the mainstream studies of third world democratisation, I suggest that we need to focus instead on problems of substantial democratisation and propose an analytical framework for this. By applying the framework to the concrete cases of Indonesia and Kerala, I summarise, finally, the analytical and empirical basis for the conclusions in part one.

PART I: POINTS OF DEPARTURE AND CONCLUSIONS
THE MAINSTREAM DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY ARGUMENTS

To begin with, Kerala does *not* confirm the mainstream thesis about democratisation. According to this thesis, the rise of democracy is a result of social and economic development of capitalism, middle classes (in particular) and their capacity of organising themselves and

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communicating within a civil society of 'good' citizens with increasing trust in each other (social capital). In this perspective, moreover, the current dynamic growth of third world late capitalism and, with it, increasingly independent and astute citizens, will undermine the old kind of class contradictions that, many say, generate 'threats against democracy and development' in terms of 'overpoliticisation', authoritarian and huge states, and 'top-down' traditional leftist parties and unions.

If the thesis had been correct in the context of Kerala, this would have implied, first, that Kerala's underdeveloped economy should not, as it were, have produced a democratic polity in the first place. Furthermore, in accordance with the thesis, the long and outstanding importance of Leftist politics would have diminished after the land reform and further democratisation would primarily have come about in the southern areas where market and middle class civil society driven modernisation was most important. However, as we know, the results from one of the World's most impressive campaigns for democratic decentralisation, alternative popular planning and development work from below, the People's Planning Campaign indicate that generally speaking Left politics is alive and renewed while the campaign has done least well (in terms of democratic development projects) in the areas with most of the market- and middle class civil society driven modernisation that the conventional argument instead relates to democratisation.

TENTATIVE ALTERNATIVE THESES

In contrast to the mainstream perspectives - and aside from the fact that most democracies have actually come about much 'thanks' to 'enlightened' top-down leaders, war, and other catastrophes - the inital hypothesis in my own programme was, that even though it is true that third world late capitalism differs a lot from the European and American paths, it may generate instead other characteristics that might actually spur both a renewed Left and a radical democracy.

Why would that be? First, no matter what we think of third world capitalism, it is no longer held back (as under colonialism) in countries like India. So the basic rationale for the old communist argument about the need for authoritarian shortcuts to progress is no more. While the old Left would thus diminish, radical movements would instead become more interested in gradual and democratic pathways from below and abandon enlightened authoritarianism. Similarly, second, there would also be less fertile ground for the old third world

social-democratic middle class coups against 'threatening radical masses' - as the 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. In Kerala, centre-leftists would thus become more interested in work among 'the masses' and also 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 subordinated classes than early European capitalism, the increasingly many movements that reflect 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 thus be 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 similar powerful combination of interests of class and radical democratisation against political-cum-economic rulers as previously between nationalism and the struggle against landlordism plus foreign capitalism. In Kerala, then, one likely trend after the landreform would be more focus on the control of various resources beyond land (such as inputs) through which one would be able to appropriate surplus indirectly through the market. This, in turn, would then spur co-operation among real producers in terms of joint management of, for instance, irrigation, the buying of inputs, and the marketing of their products. Further, there would 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 OUTCOME IN KERALA

Of course we can not go into details here (in terms of operationalisations, indicators, and empirical results), but with a few important exceptions the above alternative hypotheses from the mid/late-80s have proved reasonably correct in Kerala.

First, as already indicated, the results from the People's Planning Campaign indicate that the democratic development projects have done least well in the areas with most of that market- and middle class civil society driven modernisation that the conventional argument relates to democratisation. Success rather seems to go with less market modernisation, the presence of knowledgeable radical activists and well organised co-operation among voluntary organisations as well as between them an the local public administrators. In other words: the campaign rests with much of the previous popular efforts, especially within the framework of the Left.

However, as this is a still ongoing process, let us also look at the background. Generally speaking several of the alternative hypotheses have been confirmed from about 1987. This was when the Left Front managed to get voted back into power. Its policy had become less fixed to the then rather outdated conflicts over land reform. Instead, sections of the Front began responding to new challenges in terms of development of production, mismanagement, corruption and, thus, the need for more democracy. Furthermore, as we know, much of this reform work had grown out of broad voluntary and non-party political cooperation 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 70s, 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 was on literacy. While this was then followed up in other parts of India as well, additional campaigns followed on group farming and local resource mapping. The basic idea was to engage all people in joint productive and sustainable efforts 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 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 special union issues.

Despite all those positive conditions being present, however, the outcome was rather frustrating. 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 (especially trade union-) sections of the Left Front parties were very sceptical of the new initiatives. In fact, much of the initiatives rested instead with support from some well-wishers within the state government. So when the Left lost the next election, the campaigns lost steam. And by the early-90s it became increasingly clear, thus, that if an effective new social movement (beyond the land reform movement) would stand a chance, there was a need for a more decentralised democratic polity to create framework for dynamic developmental work, democratic co-operation, and fresh political mobilisation for alternative development. The major problem, however, was how it would be possible to create enough popular pressure to get the still dominating centralist politicians to implement such a decentralisation.

One of the most exciting developments among radical third world popular movements that I know of, is that the Kerala activists actually managed to get out of this trap and to launch in 1996 the new People's Planning Campaign. What is more, this was much due to very skilful activist politics: by enhancing the activists' hegemony in terms of the only exciting and realistic ideas about a new popular political development project (including through a similarly huge and impressive conference as the present one); 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, does not mean that all problems are solved. I shall return to this. But as in my other cases it testifies to the vital importance of movement politics - and for a conceptual framework to analyse it.

It is true, of course, that we could expand on additional explanatory factors in terms of contextualised opportunity structures. But no matter whether the fashionable variables of civil society and social capital signal high or low propensity for democratisation - we would most probably still have to find other explanations for the common general problem *that runs against our initial optimistic hypotheses*: in Kerala as well as in the contrasting cases of Indonesia and the Philippines the lack of substantial convergence on democratisation between various fragmented interests, ideas, groups

and actions, *and* the large variation in terms of more or less successful contribution to democratisation.

THE CONCLUSIONS!

To handle this, we need to also take a close look at how the movements themselves read the conditions and thus find it most reasonable to work and go about with their actions - or in other words, to discuss popular politics of democratisation. Since we are short of time (and impatient), let us begin with some of the more exciting conclusions and only thereafter discuss how we have arrived at them. To underline what I like to say about Kerala, the conclusions also include some comparisons, primarily with Indonesia. Two processes, one interpretation, and one policy conclusion seem to be especially 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 to, but not integrated or prioritised between, 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 - and parties.

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 on 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 patronage, if possible charismatic. 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 Namboodiripad, 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 in Kerala are more favourable than in Indonesia, but the activists have also been remarkably 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

TOWARDS A THIRD WAY: SUBSTANTIAL DEMOCRATISATION

For whatever they might be worth, my results indicate, instead, that there is a need to proceed along a third way, between determinism and idealism. This implies the specifying of the minimum material social, economic and political preconditions that must be promoted in addition to the current crafting of basic rights and institutions. Preconditions that are necessary in order for ordinary people to be able to use the rights and institutions, and thus introduce and develop a substantial democracy. A substantial democracy which is no utopia but 'only' implies that the conventional rules of the game are both fair *and* applied, and that all the players are both granted political equality *and* have an actual capacity to take part and win. A democracy, therefore, which is likely to make sense for most people concerned. Not because its outcome is always to their advantage. (The result is an open question and another matter, as long as the democratic fundamentals are not undermined.) No, a substantial democracy which is likely to be meaningful (and solid) simply because the people at large (and not just the elite) has both the possibility *and* the capacity to make use of conventional democratic principles and institutions at work in order to handle their problems - by influencing, controlling, and participating in equal and peaceful government and administration of their societies.

How would it be possible, then, to start identifying such minimum preconditions that should be added to the current crafting of minimum rights and institutions in order to introduce and promote a democracy that makes sense? What are the rights and institutional mechanisms that must be both fair and applied? And what kind of rights, institutions and popular capacities are needed for people to introduce democracy with as democratic means as possible and to be both equal and capable to take part in an existing democratic framework and win?

While the democratic principles of popular control and political equality with regard to collective binding decisions are universal in terms of the democratic aim, their substance and implementation through various means, are not. Hence our questions should be

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. A major explanation seems to be, that the reformists were not strong (and willing) enough to make an impact on the formal political level, including to run in local elections (with party support) - while the established politicians kept controlling the parties as before and only tried (but largely failed) to harvest more votes for themselves in return for support to the campaign. During the Spring 2001, the Left is likely to make losses in the State Assembly Elections as well, and perhaps even to lose them. If so, it will again be difficult to uphold the momentum within the reform movement, though there have been substantial advances since last time a more conservative state government took over, in 1991.

3. *The missing link:* One way of reading these conclusions would be to relate them to the Latin American (and perhaps also South African) dilemma among new pro-democrats and dichotomy between those who have opted for substantial social change and radical organising on the grass-roots level, on the one hand, and the pragmatists who have adjusted to the need for smooth transitions from authoritarian rule, the need to take part at the negotiation tables, and the need to win popular votes in general elections, on the other. But that only makes sense partly. For one, in Indonesia and Kerala it

has instead often been radicals that have given priority to the explicitly political work, while those emphasising the more local and civil society oriented activities have been less voluntaristic and less eager to promote political shortcuts. At least, one may doubt that what is reported to be a Latin American dilemma is an always universally applicable and fruitful dichotomy. Actually, I think we even need to challenge the kind of inbuilt idea that there is an inevitable conflict between these two trends, and in particular that one has to strike a balance between the substantial and radical, on the one hand, and the vote-catching and more accommodating, on the other, in order to promote a so-called consolidation of democracy. Whatever is meant by that consolidation, I would suggest it is wrong (and ideologically biased) to put up the two against each other. For whatever they are worth, my results indicate instead, that there must be synergies between local and central, and civil society and political, in order for the new democrats to make a difference. Moreover, there are clear indications that democratic sustainability rather calls for more substantial democratisation. That substantiality relates to the quality and extent of democracy, not to the output of democracy. The result (the instrumental aim of the actors) is vital, of course. But what really matters is not primarily whether the outcome is more or less radical. The bottomline is rather if democracy makes sense to people - not because they always get what they want, but because they stand a fair chance and have actual capacities to make use of and further improve democratic rights and mechanisms to handle their common problems and conflicts.

In my understanding, therefore, the more important message is that both the major concluding theses - about the weak link in terms of (a) aggregation of interests and ideas and (b) synergies between central and local action as well as the explicitly political and civil society work on the other - point to a major missing link that use to be institutionalised in the form of interest- and ideology based popular parties which are able to articulate and combine various demands and actions.

It is true, of course that one may locate several structural reasons for why this have been particularly difficult. One is the increasingly complicated and fragmented relations of production, subordination and exploitation - further enhanced by the global wave of neo-liberal atomisation of people. Thus, one might add in this case, against the Marxist dictum, the dynamics of capitalism has not really generated its own counter force.

However, to put the blame on such basic structural factors only does not seem to be a very convincing proposition, given the few conscious political attempts to make a difference that have been made. In the case of Indonesia, to begin with, the liberal west rather contributed to the destruction of the entire arsenal of (at least partially) interest and ideology based popular mass organisations that grew out of the independence movement as well as the third largest and democratically very successful communist party - widely regarded as Indonesia's only modern party at the time. And absolutely nothing has replaced this. There is a democratic vacuum. Furthermore, since the collapse of the 'New Order', as we know, there has hardly been any attempt - not even on part of the western democracy-makers - to support the emergence of any kind of interest and ideology based popular mass movements and parties. On the contrary, in fact, top priority has been given to the development of a kind of Americanised system of political machines, the election of personalities, and the promotion of various issue based NGOs and lobby groups.

In Kerala, secondly, the major restriction is rather the next to monopolisation of the political scene by established parties, mass organisations, and election fronts that are characterised by earlier struggle against colonialism and 'feudal-like' landlords, partly undermined by boss-rule, commercialism, and populism, and threatened by leaders exploiting religious and national chauvinism.

On top of that is the sometimes even active disinterest, and next to ideology, among several of the new pro-democratic activists to distance themselves from dirty politics in general and disgusting party-politics in particular. To begin with, in this respect, both Indonesia and Kerala are a bit different and rather unique. The general pattern is otherwise - like in the Philippines - that the new pro-democrats take an active stand against not just Leninist and Maoist organisations but whatever kind of programmatic party with a fairly good organisation and effective central leadership and organisations - either because of bad and sad and frustrating experiences, or because it has simply been fashionable. In fact, in the Philippines it is only during the late-90s that pro-democrats have given real priority to and managed to enforce certain minor changes of the electoral laws (in terms of minor party-list system attached to the otherwise American model) and then also began to take advantage thereof by building new popular movement related but electoral-cum-governance related parties, of which the Citizen's Action Party Akbayan (that I have studied) is the most principled one and also the pioneer. In Indonesia,

however, such organisations were destroyed in the mid-60s and several young pro-democrats even look back at them with some romantic excitement. In Kerala, moreover, the new democratic reformers have been mature enough to refuse the abandoning of previous forms of progressive civil society and political organising, opting instead for trying to balance and further develop them. In both cases, however, there are strong influences of the world wide euphoria over the democratic capacity of decentralisation, the strengthening of civil society against state and so-called top-down politics, the promotion of 'social capital', and the capacity of social movements. And again, of course, this has been enhanced by the mainstream emphasis on turn key elections-plus-rights packages - within which any rational NGO or cluster of activists would have to situate themselves not primarily to get ideas of good government but good connections and good money. In Kerala, finally, even the very stimulating and impressive attempt to go against the stream and develop new and independent popular based politics in order to reform and further develop old mass movements and parties also seem to have lost momentum. The activists were strong (and skilled) enough to shape and develop a favourable local space for alternative politics and development. In the end they even got the support of the leading CPI-M party of the ruling Left Front. But they were not powerful (and focused) enough to institutionalise the new practices and to forcefully make an impact within politics and to really reform the established progressive parties. Rather, as already hinted at, the latter tried to take advantage of the popular efforts in elections, lost the game and have now put the entire reform movement at risk.

3. *Policy implications:* If there is something to these results, then, there should be more focus on popular politics of democratisation - especially to promote ways of aggregating single issues and special interests, and linking central and local levels, and civil and political societies. 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 and civil society based actors in processes of substantial democratisation. To make it very clear: one need to focus exactly on how it would be possible for common people to make use of democracy under specific conditions and opportunities in various settings. What are their capacities and opportunities? How can people improve them? How can they make use of rights and institutions?

How could these in turn be altered in favour of people's chances to use them?

One of the main puzzles to me is why the most positive and massive example of attempts to promote new democratic politics *and* development, in Kerala, has been so internationally neglected, even by northern Europeans who should know better; and why in a case like Indonesia the same northern Europeans, for instance, come down so floppily, and suppress their own historical experiences - of the need for social and economic preconditions and popular organising in processes of democratisation - in face of the predominant ambivalence between elitist modernisation and idealistic, rather shallow and personalistic betting of civil rights and election packages.

PART II: BEHIND THE CONCLUSIONS

Back then to how we arrived at those results. First the analytical framework. In contrast to mainstream studies of third world democratisation, I suggest that we need to focus on problems of substantial democratisation. It is the application of such an analytical framework to concrete cases like Indonesia and Kerala that has shaped the just summarised conclusions.

ANALYTICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE: SOME CRITICAL NOTES

The missing societal dynamics: As we know, much of the earlier structural and institutional approaches to the problems of third world democratisation was based on the assumption that democracy, according to the established scholars, would only come about if there were more modernisation, or, as their critics retorted, if there were less international dependency. Just about the only thing they had in common, then, was that both were wrong. The third wave of democracy reached the third world despite insufficient modernisation and despite more dependency.

An initial problem with the new approches that emerged in response to those unexpected changes, then, was that they mainly turned out to be supplements. The mainstream scholars (including Huntington, Lipset, Diamond, Linz et. al.) did away with much of their outdated hard-core modernisation theories, turned almost all-inclusive (just about everything mattered) and congregated instead around an increasingly normative focus on western liberal democracy and the role of middle-class elites. For instance, even the very best book in this tradition, by Linz and Stefan (1996), combines structure and actor approches by looking at the constraints through the prism

of normatively identified and empirically localised elite-actors (and ending up, moreover, with a myriad of partly unrelated and emprically generalised grand theses). Meanwhile, the (former) dependency scholars, like O'Donnell et.al (1986), simply set aside the structural and institutional dynamics - which according to their previous analyses could not generate democracy - and focused on the elite-manoeuvres.

Hence, both major approaches to the new democratisation suffered from an unclear and often even absent relation to the broader societal dynamics. The obvious way to get out of the impasse, I suggest, is to substitute the citizens for the elite. This is not just because the basic principles of democracy relate to the people rather than to the elite. Equally importantly, this would allow us to consider the broader societal and structural dynamics e.g. by supplementing Linz et. al's analyses of the constraints through the prism of the elite with studies of how popular actors relate to such preconditions.

The lack of historical and contextual perspectives: An additional problem with the predominant approches (already hinted at) is that they tend to analyse democracy on the basis of definitions that build on specific and contextual and historically static means of democracy rather than on the universal ends, the principles of democracy. (Cf. Beetham 1999) First, therefore, we are constrained by definitions that are based on the implementation of certain institutional arrangements, even though most of us know that they are based on (static) empirical generalisations from the west and actually vary over time and contexts and with the balance of power.

Moreover, we are enclosed by static and normatively based analyses of stages such as transition to and consolidation of democracy. What universially and once and for all definied democratic means are supposed to be consolidated? What if we would rather be interested in the dynamcs of democratisation in terms of the forces at play and their interests in being able to shape and use the democratic means to reach the democratic ends? What if that, perhaps, is the key to the sustainability of democracy?

Beyond the elitist perspectives: In short, therefore, there is a need to go beyond the elitist, often normative and ahistorical perspectives - no matter whether they have a structural-determinst base (like the modernists) or an idealist focus on the crafting of democracy. First the determinists, then the idealists.

In an almost touching way, to begin with, activist scholars (like many followers of Huntington and Lenin) who referred to the socio-economic reality agreed on the need to combine elitist political

intervention with rapid modernisation. We all know of the authoritarian outcome. Hence there is a special need for analyses of the additional factors, dynamics and checks and balances that are needed to generate democracy.

Despite their preoccupation with structural imperatives, moreover, none of these kind of perspectives considered the special importance of authoritarian political monopolisation in the process of late primitiave accumulation of capital. This monopolisation first called for struggle for national independence and then for quests for more individual freedom and liberalisation well before anything like the European constitutional arrangements (recht-staat) had taken root. Hence, this monopolisation may well have given birth to a new formidable combination of class struggle against exploitation and national-citizen demands for freedom and democracy, second only to the anti-colonial combination of class and nationalism. But no mainstream perspective addressed it. The partial exception - the students of the dynamics of the late developmental state - primarily focused on the mechanisms of growth rather than the potentials for democratisation. Generally speaking, therefore, it was rather the neo-liberal ideas and vested interested that captured and expressed the new demands for freedom/liberalisation against authoritarian political monopolisation. The end result, at worst, was rather despotic liberalism (as in Suharto's Indonesia) than even very limited liberal democracy. And the reaction against this, in turn, may now, at worst, be manipulation within a formal democratic framework (of elections and civil government) of nationalist political bosses that make use of ethnic and religious loyalities and broker business and military interests.

On the other hand, however, the pro-democrats who really did focus on the special need to promote democracy (since it would not grew out automatically from elitist modernisation, no matter if guided by Huntington or Leninist) took to the opposite and idealist extreme by almost entirely neglecting even the most basic social, cultural, political and institutional prerequisites.

The historical failure to promote the emergence of the world's third largest democracy in Indonesia is probably the best recent illustration. Here it was not the development of modernisation but a political crisis of despotic liberalism that gave Indonesian democracy a second change (having been severely undermined in 1959 and totally destroyed in 1965/66). Hence, the institutions crumbled and there were few independent and forceful actors that could take command and propel change; economically, administratively, politically. While

the determinists were right in stressing the insufficient preconditions for democracy, the idealists had a point in saying that one should not miss the chance to promote it. But to craft democracy by only betting on elementary civil and political rights plus elections within a vacuum of supportive mechanisms, forces and organisations - which was exactly what happened - was doomed to fail. The country's most severe problems turned non-issues in elections that avoided the very local level. Only the military, political and religious elite with old organisations and loyalties stood a chance. Aside from informal contacts and networks, much of state and politics remains closed for those who thus lost out, and has turned non-operative and disintegrated in the process of fragmentation and localisation of power. Boss politicians have taken over - brokering religious and ethnic leaders with mass following, businessmen and administrators with resources, and military and militias with weapons. While pro-democratic NGOs are (rather) well funded but marginalised, the new attempts at popular organisations and parties are poor and fragmented. Beyond the limited elections, there are few chances for people to influence the system other than to return to informal contacts or resort to pressure politics. The decisive public sphere that had evolved among pro-democrats rarely expanded locally and to ordinary people. With liberalisation, speculative media has instead filled the empty spaces. Foreign support for open and accountable government is usually non-transparent and unaccountable to the Indonesian population, and limited to urban elite circles with good international connections. The vital liberalisation of civil and political life remains of limited significance for major parts of the population. Political violence is localised, semi-privatised, and nourished by instigation and manipulation of ethnic and religious loyalties. The lack of social and cultural rights is part of the problem. This became established state policy already during the massacres in the mid-60's but is no longer controlled by a supreme godfather. Truth and justice is a precondition for reconciliation but primarily remain a topic for NGO seminars. The elements of a democratic culture, and the interest and ideology-based popular organising that grew out of the struggle for freedom and national liberation have been thoroughly undermined by decades of 'floating mass politics' and boosting of feudal-like customs. In fact it has even affected the pro-democracy movement which continue to suffer from divisive elitism while many people have to weather the crisis before they can make use of the new democratic options.

So the Indonesian picture is quite clear. There are important freedoms, but the civil and democratic rights and institutions are poor, often malfunctioning, and usually difficult for ordinary people to make use of. The politically marginalised but resourceful elite would probably have turned to non-democratic methods anyway. But what's really wrong with Indonesia's democratisation is that it does not make much sense even to its major potential pro-democratic force - the people at large - as a way of promoting ideas and interests and agree with others on how to handle issues of mutual concern. Rather they usually have to find non-democratic and anti-democratic methods and avenues. For instance, they have to pay or bargain for protection and influential positions and contacts within administration, government and elite circles as well as ethnic and religious networks. And if nothing helps, they may have to take to the streets or end up burning down a police station.

Beyond defeatism: This critique, however, is not to agree with the fashionable counter-argument that pro-democratic efforts in general are naive and almost ridiculous. The message, then, is that patrimonial cultures and systems are so old and strong that they will capture whatever element of democracy that is introduced. But the role and importance of these elements of patrimonialism and clientelism rarely have that deep and strong roots. In Indonesia, they primarily gained importance as a result of the authoritarian rule and exploitation from the late 50s and onwards. So if one focuses on that enemy - not some seemingly irrevocable cultural traits - the favouring of democracy cease to be impossible. But of course, that calls for more than idealistic promotion of shallow rights and election packages.

TOWARDS A THIRD WAY: SUBSTANTIAL DEMOCRATISATION

For whatever they might be worth, my results indicate, instead, that there is a need to proceed along a third way, between determinism and idealism. This implies the specifying of the minimum material social, economic and political preconditions that must be promoted in addition to the current crafting of basic rights and institutions. Preconditions that are necessary in order for ordinary people to be able to use the rights and institutions, and thus introduce and develop a substantial democracy. A substantial democracy which is no utopia but 'only' implies that the conventional rules of the game are both fair *and* applied, and that all the players are both granted political equality *and* have an actual capacity to take part and win. A

democracy, therefore, which is likely to make sense for most people concerned. Not because its outcome is always to their advantage. (The result is an open question and another matter, as long as the democratic fundamentals are not undermined.) No, a substantial democracy which is likely to be meaningful (and solid) simply because the people at large (and not just the elite) has both the possibility *and* the capacity to make use of conventional democratic principles and institutions at work in order to handle their problems - by influencing, controlling, and participating in equal and peaceful government and administration of their societies.

How would it be possible, then, to start identifying such minimum preconditions that should be added to the current crafting of minimum rights and institutions in order to introduce and promote a democracy that makes sense? What are the rights and institutional mechanisms that must be both fair and applied? And what kind of rights, institutions and popular capacities are needed for people to introduce democracy with as democratic means as possible and to be both equal and capable to take part in an existing democratic framework and win?

While the democratic principles of popular control and political equality with regard to collective binding decisions are universal in terms of the democratic aim, their substance and implementation through various means, are not. Hence our questions should be thoroughly contextualised. But for the lack of space, let us be shallow and stick to the general categories. There is no mysterious cultural relativism involved.

In my own writings, I have separated the contents (in terms of the results of democratic decisions) and pointed to different scope (reach, extension) and forms (civil and political rights and institutions) of democracy as well as their preconditions in terms of other rights and institutions, balance of power, and citizen's aims, strategies and capacities. To avoid unnecessary conceptual disputes with mainstream colleagues, however, let us rather point to what should be covered by drawing on the four basic criteria that have gained rather wide acceptance in the European discussion about 'auditing democracy'. (Beetham 1999) Those criteria may apply for the introduction as well as further development of democracy and include the three 'conventional' means to promote the democratic principles of popular control and political equality, some of the additional conditions that are necessary to enable people to make use of those instruments, and the specification of the quality and extent of it all.

The first instrument, according to Beetham, is what use to be called 'free and fair elections' - to which we add their substance and scope. The second instrument is open and accountable government (politically, legally, and financially) - which also require independent public knowledge, movement, organisation, and government responsiveness to public opinion. The third is the conventional cluster of civil and political rights, including to what extent that they are real and useful for ordinary people. The fourth factor is the set of additional background conditions that are needed to make the other factors real - including democratic governance of not just state and local governments but also the society at large (at least civic associations) to shape a democratic culture as well as basic needs, social and cultural rights, and education to make citizens reasonably self-confident.

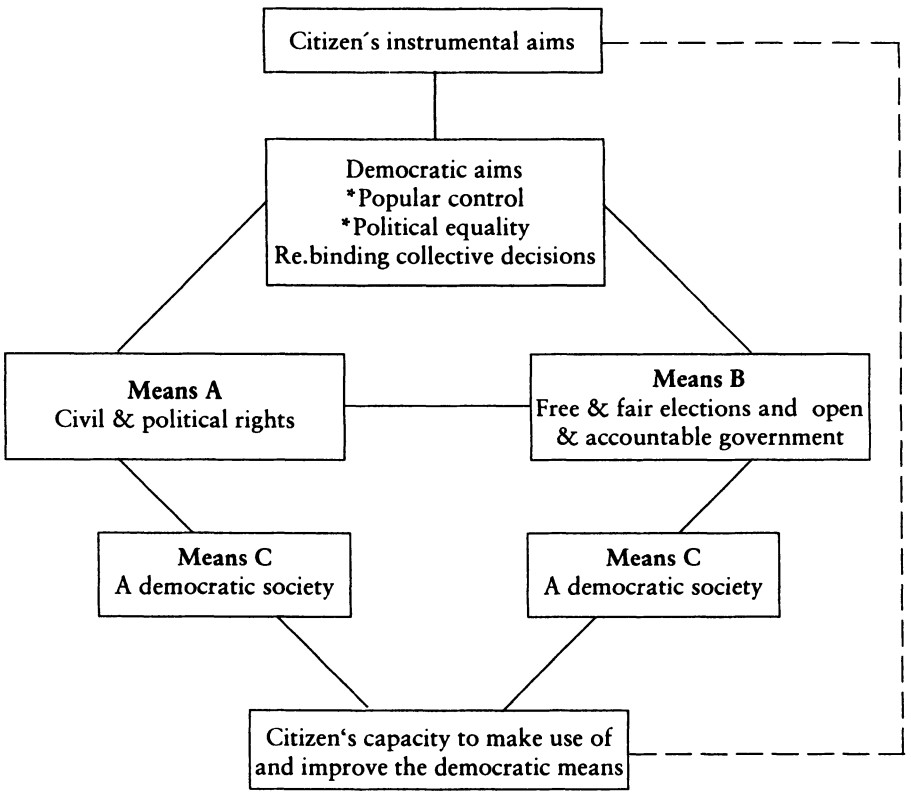
What I have labelled substantial (and therefore also sustainable) democratisation (in terms of actual political equality and popular control) would then rest with certain equally substantial rights (civil and political), institutional mechanisms (free and fair elections plus open and accountable goverment), certain societal background-factors along each of these dimensions *and* - which Beetham does not specify - the chances and capacity of the citizens to make use of (and improve) these rights and mechanisms. See figure 1.

So if democracy (and democratic struggles for democracy) makes sense to the citizens, they would try to promote their instrumental aim by supporting the principles of democracy and by making use of the democratic rights and institutions. In other words, they would make their way through the various steps in the model (figure 1) rather than trying to bypass them and finding other non-democratic or even anti-democratic avenues (such as paying or bargaining for protection and influential positions and contacts within administration, government and elite circles as well as ethnic and religious networks - and if nothing helps, take to the street or burn dow a police station).

POLITICS OF DEMOCRATISATION

Having examined if and when popular organisations give priority to democratic aims and means, the major task remains: to analyse *how* they have tried to go about it - by way of popular politics of democratisation. In relation to figure 1, that, of course, is primarily to focus on how citizens have tried to strengthen their capacity to make use of and improve the democratic means and thus make their

Figure 1
Elements of Substantial Democratisation (and a way to get around it)



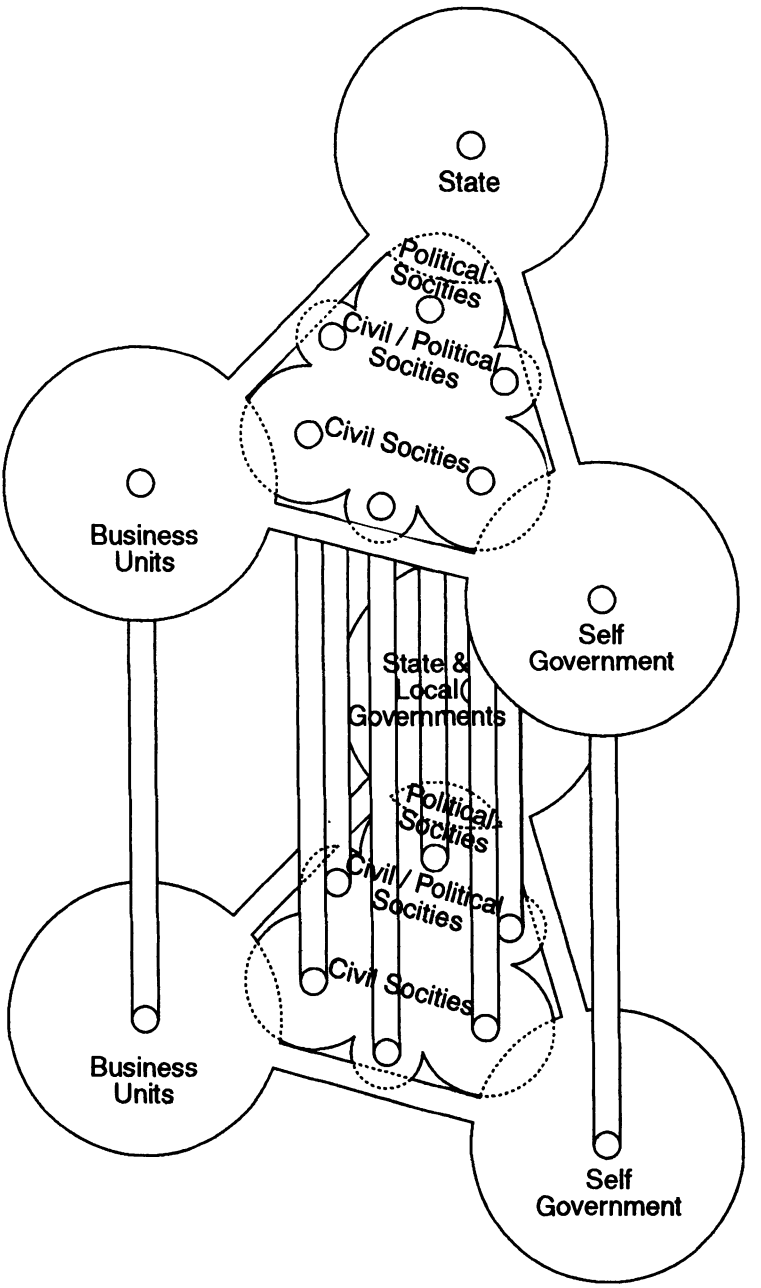
— — — the usage of undemocratic means
——— relations between and the usage of democratic means

way upwords in the model - via and in relation to the rights and institutions.

In analysing this politics of democratisation, I have focussed on three dimensions: (a) where in the political terrain that the actors have choosen to work, given the political opportunities and their reading of them (see figure 2); (b) what issues and interests they have focused on and thus politicised (see figure 3); and (c) how they have tried to rally wider popular support for this (see figure 4).

Allow me now to briefly present these three aspects of how the

Figure 2
Actors in the Political Terrain



Indonesian and Kerala actors have tried to enhance their capacities to promote their instrumental aims by way of favouring democratisation. My general thesis is, that not just the already criticised elitist idealists but also much of the new popular efforts at promoting and 'deepening democracy' have neglected basic structural, institutional and political prerequisits for citizens to be able to use and promote democratic mechanisms to handle their problems. As alredy hinted at, a major facor relates to the missing link in terms of aggregation of interests and ideas and links between central and local, on the one hand, and the explicitly political and civil society work on the other.

POLITICAL SPACE

Given that organisations aim at some kind of democratisation (to thus also promote their instrumental aims), the first major question in any discourse on how they try to go about this concerns the preferred terrain of struggle. In the main, this rests with the political opportunity structure and the political implications of the discourse on how to read it, including the activists own conclusions.

The first aspect relates to the three major and 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, below!)

The second aspect builds on the assumption, that while the 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, below!) 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 societies, (actual associations, 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 cooperatives; human-rights groups. that both support victims of violence and try to influence related state policies; peasant movements that do not just fight landords on their own but also campaign for public land reforms).

The third aspect is simply, 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 2).

Kerala 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 on top of the figure 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. Most of the democratisers are rather within the established political forces of the Left Front and/or associated with movements like the autonomous KSSP in civil-political society and outright 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 - until the very dynamic and

forceful campaign since 1996 on decentralised popular planning began in 1996.

POLITICISATION OF INTERESTS AND IDEAS

Having discussed where activists consider it meaningful to carry out pro-democracy work, the second major issue concerns why democracy makes sense. This refers to what kind of issues and interests they choose to bring up on the political agenda, politicise, in order to promote democratisation and thereby also further the issues and interests.

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 et. al. in Indonesia disclosed my naivety, so now that category has been added.

Figure 3
Basis of Politicisation

I. Single issues or specific interests
II. Ideology or collective interests
III. Moral & spiritual values & communal loyalities

In addition to this, of course, one must analyse the basis of politicisation within the previously discussed framework of where in the political terrain that the actors position themsleves - for instance in relation to the state or self-managemant. (Later on we shall also add how they try to mobilise support.)

In contrast to Indonesia there is a long tradition in Kerala of strong institutions and broad and mass based politicisation related to collective interests 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 exceptional land reform and the famous welfare schemes despite low gross national product) 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 as well. And over the years, the 'old' class and ideology based Left Front organisations have also been affected by privatised and atomised activities and interests. So even though many now talk of 'overpoliticisation', this is only true in the sense that atomised 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 were rather conventional NGO-cum-action group single-issue ones. But over the years they have become more and more comprehensive. Already, their famous massive literacy campaign in the end of the eighties were related to several other questions and 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. And 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. Finally, the activists also continued the old 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 began 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 on what should be held in common by all citizens (not just by members of

various associations) and how this should be governed jointly. So 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 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 - and operationalise it in three step.

Of course, political inclusion is related to Sidney Tarrow's (1994) 'mobilisation structures'. But in my experience, and especially in third world contexts, we should start with a wider perspective. First - and in general accordance with Nicos Mouzelis (1986) - 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 separate between two ways of incorporating people: clientelism and populism. The concept of clientelism is not confined to Weber-inspired ideas of patrimonialism but more general and associated with what one may call patrons or bosses on different levels with their own capacity to deliver some protection in return for services and votes. In many cases, I would add, clientelism is also '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.

In addition to this, I would argue, political leaders aiming at integrating people into politics have often tried short cuts by adding elements of clientelism 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 (1994), 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: 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, through instigating 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. To avoid biased connotations, I shall instead talk of networks and organised integration.

Figure 4
Key ways of including people into politics (in relation to politicisation)

Politicisation	Inclusion/mobilisation		
	Incorporation	*Alternative Patronage*	*Integration*
Single/ Special intrests	Populism-Clientel.	Incorp.— Integration	Networks- Org.integr.
Ideological/ Collective intrests	Populism-Clientel.	Incorp.— Integration	Networks- Org.integr.
Values/ Communal loyalt	Populism-Clientel.	Incorp.— Integration	Networks- Org.integr.

For this to make sense, however, 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. The 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 3 to put a stamp with regard to characteristics on each and every actor (at different points of time).

Populism and clientelism were also found among the Kerala 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 so many downtrodden people into comparatively independent citizens. The Left Front and especially the leading CPI-M party still dominates politics and general organising. The 'leftist-clientelism' 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-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 and well as of 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 sowed.

TOWARDS THE CONCLUSIONS

The analytical point, of course, is that the character and combinations 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, however, to point to two processes and one policy conclusion - the ones that have already been presented in the first part of the essay.

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