Chapter 2

Feminists recasting politics and power

> "*We commit ourselves to promoting social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security, and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.*" [1]

Introduction

This chapter provides a critical analysis of the state and state-power. It also highlights the views on the state, power and politics of women in the South. Women's participation in mainstream political activity as well as in the broader arena of governance is also reviewed. Post Beijing and the Copenhagen Declaration, states committed themselves to address poverty, social integration, capacity and governance. Since then little has changed.

The global political landscape has been recast. The break-up of the Eastern block and the push for multiparty liberal democracies has changed the balance of power everywhere. We are therefore, as women, challenged to interrogate whether the objectives of the many struggles for national liberation, as well as women's emancipation are being attained. Women across the South question to what extent political liberation from repressive regimes has led to an improvement in the overall quality of life of the poorest. There is a new urgency to understand and interrogate the politics of

governance and changes under way in national, regional and global contexts from a critical feminist perspective.

It is evident from much of the mainstream or malestream debate on the nature of political changes and processes of governance that the dominant discourse does not include perspectives and concerns of poor people, nor of women. The debates tend to focus on the state machinery, the crisis of the state or the capacity of states to manage within a global context of accelerated change. Although public interest perspectives of the state have dominated contemporary discourse, these perspectives tend to create a false sense of homogeneity in relation to the state as characterised by patriarchy and neo-colonial factors. Further, it is just as clear that social transformation, as much as it has become the mantra of governments and perspectives on the left, is not understood in the same way and is not necessarily an objective of political change or democratic renewal.

It is therefore necessary to understand what issues of governance and state restructuring within a changing global context mean for the disenfranchised, the socially and economically excluded. In this chapter feminists from the South provide a critical analysis of some of the key issues that characterize state power and politics.

Mainstream critiques of the state

The need for institutional reform of the state is emerging from both a neoliberal and a left critique for different reasons. Both sides of the critique focus on the state's role in the market. The market and the NGO sectors are seen, by the right, as alternatives to lead economic development. Development direction is driven by emphasis on market efficiency at the cost of distribution of resources. While both critiques focus on the unresponsiveness of bureaucracy to people's views and needs and the growing inequalities within and between countries, the reasons attributed for this differ. There is a convergence of critiques even though the objectives of the right and the left differ; the right may be said to be co-opting left critique for its own

agenda. Neo-liberal proponents see the market as the best allocator of goods and services, and the left perceive the state to be alienated from people, corrupt, promoting a new elite with vested interests in maintaining the status quo.

A major critique of the current debates on the state and governance from the feminist perspective is that the discourse lacks a historical analysis. It therefore does not reflect patterns of powerlessness nor does it reflect the manner in which traditional cultures and colonial cultures combine through state and economic institutions to exploit women. Even when a historical context is used by theorists on the left the state is examined from the perspective of class and race and the position of women is ignored.

This, of course, raises further issues in our analyses of the state, that of how patterns of patriarchy are embedded in its institutions and derive from traditional cultural forms, but are not exclusive to these. The result is an explicit or implicit compact of male power that permeates every sphere of women's lives and has given rise to what some feminists call the "masculinity of the state". The construction of a masculine society and state has a significant impact on the type of space for women's engagement. There are stark contradictions emerging. It has on the one hand, resulted in the push for liberal democracy and protection of individual rights within the notion of citizenship and nationhood and, on the other hand, countries continue to deny rights to women within the public and private sphere.

Whatever the critique, the state is seen as the arbiter of democracy and therefore its role in public policy and action cannot be abolished. Neither can it be left to the NGO sector (as if this is an independent sector), nor can it be left to what is glibly seen as a unified homogenous civil society sector. However, even more significant, the 1990s is characterised by concern with growth through the market, the erosion of state's capacity while at the same time development directions are discussed in terms of governance and efficient management. The debate has shifted from issues of distribution to efficiency and management.

Whatever differences and limitations models of democratic transitions contain, they all have in common the absence of some categories of actors,

the most noticeable being constituted by women. Yet the semblance of democracy is being still presented as a source of potential positive change.[2]

Related to, democracy is the concept of governance and how it has been promoted with its policy implications. The definition of good governance is a controversial issue for feminists from the South. Ideally, governance is "a set of rules institutions, and values that are used to manage state and society".[3] Governance institutions include political parties, parliaments, government and their interaction with society. Although governance is philosophically universal, governance values, types of government, the nature of political parties, whose interests are protected, and the power that the masses have to challenge the state or offer alternative ways of handling public affairs, vary.[4] The liberal definition of democracy is more concerned with reason, law and freedom of choice but overlooks the position of different social categories in the social space where power is located.[5] Evidently, this definition ignores the fundamental premises upon which democracy is based.

This conception of democracy does not take into account the historical contingencies that have limited women's chances to exercise their freedom. To the contrary, in the case of Africa, political organisations, prior to colonialism, were characterised by "existence of democratic rule even among people governed by monarchic rules in highly pyramidal political structures".[6] Political organisations were also characterised by gender balance in policy formulation and implementation as well as women's participation in the political process. Historical and cultural analysis of African societies reveal evidence of a wide range of democratic systems, practice and culture that reflect long-term political processes in which people were involved. Feminists in Africa assert that democracy was not reduced to "rituals of simplistic, mechanistic, legalistic, and occasional exercises of individuals".[7]

The state and state power

Notions of democracy, governance, and the state are used as constructs without actually interrogating how these constructs result from both historical factors and experiences. Further the patriarchal characteristics of the state and state-led development processes are seldom analysed.

States have been considered the most important kind of political organisation in the global system. The power of states is an important feature in political restructuring and social transformation. Illustrative of this power are three common definitions:

The first is that of state power seen as control over resources, over actors and over outcomes. Distinctions are made between what the state possesses and what the state is able to do. Secondly, mainstream debates on politics are located within a masculine construct of the state and the state's power: "When we speak of power, we mean man's (sic) control over the minds and action of other men."[8] Thirdly, power as embodied in resources that a state possesses; put simply, the state holds the key to economic development, social security, individual liberty, and life and death over people.

The complex relationship between state control over resources and its ability to change or modify the behaviour of others or to control outcomes in international disputes is not easy to understand since many other dynamics influence states. There are internal factors that are not explicit but that emerge at certain points in the history of development within the nation state and complex external forces. Emerging trends show that:

- Each region in the South is experiencing crises that have their origins in history and are manifested as a contemporary crisis of governance. These crises encompass the Asian economic crisis, internal conflicts, "ethnic', race-based and religious conflicts. They impact on the lives of women with devastating consequences.
- In all regions of the South, political and economic compacts of power are made through international institutions at the global, regional and national level. These compacts are mediated both through forces, economic and social power and new information technology.
- In the new emerging political economy of change, states and global institutions have overt and covert objectives. At the overt level, decision making is dominated by mainstream institutions and promoted through the industrial North.
- Global governance and efficient management are the new mantras of international agencies and institutions.

- Change takes place so fast it creates a dynamic that leaves behind whole communities, areas and regions.
- At the same time as countries of the South are asked to engage in liberalizing their economies we also find that institutions that set the terms are not transparent, democratized or open, nor do they open themselves up to the participation of the majority of the poor.
- The reassertion of neo-liberalism is accompanied by an increase in fundamentalism.
- There is collective amnesia about the impacts of colonialism, racism, sexism, fundamentalism and narrow nationalism.
- In the contested and shifting sites of struggle, there has been homogenization of debates on governance and political transformation.
- Women across the regions of the South are beginning to ask questions about the meaning of democracy and citizenship.
- Women of the South are challenging the way the public-private dichotomy is constructed.

Constructs, such as state sovereignty, political identity and security when viewed through feminist's lenses, reflect patterns of power, control and exploitation over women and poor people. Against the backdrops of historical, cultural, economic and political forces women in the South are beginning to claim spaces to contest the shifting terrain of politics and governance. The search for real political alternatives, to challenge notions promoted by proponents of liberal pluralism, and economic fundamentalism is beginning to gain momentum.

Across regions of the South women challenge the notion of the state as a static entity because within this perspective is the assumption that states and state led processes are inviolate. The state as a monolithic organisation that cannot be pressurised to change from within, poses limits to our engagement. This tendency has immobilized and alienated women from the state and its power. Significantly, feminists in the South are beginning to see the state as a contested terrain and are refusing to leave the state and the state machinery unchecked.

Neither should we view the state as the withering instrument of the ruling class, as orthodox Marxists would like us to believe. Our experiences in the South show that the state is neither. It is an actor in its own right. While the state may be seen to act independently, its unity or coherence should not be exaggerated. Feminists in the South are beginning to grapple with this.

The state and its organisational entities experience and represent the same social forces as other social organisations. States and state elites, in attempting to appear united for whatever reason, mask the actual disunity of political power. Political power in itself is not a unified homogeneous power that cannot be dismantled and grappled with. Unified political power is usually brought about through control and coercion: in very militarised states, through the power of force; in authoritarian systems, through a lack of civil liberties, etc. and in liberal democracies through economic and social compacts with elites.

A very real compact of power exists between state-led institutions and transnational corporations. Feminist analyses in the South, point to the reality that instead of states acting in the interests of its citizens who have elected them into power, states are actually acting in the interests of private enterprises.

A noticeable shift has occurred from parliamentary democracy and the public interest role of the state through to the shifts in how to secure faster gains for the private sector to promote economic growth. States, in this context can no longer be analysed as fixed ideological entities. Rather, they embody an ongoing dynamic, a changing set of aims, as they engage with and disengage from other social and economic forces.

State power

State power and the dynamics through which power plays itself out are difficult to define and understand, but there is a new urgency for us to reframe and interrogate traditional constructs such as states, sovereignty, political identity and security through feminist lenses.

The emerging political economy of change

What is relevant in this period, as nation states begin to engage within a globalised system, is that states have a two-faced, a Janus nature. They stand at the intersection between domestic, sociopolitical order and transnational relations. In the past states looked at their comparative advantage in relation to their internal strengths and how these could be used to maximize opportunities in the global trading system. Today the issues in the globalised system have moved beyond that to how to carve out markets using a competitive edge: competitive edge – simply put – usually relates to the ability of industry to produce goods and services at the lowest labour and other costs thereby undercutting goods produced at higher costs.

There is a real compact power, explicit or implied between economic and political elites. Instead of governments acting in the interests of all its citizens, the interests of private enterprise and transnational corporations have been prioritised on the assumption that this would be in the interests of national development. The shifts from democratic engagement on what is in the interest of public to how to secure faster gains for the private sector and capital to promote investment and foreign exchange earnings have often resulted in few or no internal checks and balances to safeguard the interests of the poorest.

Although countries differ in the range of factors that shape their development paths common elements include historical factors, patriarchal forces and various forms of oppression. In all regions in the South women have voiced their consensus about the characteristics of states within the global system.

Firstly, analysis of states suggest that regions consist of "state-nations" rather than nation-states", where the corporate power of the state dominates. This is instead of people being integrated into a nation-state as active citizens.

Secondly, the common experience voiced by women in all regions is the States' inability to provide benefits and services that were fought for through the many independence and post independence struggles.

Thirdly, the focus of states on the primacy of economic growth rather than on people centered equitable development has increased inequalities and alienation.

Fourthly, regions in the South, particularly in Asia and Africa have witnessed the growing legitimacy of identity politics (in its ethnic, race and religious variations.)

Fifthly, in all regions there is increasing repression and antagonism to civil society organisations, resulting in their depoliticisation.

Sixthly, globalisation is undermining the sovereignty of states and reorganising them into economic territories, regions or markets.

Historical influences in state power and citizenship

Historical factors have influenced the power dynamics within the contemporary nation-state and have created the conditions for a differentiated and privileged citizenship.

State power and citizenship

Differentiated citizenship: Women's experiences in the South indicate that from its inception and until several decades into the 20th century the nation state conferred citizenship status and rights to men: Sex, race, class, age, ethnicity, and religion were and still are a basis for differentiation. The attainment of full social citizenship has been denied women in many parts of the South. This differentiated application of citizenship rights affect the ways in which women can participate in society.

Women have engaged with the state to secure full citizenship. Their struggles spill over from attempts to change power relationships in family life and society, to how to gain power in the public arena to exert sufficient influence on it to transform the process.

Based on Brazilian experience, women in Latin America[9] insist on the need to incorporate the racial dimension and other inequalities whenever the process of women and society is being dealt with. For example, we need to reflect that women's incorporation into the labour market during the forties applied to poor white women in Latin America and not to black women.

- *The family as a legitimate sub-state entity*: The basic premise of the nation state is that it provides for a direct and exclusive relationship with citi-

zens, with the exception of the family where the state delegates authority to persons outside state structures (males and in particular male heads of households). The special status of the family as a nuclear entity, is still upheld by Constitutions of contemporary states and in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The reality in regions of the South bears little resemblance to this conception of family. A consequence is that while the state reserves the monopoly of instruments of coercion, it turns a blind eye to domestic violence, and while women are granted formal equality by virtually all constitutions, they are denied such equality in the family and this is reinforced through personal laws.

- *Multiple state-citizenship mediation:* The state-citizenship relationship has never been entirely practicable. Different institutions continue to mediate between the state and citizens, particularly in postcolonial states. Pre-colonial institutions were not integrated or replaced into the "modern" contemporary state through locally driven processes, but were integrated into contemporary society as the means to divide, subordinate and restrict autonomous forms of power.

Local power structures and elites continued to play an active role between the people and the "distant" state during colonial rule. Today they continue to operate in post-independent states and have appropriated modern state machinery on a large scale to maintain unequal power relations.

Further in some regions, reform religious movements emerged in the context of the colonial state and because of state repression, there was little internal confrontation between "modern" and religious forces. Religious domination in its worst forms have led to the denial of women's human rights in many countries of the South.

The political terrain as a shifting site of struggle

Pre-independence struggles in the South

Critical feminist analysis points to the manner in which history has denied or failed to recognise the role of women in pre-independence national lib-

eration struggle. This lack of recognition of women's involvement in the political terrain has resulted in the conventional thinking that women are not "political beings" and are more comfortable in the domestic arena.

Women's early involvement in struggles for political and civil rights was also linked to nationalist movements in alliance with males against the "alien other". For many, part of the struggle was the need to gain access to education and employment opportunities. Many women, especially those who engage with the "grassroots",[10] reflect on the sense of alienation and disenchantment they feel about the betrayal of the goals of revolutionary struggles.

Post-independence and contemporary

Women's involvement in nationalist struggles however changed their lives and even while they were denied opportunities to shape the new states they gained de jure rights. Gender relations were not reshaped. Subordination of and discrimination against women has been a persistent feature of women's engagement in state activities. They have not been able to access de jure rights in many cases because interpretation of these rights is male determined.

Absence of democratic practice

In many countries of the South, women state that state power and politics has little to do with democracy and development. Patronage across ideological divides and authoritarian/military rule, prevail instead of legitimacy and accountability. A democratic ethos has not emerged and politics has been reduced to an electoral process without accountability

Some paradoxes of women's participation in political structures

Women's struggle for political space has resulted in some gains. A few women have attained positions, as heads of state, leaders of opposition and members of parliament (see table overleaf).

A feature of women's take up of key political positions in countries in Asia has been the political power wielded by family dynasties or as is called in Sri Lanka the "Over his dead body syndrome". However, women enter-

ing political spaces through patronage and patriarchal structures are unlikely to challenge the structures that brought them to power and to champion women's cause (this applies equally to high political positions and trade unions for example).

Table 2.1: Women in political life (1995)

A = % parliamentary seats occupied by women; B = % governmental posts occupied by women, ministerial level; C = % governmental posts occupied by women, total

	A	B	C		A	B	C
Angola		7.4	6.2	Lesotho	11.2	6.7	13.8
Antigua		0.0	30.0	Madagascar		0.0	0.0
Argentina		0.0	3.2	Malawi	5.6	4.5	6.1
Bahrain		0.0	0.0	Malaysia	11.1	7.7	5.8
Bangladesh	10.6	4.5	3.4	Maldives	6.3	5.3	10.1
Bhutan		12.5	5.0	Mauritania	0.0	3.6	4.7
Bolivia	9.6	0.0	9.4	Mauritius	2.9	4.0	7.4
Botswana	10.0	0.0	10.9	Mexico	13.9	14.3	6.7
Brazil	7.1	3.6	13.1	Mozambique	25.2	3.6	13.2
Burundi	12.3	7.7	4.3	Myanmar/Burma		0.0	0.0
Cambodia		0.0	5.1	Namibia	18.1	9.5	6.6
Cameroon	12.2	2.7	5.4	Nepal		0.0	0.0
Cape Verde	7.6	12.5	11.5	Nicaragua		10.5	10.5
Central African Rep.	3.5	5.3	4.9	Nigeria	2.0	3.7	4.1
Chile	7.2	15.8	12.2	Pakistan	1.6	3.7	1.6
Colombia	9.3	10.5	24.7	Papua New Guinea	0.0	0.0	1.6
Congo	1.6	6.3	4.3	Paraguay	5.6	0.0	3.3
Costa Rica	14.0	14.8	20.8	Peru	10.0	5.6	9.7
Cuba	22.8	3.6	8.4	Philippines	9.5	8.3	23.9
Ecuador	4.5	6.7	9.8	Samoa		6.7	7.1
El Salvador	10.7	5.9	18.4	Senegal		3.6	2.3
Fiji	5.8	8.7	9.8	Seychelles		30.8	21.3
Gabon		3.2	6.0	Singapore	3.7	0.0	5.1
Gambia	7.8	22.2	6.7	Solomon Is.	2.1	0.0	0.0
Ghana	8.0	10.7	10.5	South Africa	23.7	9.4	7.0
Guyana	20.0	11.1	16.2	Sri Lanka	5.3	12.5	8.7
Haiti	3.0	17.4	13.8	Suriname	5.9	0.0	13.6
Honduras	7.0	10.5	17.0	Tanzania	10.6	15.6	9.1
India	8.0	4.2	6.1	Thailand	4.8	3.8	4.4
Indonesia	12.2	3.6	1.8	Trinidad & Tobago	20.6	20.0	13.6
Jamaica	5.6	13.4		Uganda		12.5	9.8
Korea Dem. Rep.		1.2	0.8	Uruguay	7.0	0.0	2.9
Korea Republic	2.0	3.4	1.5	Zaire	5.0	3.4	1.7
Laos		0.0	2.7	Zimbabwe	14.7	3.0	10.8

Source: *The World Guide 1997/98: A View from the South*, Instituto del Tercer Mundo. Oxford: New Internationalist Publications Ltd.

Lack of opportunities and resources

Women were never part of traditional local power structures nor have they made entry into industrialist/traders class. Thus they have little opportunities for public influence and to enter politics. Women also lack opportunities to move within the hierarchies without patronage of male leaders. Even the women's wings of political parties, when they exist, may further marginalise women

rather than integrate them into central power structures. Women do not have necessary resources to enter and compete in contemporary political arena – even middle class males cannot access these.

Women claim that contrary to development theory, improved social indicators do not automatically open the doors of power and improve participation and representation (as exemplified by Sri Lanka where indicators for health, education and participation in the labour force are high). Development interventions also often have narrow perspectives; even interventions that may have had positive outcomes for some women in terms of economic empowerment have neither translated into collective gains nor into sustained political power.[11]

Scope for women's public activism varies across class, region and country but power is curtailed to all. Patriarchal control continues to limit women's agency and mobility which block access to health, education, employment and politics.

Women's participation in politics

Using formal channels, women have been able to enter and contest elections. However, the percentage of women in positions in legislatures and the bureaucracy remain low. The most important collective impact is that women have articulated women's issues and placed them on the agendas of state institutions, political parties and development projects, and ensured inclusion in policy documents – this has been achieved with collaboration of allies in both state structures (often women) and NGO's.

Feminist perspectives from South Asia on politics and power[12]

The Beijing process and negotiations on women's rights catalysed work between women activists and governments, and resulted in strengthening mechanisms to implement National Plans of Action.

Affirmative action and reservation seats

Affirmative action in the political sphere has become a demand and with the exception of Nepal all states have initiated it at local level. Other measures

include reservation of seats or quotas for candidacy. These have had some positive features such as ensuring the physical presence of women and the placing of women's issues on the agenda. But there have also been negative outcomes.

In Pakistan for example, women are elected by indirect election, and used as tokens by political parties to increase their share in the assembly. In Pakistan and Bangladesh women are discouraged from contesting open seats and political parties deny them the opportunity to contest general seats (reserved for males). Reserved seats also undermine opportunities for training and gaining experience.

The most impressive affirmative action has been India, where 33% of local government seats are reserved for women. Some are "proxy candidates" (relatives of male politicians), and some women, especially those from lower castes have experienced violence. However more than a million women are in power, are active participants and adhere to the idea and practice of representative democracy. The effectiveness of this depends on the local configuration of power and cultural environment.

In contesting political space, women face many problems. These include poverty, illiteracy, lack of economic resources, disabling social and legal environments, family and household pressures, male dominated bureaucracy and politicians.

Using informal channels

South Asia attests to the difficulties of socioeconomic gains being translated into women's ability to access political power. Feminists are concerned that development initiatives such as the Grameen Bank, SEWA and BRAC have not led to sustained political power. Women have also been able to mobilise informally. An example of this is anti-liquor campaigns in three states in India started by poor Dalit agricultural women labourers. They focused on the violence perpetrated by drunken males and were able to stop liquor sales. But due to strongarm tactics by the police and administration the gains were limited.

Understanding local power dynamics

> *"In each state the specific configuration and dynamics of power sets the parameters within which change can be instituted. To access power at any level, women need to first understand how power and influence operate in that environment - be it the family or the state - and then to identify the most effective channels and vehicles available to them."* [13]

Counteracting identity politics – the role of civil society

Women in South Asia (and Africa) voiced concerns about the rise of identity politics. The rise of identity politics may provide space to individual women but it is a challenge to women's collective access to power. As violence increases, minorities organise for self-protection and majorities organise around aggressive exclusivist actions and policies. Militant politico-religious parties, with undemocratic and misogynist agendas, who lack popular support, have become alarmingly influential (e.g.: Pakistan, Bangladesh) due to concessions made to them by the more popular "non-religious defined" parties. Even in the context of a secular framework (e.g. India) communal (religious) violence and the success of the dominant BJP are of concern.

Identity politics in South Asia

Essentialist politics ascendant in the region may provide individual women increased personal space and more power but pose a major challenge to women's collective access to power. Moreover the nature of essentialist politics is that it feeds on itself so that the rise of identity politics and the increasing acceptance of violence in the pursuit of such agendas has immediate implications for neighbouring states and people. Events in one country, themselves frequently linked internationally, have ramifications across South Asian borders e.g. the destruction of the Babri masjid in India provoked senseless violence against buildings identified as Hindu even when the people affected were in fact Muslims. Events in one part of the country that pit or appear to pit one "collective" against another will reverberate elsewhere commonly catalysing similar or retaliatory actions and sentiments. This pushes minority communities into organising for self-

protection – often resulting in a ghetto mentality - and majority communities into aggressive exclusivist actions and policies.

Sri Lanka has been embroiled in a civil war for decades in which both ethnic and religious identities have divided the populace into ever more isolated and watertight segments. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, increasingly militant politico-religious parties who present their undemocratic and misogynistic political agendas in a religious idiom, have grown spectacularly. And, in some ways, they have overcome their lack of popular support thanks to the constant concessions made to their demands and pressures by the more popular "non-religiously defined" political parties and sitting governments. (Rashid 96) Whereas politico-religious parties have never enjoyed direct power and have consistently been routed at the polls, the level of indirect influence exercised by such groups has grown to a point that is alarming.

If, in Pakistan, the prominent place of religious identity in the state's creation helped legitimise the frequent and facile recourse made to religion by diverse political actors in pursuit of political power, this is not the case for India that has maintained a secular framework. It is all the more disconcerting, therefore, that a secular framework and a fairly regular electoral process have failed to prevent the rise of communal violence first between Hindus and Muslims and now in violence targeting Christians. Of even greater concern has been the consecutive electoral success of the BJP. These tendencies penetrate various state institutions as well, most importantly the courts and law-enforcing agencies.[14]

Feminists point to 3 factors that may contribute to the resurgence of primordial religious and ethnic identity politics in South Asia:

- *Firstly*, localised forms of governance that were neither replaced nor integrated into the modern state apparatus.
- *Secondly*, economic policies that distribute state opportunities and benefits unequally. Identification of citizens with smaller collectives seems to have taken root. Even well meaning policies (e.g.: job reservation for disadvantaged groups) may have bolstered the idea of smaller identities as not only legitimate but the most effective basis to derive state benefits.
- *Thirdly*, the onslaught of modernity and technology has failed to replace religion as the essential reference point for the majority. The sense of

social injustice and alienation perceived to go with the New World Order contributes to the renewed assertion of a collectivity in terms that are meaningful to the average citizen, usually ethnic, race or religion.

In this context the presence and nature of civil society institutions are becoming pivotal to renegotiate the state-citizen relationship. They need to act as intermediary negotiators and provide effective alternative means for self-expression and collective intervention. In their absence religious/cultural/ethnic based/defined institutions play this role and are strengthened. Autonomous civil society institutions are increasingly vital to promote women's and citizen's rights.

However, in all regions of the South women recognise that while NGO's have gained greater acceptance and legitimacy, they are no replacement for the political process, as they do not represent the will of the people nor can they bring about structural and systemic change.

Critical feminist perspectives on the state and state power in Africa

Some African feminists assert that African states are not stable enough to be analysed. Thus commonalities are seen only at a distance and generally derived from external forces that have a homogenizing effect such as Structural Adjustment Programs. Another difficulty concerns the fact that knowledge of African politics is derived from political science, a field that is state centered. The consequence of the focus on the state is preoccupation with the failure of the African State and a negative portrayal of the state as corrupt, patrimonial and a source of African crisis.

Feminists in the region centre their arguments on the way in which mainstream critiques fail to understand the complexities that shape African experiences. They argue that "critical readings of the vast number of publications on various aspects of Africa politics suggests that the assumptions that have been made about the form and location of power have been deeply flawed. Mama argues that African politics continue to be presented in ways that homogenise, simplify and reduce the diverse and complex machinations of political power in postcolonial Africa".[15]

One aspect of the danger of this generalisation is that international policy on good governance and political restructuring which are based on negative assumptions about the African state are prescribed to African states with no regard to the complexities and diversity among them. Indeed "the programming around good governance, political restructuring and capacity building display the limitations of this knowledge base, exacerbated by the institutional characteristics of the agencies, and the exigencies emanating from the political and financial interests prevailing back home – home in London, Washington and Oslo.[16]

Others argue that the notion of the state as a complex, contradictory and desegregated set of institutions is much more useful than the idea of a state as a monolithic entity.[17] A wide variety of state forms exist in the region and there are important variations. Colonialism in Africa was not uniform in that not all-African states were colonised and among those that were colonised they did not share similar experiences. Each state has its own distinctive political history, which is a product of specific national and sub-national constellations of forces old and new. Due to the dearth of information, commonalties in the workings of gender, politics and power in Africa are likely to be abstract and based on generalisations. Much of what has been written on the African state has dwelt on various manifestations of authoritarianism and corruption and little attention has been paid to organisational analysis, institutional culture, formal and informal structures of power, or the complexities of gender, ethnicity, and religion within the mainstream structures of power and public administration. Between the poles of authoritarianism and democracy, Africa displays a wide array of unique political forms and experiences that were innovative in response to local philosophical and material conditions.

Generalisations and current discourse tend to demonise African leaders and cast African people as passive victims of state machinery, who are unable to curb the excesses of dictators or to exercise any civic responsibility. The unfortunate consequence of this literature is that it resonates with the current stance of international financial institutions that agree that the African State is a source of crisis and the answer is to diminish the state.

The view of the African State as corrupt, parasitic, bloated and authoritarian, which is part of a dominant anti-states discourse on Africa, has colonial origins. It casts Africans in the image of passive victims of oppressive states, which they are unable to do anything about. Yet, studies of social movements in Africa subvert that general picture. Western academics seem agreed on the cause of 'the problem', and on the solution – that is, rolling back the state, with the result that throughout Africa there are currently 100 000 experts on the ground costing over $4 billion a year in technical assistance fees.[18] The pertinent questions for critical analyses are: Who owns the state, who directs policy? Are African states real states at all? And where does power reside? [19]

Given the changing political landscape we cannot afford to ditch the state, as the few gains that women have had in Africa have come via the state; moreover, the consequences for women have been extremely dire in contexts where the state has been destroyed – Rwanda, Liberia and Sierra Leone – where women are living in conflict and post-conflict situations or have become stateless. An emerging debate in feminist discourse is the phenomena of male patriarchal leaderships championing the women's cause, and of 'First Ladyism', which has advanced very conservative agendas, need critical analysis.[20]

Three main processes currently dominate the continent: Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP's), the process of democratic transitions, and that of globalisation. How have these processes of transformation been linked to politics and power in Africa and how have they affected women and their citizenship in Africa? Africa's economic integration into a global economy is not modernising Africa, but rather making Africa perform better for global capitalism. The postcolonial state, in renegotiating its power and political legitimacy, had imposed its own social logic, with specific implications in respect of both ethnicity and gender relations. The primary preoccupation within Africa today is not dealing with human problems, but achieving macroeconomic stability. This has led to social movements questioning the legitimacy of states.[21]

Feminists in Africa analyse states from the perspective of the politics of exclusion, and female power and the politics of subversion. The politics of

exclusion (both ethnicity-based and gender based) characterised postcolonial development policies. In Africa the state has become the means through which global capitalism transforms, restructures and realigns production systems. Women's economic marginalisation and precarious situation today, with fewer and fewer resources to survive globalisation, illustrate the failure of modernisation. While women were part of movements which gave birth to democracies in Africa, the fundamental reason for their exclusion from the political arena lay in persistence of an impenetrable androcentric and masculine world. Women's experiences in Africa resonate with those of other women in the South. Women in Africa contest the political terrain in many ways.

The strategies adopted are complex and varied and include appropriating the international discourse on rights and mobilizing within Parliament. Within the civil service, however, women who entered as part of their engagement at the highest political level have had to contend with transforming the internal cultures of government and making an impact in terms of resource allocation and policy processes. In this they could not rely solely on the structures of government but on the movements outside of the government.

The state in Africa, was not devised in the interests of the African people. Debates on the state in Africa need to go back to political formation before the Berlin Conference and prior to European contact, that is, before there were colonial states or what is now termed 'nation states'. More over while Africans must rediscover their cultural heritage, they should not romanticize the African past. In transitions from illegitimate political order or arrangements to legitimate governments male leaders usually sought to re-invent themselves and forget how they had come to power, but women's NGO's created by First Ladies were usually named by the date of the military coups, and thereby immortalize the events which their husbands were trying to erase from the public memory. [22]

The state, power and politics: Feminist perspectives from South East Asia[23]

Postcolonial South East Asia continues to chart dramatic political and economic changes that often escape conventional (western) standards of analysis. Strong and autocratic governments (Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia) have weathered external criticisms and citizens' demands for more freedom and individual rights. Remarkable still is the visible material progress enjoyed by citizens despite restrictions of their civil rights even when they are under one-man absolute rule (Brunei).

Economic prosperity versus democratisation

Undoubtedly, economic progress proved to be a more persuasive justification than spaces for political freedoms. This was true in Indonesia under the indisputably repressive and violent leadership of Suharto, whose administration gave Indonesians a taste of domestic and economic stability.

With the fall of the Marcos dictatorship, Filipinos take pride in the restoration of their liberal democratic traditions even while the country's economy is being pushed down by inefficiency, corruption, and elite capitalists' interests.

In Burma, no matter how much the present military junta cleansed its image it could not erase the victory of the democratic opposition in the 1990 elections. Although it granted temporary reprieve to the National League of Democracy's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, by putting her under house arrest, this move is seen as just a ploy the military regime to remain in power.

This stands in sharp contrast, for instance, to Cambodia's reversal to monarchical rule or with the replacement of a Thai civilian elected government with politicians known for their military ties in the 1995 elections. Though Chuan Leekpai was known as an honest and principled leader, the Thais were dissatisfied with his democratic style of leadership because they expected him "to tackle problems head on". As one writer puts it: "traditionally, it mattered little to the Thai or Cambodian merchant or farmer whether a government

calls itself democratic so long as he or she feels its weight little as possible and benefits from its security as much possible - a pragmatic immunity to ideology often lost on outside observers" (Vatikiotis, 1996).

Tensions exist between those who regard themselves outside the political and economic centre, and the middle class, who have found refuge in strong and autocratic governments. This begs the question of whether enrichment of the dispossessed would ease these tensions, or for that matter, equal distribution of wealth equals more equitable political participation?

Postcolonial South East Asia's bold declaration that western conception of democracy is unsuitable to "Asian values" and merely serving to conceal western political and economic interests, challenged political analysts to scrutinised just what this 'Asian value' is all about and how it has informed democratic development in the region. It must be noted that not all of South East Asian countries share Lee Kuan Yew's views on Asian values, the espousal of which is credited to him. It is also instructive to mention that even the normative concept of democracy is yielding to shifts that can lead to "improvement or deterioration" thus positioning it in a "continuous state of becoming".[24] It is in this 'state of becoming' that one democratic theorist coined the term polyarchy in place of democracy.[25]

As in the case of Africa, South East Asia escapes the neat dichotomy presented by ruler/ruled, dominant/dominator, or oppressed/oppressor mode of analysis. Despite its progressive and militant rhetoric, this type of analysis homogenizes the power of the state and fails to capture how in the course of everyday life, both the oppressed and the oppressor come together in the arena of contestation.

Modes of democracy and modes of citizenship in South East Asia

Emerging feminist views highlight how concepts of democracy and citizenship carry within their historical origin the exclusion of women, of those without properties and of racial minorities. Conspicuously absent from amongst various brands of "democracies" in the region is the embodiment of republicanism: "the idea that the discharge of public duties is an ennobling

activity that demands exacting subjection to the law, the selfless service to the public interest" [26] (O'Donnel, in Pagaduan). This would explain why citizens in most countries of the region are expressly dissatisfied with their governments.

Conflation of democracy with material progress

In Singapore political participation has been recast to promote material acquisition and progress as the basis of "entitlement of citizenship". Material conditions are used as the "criteria" to define, assess and legitimate government's performance. Similar trends are noted in Malaysia. This conflation of democracy and material progress is in large measure accepted amongst the middle classes in South East Asia.

Citizens have a very strong concept of what is unjust and detest tyrannical leadership and excessive use of power. They also defer to power. However, the stranglehold of state machineries and a culturally driven sense of obedience explains why popular protests can be curbed for a long time as in the case of Burma.

The marginalised and the dispossessed provide the ruling elite the cultural resources and the language to recreate and reproduce itself. This represents the power of values and meaning from which ideas are either concealed or publicly magnified.

The culturalisation of the political and politicisation of the cultural – Contesting power from the margins [27]

"Popular culture is one of the sites where the struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged", making 'culture' in itself 'culturally constructed. Thus, power is contested, recreated, and reproduced, marked and signified by cultural politics.

In the context of contemporary South East Asia, a region singled out for its pursuit of economic modernisation by observers, the culturalisation of its political landscape is put into our attention and consciousness both by the ruling elite and those from the margins of the political centre [28] (Khan, 1998). (e.g. in the streets of Yangon, red and white banners ubiquitously

remind the Burmese of the People's Desire to "oppose those relying on external elements acting as stooges holding negative views" or to observe "discipline" because it "leads to safety").

Identity or cultural formation, also known as nation-building, does not exactly assume a straight off and similitude unfolding (as the ruling/ hegemonic elite would like to believe). Individuals have demonstrated adaptive, multifaceted, and flexible capacity to alter or modify 'grand narratives' and find suitability in their own location and position in the social order.

Culture, and its material and physical dimensions, shapes expression of individual subjectivity and is itself 'culturally constructed' (Khan, 1995). As a product of cultural construction, culture never assumes a complete and unitary sense of purpose; discourse production appears to be no more the monopoly of those who are in the centre of power (state, academe, institutions, etc.) but is being produced by the "self-proclaimed margins" (Mann, 1996).

Reconceptualising gender/sexual difference and power

Feminist argue that concepts of democracy, citizenship, and equality are masculinised; male power negates women's agency and subjectivity, and that of others in the margins (of men who may be in the margins of power because of their racial and class position and those of women who may be in the centre of power because of their racial and class position).

The concept of difference, however, is not always amenable to feminist theorising. It commonly denotes sexual difference between women and men borne by race, class, age, sexual orientation, amongst others. Most prefer using the concept of gender to highlight the social construction of femininity and masculinity. This approach, however, draws attention to the exterior aspects of femininity and masculinity and thereby obscures the interior/subjective aspects of a gendered male or gendered female.

Those who are inclined to stress sexual difference point in its centrality to the formation of human culture. Braidotti for instance, asks: "Can we formulate otherness, differences, without devaluing it? Can we think of the other as positively other?"[29] For her, the feminist goal is not to erase differences but "to recover the feminine within sexual difference, to generate an

autonomous female imagery beyond existing stereotypes of women".[30] Put this way, (traditionally conceived) femininity becomes "the privileged marker of difference" and sidesteps the analytical tendency of enclosing women in male-centred norms.

Equality remains central in the concept of sexual difference but one that calls for equality that respects difference. Because there is also inequality in the struggle for equality, exposing differences becomes all the more compelling. Braidotti (1997) puts its political potential this way:

> *"politically this means that the terms of possible feminist coalitions are not to be sought in the categories of "sameness"-be it sisterhood ...or some commonality of oppression. The political focus is shifted instead toward a politics of coalition based on the confrontation of differences among women (and men). Here issues of national identity, nationalism and religion are of the greatest importance. In this regard, sexual difference can be seen as a critique of emancipationism or equality minded feminism".*

How do we conceive of power that is not necessarily oppositional (control and resistance) or de-centre it from asymmetry (inequality and domination) but in a way that reveals how its (assumed) negative deployment can be redeployed positively? While Cooper (1995) maintains the importance of inequality and domination in understanding power, she finds it futile to associate power with dominant or superior groups because even their choices and actions are contained (and thus limited) in the way they exercise their own brand of power. It also organizes out marginalised groups because they are perceived as having no access to power because power is reified in one dominant class or group.[31]

Power becomes productive (i.e. produces effects) when one starts from the fresh approach that the oppressed possess power and that they do challenge inequality, which may not necessarily generate effects but at least imply a potential for impact or the motivation to resist, contest and challenge their subordination.

Identities are not casually or unthinkingly taken as givens either by traditions or external imposition but contested to suit people's circum-

stances.[32] This contestation, however, cannot be simply taken as a struggle between the ruler and the ruled, the elite or the masses but how in the course of such a struggle, both are able to bring themselves, by virtue of their identities to enter such constestation (and by extension generate effects). Totalising markers and identifiers like citizenship, national identity, rights, equality, which the dominant groups perceive as their grand projects, can be interrogated and challenged by marginalised groups using the same sets of markers but may be located outside the boundaries determined by the dominant groups. This is because power is located in crisscross patterns that spawn effects on the "bodies, desires, and knowledge of social subjects (Cooper, 1995).

While power position is still traditionally mapped out in terms of 'centres' and 'marginal oppositions',[33] Mann (1996) argues that the margins are the "function and effects of the centre the very means by which the centre establishes its line of defence".

Preferences, identities, and subjectivitys, form legitimate terrain for progressive politics, if not transformational politics. The call for an ethical approach is to find strategies that engage with "dis-empowering preferences and identities" in ways that work against, rather than accentuate existing principles and forms of systematic (dis)advantage.

Empowerment goes beyond the (subjective) fulfilment of desires to highlight the scope and character of decision-making processes are they found in the home, community or workplace. Democratic participation and involvement can be viewed and valued as a good in itself. Yet the character of preference - the demands they make upon decision-making processes - are not fixed, but alter as decision-making structures change. Attempts to generate equality of empowerment through more symmetrical structures reshape the nature of our preferences and desires. At the same time, the changing character of our aspirations, pleasures, and pain inform the discourses and practices though which our participation occurs.[34]

Feminist perspectives from Latin America and the Caribbean on the state, power and politics[35]

Women in Latin America are concerned about the absence of feminist debates on the State. However, a careful extrapolation from different documents reveal that Latin American feminists describe States as patriarchal, and consider them as the political expression of domination of patriarchal societies. Feminists also describe states as class-conscious, racist, and as producers and reproducers of different social inequalities.

Feminists in Latin America analyse particular aspects of states such as military influence, the repressive system and lack of human rights implementation, the discriminatory legal system, the sexist administration of justice, the educational system, and the influence of the catholic church which managed to turn sin into offence. Moreover the absence and the inability of women to exercise their rights, and the lack of women in decision-making levels have also been questioned.

Given this, Latin American women, particularly, feminists have oscillated between State "bedeviling" and "functionalisation". The approach has been an attack on the state while trying to understand its role and functions. The chronology of women's struggles for political rights and participation reflects the painful experience of exclusion from pre to post colonial eras.

Women's political participation, even in emancipation wars, did not result in important gains for them vis-à-vis the institutionality attained by men. This further highlights the contradictions and the heterogeneous features of a continent where, for many years, military sovereignty had supremacy over popular sovereignty. The constant tension between liberal republican aspirations and a pre-capitalist economy of large agricultural and forestry estates, as well as mining enclaves with the exploitation of the workforce played itself out in various ways.

Latin American regimes have generally been autocratic and the constitutional system has been republican and liberal. In this context, suffragist

struggles for the right to female citizenship took place between the end of the Nineteenth Century until the mid Twentieth Century.

Claiming political space

The access of a minority of women to higher education, enabled women to question their exclusion from the political system. Over a period of 32 years, Latin American countries, one by one, conferred political rights on women. Two factors contributed to women's disenchantment with their victory. On one hand, women had the right to vote but few of them were elected into positions of power, least of all those who had struggled for suffrage. The second factor was little democratic stability on the continent. As Aníbal Quijano stated, "sectors and elements closely linked to inequality and arbitrariness, despotism and obscurantism" took power.

Transformation, revolution and populism

Transformation of society was also promoted through *revolutions, populism* and *reformism*. While only four revolutions have been registered in the continent there have been some benefits resulting, particularly, as regards access to health and education. These revolutionary processes can be considered male-centered in terms of power to make decisions and state action. Populist struggles were more widespread but did not lead to significant gains, especially in land reforms.

Common features among these States have been nationalism, explicit anti-imperialism and anti-communist Governments that have actively sought capitalist modernisation through economic programs of imports substitution, industrialisation and social security. The advent of industrialisation, in the forties and fifties saw women enter labour markets and gain access to social benefits; but their entry did not lead to the formation of autonomous organisations with potential to have any real impact.

Dictatorships have been amongst the most developed Latin American political traditions for two centuries and as a consequence the denial of citizenship and basic rights, have become common features. Women have

had no participation in such governments except as part of the subjugated or as opponents of state oppression. In countries such as Paraguay, the two poles which best represent patriarchy are precisely the warrior hero as holder of political power and the single women raising his children. The fathers of the "motherhood" are not aware of responsible paternity.

Recent dictatorships which spread throughout the continent during the sixties, seventies and eighties of this century, indicate that, within this repressive framework, a new Latin American feminism emerged. Small groups or a critical core of women waged a political struggle against repressive regimes. Suffragists debated principles of equality from a left perspective and feminists began to engage with the left on the contradictions within liberalisation and gender equality. During the eighties, women began to confront the State with a discourse of their own, based on their varied experiences within the patriarchal, military or authoritarian state systems.

During the eighties democratisation gained impetus. From the start, feminist and other excluded groups, struggled to have equal participation in democracy. But, the result of women's struggles for recognition and inclusion was only "a room of their own in the State".[36] Gender equality mechanisms and, until now, even democracies have not been able to be more than a formality where institutions do not guarantee equal rights for female and male citizens.

Feminist perspectives of power and politics from the Pacific

***Power and politics*[37]**

Constitutional politics process and associated legislation came into effect in almost all Pacific states without the organized participation of women as a distinctive force. However, in some instances, the Constitutions of many countries, such as Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, included affirmative action provision that could be invoked in favour of women. In Fiji, for instance, Slatter (1998) said that the new Constitution, which came into effect in July 1998, offers great encouragement

for women when looked at broadly rather than by simply looking at the explicit provisions for women's equality. A number of significant gains were made:

- The change in the citizenship provisions (Chapter 3) to give women equal citizenship rights with men.
- The Bill of Rights (Chapter 4), especially the inclusion of gender as a right to 'equality before the law' (38(1)), and other guaranteed rights, such as the right to basic education, the right to form and join trade unions, to organize and bargain collectively, and to fair labour practices, including humane and proper working conditions.
- The provisions for the establishment of a Human Rights Commission, which strengthens the Bill of Rights, which includes sexual harassment as a form of unfair discrimination. One of the Commissioners is a woman.
- The Compact, which provides 'moral support' for women's equality or social advancement.
- The strengthened human rights and accountability provisions (e.g. freedom of information, leadership code, an independent judiciary and constitutional offices and fairer electoral arrangements will benefit the nation as a whole including women.[38]

Women in the Pacific are generally depicted as the powerless and helpless victims of dominantly patriarchal societies. In fact, women in many precolonial societies enjoyed considerable power and had control over resources, such as land, and in decision-making processes which affect their lives. It is true, of course, that in certain societies, such as Tonga, women chiefs enjoyed many privileges which were denied their commoner sisters but even so, women still commanded respect and still enjoyed higher status than their male siblings. In matrilineal societies women had control but even in what would be termed 'patriarchal' societies, there were provisions for women to participate in community affairs and strategies that women could employ to access resources and benefits.

Conclusions

We face a manysided State which is in the process of transformation. Women have learnt to deal with the parliamentary side of the State, to make proposals, to lobby, and to obtain rights. We have been less concerned with the use of Executive and Judicial Power. This is due to the fact that apart from being dissimilar, each one has a different logic and we have to decode them to understand them and take action. Added to this, feminists are not able to engage effectively with state structures.

The nation-state is in the process of transformation and is weaker than before. Rights discourses give women a broader field of action, but we face the challenge of rebuilding citizenship and women's subjective citizenship, which is undervalued, even by ourselves. We must go on deepening our knowledge of formal aspects but we must also work on non-formal aspects.

The fact that human rights laws do not come into effect, is a serious problem. It is important to work on the Constitutional State to ensure that the legal framework and laws protecting women's rights are implemented.

There is a gap represented by poor women and women in general who attend political training courses, and who generally question the starting point of democracy. The challenging issue is to think about how and whether democracy exists in our regions, and what are the benefits for women.

Legal or constitutional effectiveness is not only the State's responsibility, but also civil society's responsibility. We must imagine and create the mechanisms to achieve this. Electoral participation through quotas constitutes a good example, but are not enough to result in gender equity.

We must work on macro and micro powers. If we take this to the political field, we are forced to analyse local powers which are more dynamic and which have greater possibilities of exerting influence than the processes of a country as a whole. But, we must take into consideration that many of these micro processes are very conservative.

There are a series of problems linked to the specific historical experience and to political culture. For example, in many countries of the South, citizens associate poor people's welfare with the need for authoritarian governments. Gains for the poor are not identified with democracy and the poor themselves long for dictatorships, or consider the State as a shelter instead of a point of conflict. Many of these issues have not been understood in all their complexities by women's movements.

Political openness offers new possibilities for women, but feminists are at present more fragmented than before. We are losing the emancipation potential due to the diversity of claims. We need to ensure that the different courses of action and claims are linked to inequalities of class, race, gender, ethnic and religious discussions.

Feminists need to create alternative development courses of action and to work towards progressive democratic governance. The fact that feminists may make proposals not only for women, but also for the whole society, that they may manage societies and not just have "a room of their own" in the State, is a challenge.

Some challenges and contradictions

- Forms of democracy have been built on the pillars of economic, political culture, institutions and political behaviour although the role and significance given to each of these varies.
- Countries in the South (Africa and Asia) have experienced democratic changes at a rapidity not seen in other parts of the world. The whole area of democratic governance is still contested and the nature of pluralism has to be understood in relation to historical and contemporary forms of exclusionary politics. Social activity is no longer about whether pluralist democracy is desirable but how quickly it can be attained and in what form.
- Economic development may sometimes be a spur (South Korea) to democracy but economic stagnation or collapse, can undermine the basis

of authoritarian/ illegitimate governments and pave the way for democracy. However, in some cases it has paved the way or strengthened the hands of anti-democratic elite's who the use material resources to reward friends and punish foes giving rise to what we call in South Africa the "Patriotic Bourgeoisie" or crony capitalism.

- Political institutions have changed over time and have been shaped by a multiplicity of forces including historical, external and internal factors. Weak and ineffective institutions make the relationships between the governed and government problematic, but over powerful institutions, in societies where there are few or no autonomous centres of power (civil society) can leave those in control of the state machinery unchecked.
- Development tends to be tied through Aid to a commitment to western style democracy/pluralism and in the post cold war, post modern period, this has led to a greater acceptance of political and economic liberalisation (the objectives of competition between parties in place of single-party hegemony and competition in the market in place of state planning.)
- The impacts have varied but there are complementary and contradictory pressures. There is internal and external pressure to have open competition for power and civil liberties and then there is economic-liberalisation (one dollar one vote in place of one person one vote) where decision-making is removed from the majority. This disjuncture creates continuous sites of struggle. The issue here is how to ensure that market led strategies and state-led development processes are able to secure the interests and meet the needs of the majority.
- Economic-liberalisation poses limits to the state's power but the counterweight to this is not only in the hands of the masses but in changing the rules that determine transnational decisions and agreements.
- There is a crisis of distribution in terms of economic and political power and the position of women in this process is a fundamental concern.
- The battle ground for the debate is what political system would best serve the needs of capitalism. Liberal democracy and capitalism are com-

pletely compatible. This poses interesting challenges for the region and women's emancipation.

- Questioning the nation state is important and the questions raised critical. Can the formation of the nation state be challenged if it does not take into account representation of those who have been excluded, the majority, the environment and the need for patterns of sustainable livelihoods?
- The process of inventing and restructuring the nation state in itself is not dangerous but what is dangerous is the manner in which forms of cultural politics and the issue of narrow identities promotes racism and other divides in opposition to globalisation.

Notes

1 Commitment 4: The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action – World Summit for Social Development, 06-12 March 1995, United Nations, New York
2 Diaw, 1999 at DAWN Africa PRST Research Meeting, Cape Town
3 Assié-Lumumba, 1999 at DAWN Africa PRST Research Meeting, Cape Town
4 Citing Lumumba-Kasongo, 1999
5 Citing Lumumba-Kasongo, 1999
6 Assié-Lumumba, 1999.
7 Assié-Lumumba, 1999 at DAWN Africa PRST Research Meeting, Cape Town
8 Morgenthau, H.J. 1967. Politics Among Nations, p26. New York: Knops.
9 Vera Soares, 1999 at DAWN Latin America PRST Workshop, Brazil
10 "Grassroots" is a term used to denote poor people who are often located in local, underdeveloped conditions.
11 Farida Shaheed, Politics and Power in South Asia – 2000, DAWN PRST Research meeting
12 This section has been based on the analysis from Farida Shaheed's paper on Politics and Power in South Asia – 2000, DAWN PRST Research meeting.
13 Farida Shaheed, 2000:27 in Power and Politics in South Asia, DAWN PRST Research meeting
14 Farida Shaheed, f: 2000:27-31, Politics and Power in South Asia – 2000, DAWN PRST Research meeting
15 Mama, 1999 at DAWN Africa PRST Research Meeting, Cape Town
16 Ibid

17 Hassim, S and Meintjies S, 1999, DAWN Africa PRST Research Meeting, Cape Town
18 (Mkandawire *et al*, 1999 citing 1995 figures).
19 Amina Mama, 1999, at DAWN Africa PRST Research Meeting, Cape Town
20 Aminata Diaw, 1999, at DAWN Africa PRST Research Meeting, Cape Town
21 Aminata Diaw, as above. She also draws on Samir Amin's work in this analysis.
22 Assie-Lumumba,1999, at DAWN Africa PRST Research Meeting, Cape Town
23 Much of the analysis for this section is drawn from Pagaduan, Maureen, 2000: Power, Politics and Culture in South East Asia: A preview to contemporary South East Asia, paper prepared for DAWN PRST Research.
24 Almond in Diamond, 1994
25 Dahl in Diamond, 1994
26 O'Donnell in Pagaduan
27 Maureen Pagduan and others; 2000 in Power, Politics and Culture in South East Asia, paper prepared for DAWN Research Meeting.
28 Khan, 1998
29 Felski, 1997
30 Ibid
31 Cooper, 1995
32 Khan, 1998
33 Mann, 1996
34 Maureen Pagaduan, 2000
35 This section has been based on the analysis by Line Barsino, 2000, DAWN PRST regional meeting, Rio, and on the Latin America regional PRST report.
36 Fempress
37 Ana Maui Taufe – Ulungaki's paper: 2000, A regional synthesis of PRST in the Pacific, DAWN PRST Inter-regional meeting, Cape Town
38 Slatter Claire, 1998: Fiji