Appendix

Preliminary description of the theme for a 3-year Ph. D. programme in International Development Studies on "Political and Cultural Institutions in Development"

In the study of societal development in the Third World there has been a tendency to focus *either* on particular institutions and their role in development; *or* to disregard institutions altogether and concentrate attention on structure and process at a macro-level of analysis.

Much of the earlier thinking on political and sociological development belonged to the first category. The research focus has been most closely associated with the "classic" theories of political science rooted in assumptions about "modernisation". But it is currently being revived, giving rise to new versions of modernisation theory based on more sophisticated and dialectical visions of socio-economic and political relationships.

The inspiration behind the second category of studies has been particular versions of Marxist theory - "capital logic" and structuralist Marxism, theories of state and class as well as varieties of dependency theory. In this branch of research, the selected institutions are often treated in a relatively mechanical fashion, being seen as simply derivatives of more "fundamental" economic structures of determination.

Studies of culture and development in the humanities take a different starting point from those originating in the social sciences. They are usually more concerned with issues of perception, interpretation and synthesis, but a similar tendency can be discerned to abstract the analysis of culture-bearing institutions from the broader context. Cultural expressions of an aesthetic or literary nature are most often analysed purely from the point of content, without any further reflections about the wider aethestic-cultural environment or about the way in which cultural institutions are established and adapted as part of the development process. Similarly, a tradition prevails that the treatment of aesthetic culture is separated from the study of institutions that are at once cultural and political and serve to transmit messages and understandings which may be of prime importance for the cohesion of society and for social development. This applies to a variety of religious institutions, educational structures and forms of group-cultural organisation that define and protect particular identities and interests and play important mediating roles in the laying down of specific patterns of development.

Studies of institutions coming from social anthropology have been distinguished generally by their clearer theoretical and empirical focus. They have helped shed light on certain institutions of fundamental importance in the field of development which have often been neglected by the other social sciences: The formation and adaptation of institutions surrounding marriage, family and the definition of gender; kinship, fictive kinship and ethnic/clan and patron/client relationships expressed through the idiom of kin. But on the other hand, many anthropological studies have treated institutions within a relatively restricted and localised context. Only rarely are national/international levels and relations taken into consideration, and

when they are, they tend to reflect primarily debates about ethnocentrism and the transfer of analytical categories from western social science to the Third World.

The proposed Ph. D. programme would aim to address and explore the theme of political and cultural institutions in an interdisciplinary way and would take up the discussion at local, national and international levels. The programme would hope to inspire an important and timely debate through which a more holistic approach to the study of institutions could be outlined and developed. This could help rectify the unsatisfactory fragmentation and partiality in the study of institutions up to now.

Within the understanding of the programme, the term institution will not be used only in a narrow sense to define formally organised structures, and it is not the intention to try to perpetuate the ideological colouring the the use of the term in the political science of modernisation in the 1960s. Instead, the term will be understood more broadly and in accordance with the meaning of "institution" in common parlance - "a noun of action or process which became, at a certain stage, a general and abstract noun describing something apparently objective and systematic" (Raymond Williams, *Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 1976) or "an established law, custom, usage, practice, organisation or other element in the political and social life of a people; the giving of form or order to a thing" (*Shorter Oxford Dictionary*). Using the concept institution in this sense, the aim is to focus on enduring patterns of behaviour that arise from the way people organise as individuals, groups, genders or classes to utilise and exploit material and social resources.

A wide variety of social forms, forces and phenomena can thus be understood as institutions. They include institutions that are more formally organised such as state agencies and authorities, political parties, trade unions and co-operatives set up to foster greater interaction and sharing. They also include the ways in which power is used or distributed through institutions governing the control of authoritative resources as in the case of chiefdoms or entrenched patron/client relations; the roots of mutuality and reciprocity in what Alavi has called "primordial loyalties" and Hyden "the economy of affection"; and the institutional bases of subordination and servility that may be found in relations of marriage, gender and kin. Different forms of social movements may also be treated under this heading such as religious missions, revivalist movements and spirit mediums; the coalescing of communities and groups sharing an identity and a set of interests and needs as, for instance, among women, youth, workers, peasants, slum dwellers, community/caste/village members, members ethnically defined groups or neighbourhoods. Finally, a set of more self-consciously cultural organisational forms that may also be usefully studied as institutions include media or publishing enterprises, libraries, museums, galleries, writers' associations, theatres and popular drama groups, which serve to form and regulate the possibilities of articulating, communicating and debating different understandings of development.

The emphasis given to institutions should not be seen as restrictive, but as representative of an alternative approach to the study of development

that sometimes supplements, sometimes challenges the predominant conceptualisations, methodologies and language of mainstream development studies today. One intention is to give greater analytical attention to the many kinds of "actors" and expressions of "agency". The aim is to include analysis of the way conflicts of interest arise and find resolution amongst different social "actors", and how in this process individuals, groups and classes may both act through institutions and constitute themselves as institutions. Thus, conflicts and struggles are not only of interest inasmuch the outcome of the contestation is concerned, but also with respect to the character of the opposition articulated. This is a field where the borderline between politics and culture cannot be sharply drawn, and where the concept of institution can facilitate inquiry.

The programme is intended as a framework for discussion of process seen in relation to the identification of needs and interests and culturally infused patterns of behaviour, attitudes, formulations and action. It will seek to stress the multi-faceted connections between local and non-local levels and to explore the often problematic and conflict-ridden interface between historically established local customary norms and practices and those introduced into the local context through external agencies.

One of the programme's aims is to clarify the extent to which different kinds of cultural and political institutions may alternatively simulate or block the mobilisation and use of human and physical resources in the process of development. In this connection, "development" is understood as a culturally grounded, normative and composite idea that cannot be subsumed under a single concept nor reduced to measurement by a single indicator. The programme will endeavour to explore how development is conceived by different social groups; how it is interpreted in relation to different class, gender and political interests; and how the different visions in themselves constitute positions of influence. This should make possible a more nuanced and concrete assessment of the role and effect of different institutions in furthering or holding back expressed development goals.

In line with the overall commitment of Scandinavian development assistance to the alleviation of poverty, the programme will seek to investigate how the poorest and most subordinated and vulnerable groups in society interpret and articulate their development needs. These groups may be revealed in terms of class, gender, generation, religion, caste, ethnicity or in other ways.

The programme accords with present-day tendencies within development research which are aiming to specify more clearly and precisely the scope and relevance of different theoretical perspectives and wishes to avoid a narrow, mechanistic and economistic view of development. Greater weight will be given to analysing the "middle ground" by using more inductive approaches and methodologies so as to enable generalisations and concepts to be drawn out from actual processes and practice rather than trying to find "cases" to fit theory worked out at high levels of abstraction. A methodological point of departure which places the traditions and institutions of the developing countries themselves at the centre of enquiry occurs as a more appropriate entry into the study of a situation that is characterised by

increasing social and cultural complexity and difference. Finally, within this field, it seems to be of central importance to work towards a greater understanding of the role played by popular movements and organisations in past developments as well as of their potentials for affecting change in the future.

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