

Social Movements, New Social Movements, and the Changing Social Terrain of Late Industrializing Asia

MSSDS  
Week 10/2013-14

## Remaining weeks

- The Changing Terrain of social movements
  - Social differentiation, the rise of SMOs/NGOs
- Varieties of Social Movements
  - Accountability movements, transnationalism
- Virtual society and the public political sphere
  - Internet and social movement dynamics
- The promise and limits of social movements
  - State repression, civil society, and political development

## Agenda

- Civil society and development reconsidered
- Civil society in late-developing Asia
- New Social Movements? NGOs, SMOs, GROs

## I. Civil Society Reconsidered

- Middle class thesis

## Civil Society and Development

- Economic development & civil society
  - Common to modernizationists and (Gramscian) Marxists
- Civil society as a progressive outcome
  - Sign of modernization, capitalist development
  - Progress in expansion of political space
  - Struggle takes place outside formal political institutions
- “Presumptive historical end points” → Teleology
  - Working class → socialist revolution → **ironic outcomes**
  - Middle class → liberal democracies → **hasn't happened**

## What does development of CS entail?

- Legitimation of rights
  - CS actors, organizations legitimated
  - Secure position: questioning, challenging state power
- Role of state
  - What is political, what is legitimate
  - Active boundary setting: permitting, suppressing
- Conditions of non-democratic polities
  - Where rights not established, CSOs vulnerable
  - Cambodia trade unions, CS actors in China

## II. Civil Society and the Politics of Late-Developing Asia

### Three Questions for CS in Asia

1. Scale, scope, vitality, and limits of civil society
2. CS Development  $\leftrightarrow$  political institutions?
3. Other factors shaping development of SC
  - social differentiation

### Distinctiveness of East Asia

- ‘Successful’ capitalist industrialization
- Authoritarian managerialism
- New interests, greater social differentiation
- Advantages of historical perspective, not new!

### Civil Society Not New

- 1920s-1930s
  - Anti-colonialism, nationalism, social humanism
  - Instrumental in expanding civil society
- 1940s-1960s  $\rightarrow$  doors open and slam shut
  - Role of Marxism, not only China/Vietnam but SEA
  - Opening and closure of CS in C&V
  - Establishment of dictatorships, South Korea, TW
  - Indonesia, Malaysia

### Civil Society Ebbs and Flows

- 1970s attempts to expand civil society...crushed
  - Labor, student activism (Thailand, Philippines)
  - Authoritarian responses, China/Vietnam suppression
- 1980s-1990s
  - Capitalist development, middle class, industrialization
  - Particularistic, including middle-class movements
  - Philippines ‘People Power,’ Korea, Tiananmen

### CS and the Political Left in Asia

- Left has played crucial role in expanding CS
  - Reform-oriented movements for alternatives
  - Socialism  $\rightarrow$  revolutionary socialism to social democracy
  - Suppressed, co-opted, and overwhelmed
- Transformation of left
  - Has become more strategic than mass
  - Taken over by liberals and social reformers
  - New political aspirations, not-revolutionary

## Civil Society and Political Oppositions

- Political society
  - Parliamentary means of opposition
- Civil-society
  - Non-parliamentary means of opposition
- Presence of neither, either, or both
  - Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Philippines, Thai, MY

## Civil Society & Social Change in Asia

- Labor organizations present, no longer central
  - Rise of grassroots organizations
  - Corporatism and repression used to diffuse labor
- Middle class of particular importance
  - Professionals, bureaucrats, self-employed persons
  - Professional associations
- Development of bourgeois class elements
  - Business associations
  - Often less concerned with democracy, human rights

## Case of the Middle Class in Indonesia

- Sustained economic growth since 1970s
  - Urban workers, middleclass professionals, activists
- Contradictory class location, obstacles pre-97
  - Middle-class alliance, workers, journalists
  - Fragmentation of oppositional movements
- An update on status of social movements in Indonesia
  - NGOs have become institutionalized feature
  - Counter-hegemonic struggles against money politics

## The Case of Thailand

- Student activists of the 1970s
  - Anti-authoritarian, pro-poor, exile
- Support and withdrawal of support for TRT
  - Coincidence of interests
  - Communitarianism vs. Populism
  - Clean vs. dirty
- Taking down the government - rejection of state
  - Alliance with strange partners, R-C-NGOs, no party of own
  - Anti-rural campaign of PAD
  - Conclusion? Limits of NSMs

## New Social Movements in Korea

- Backdrop of democratization
  - Workers, students, dissidents
- Transformation of politics
  - Institutionalization of parliamentary democracy
  - Development of SMOs
    - Environmentalism, feminism, consumer/human rights
- Emergence as political force with limits
  - Middle-class based, supplanting worker-student alliance
  - Transformation of unions, student movements, and CCEJ

## III. SMOs, NGOs, NSMs, Alternatives

## What is an NGO?

- NGOs not new
- NGOs not always NGOs
- NGOs and development, 1980s →
- NGOs and Civil Society
- SMOs and NGOs in development contexts

## Activist NGOs and Development

- Non-governmental organizations in LDA
  - In principle voluntary, non-profit organizations
  - Often with development-related goals
- Not necessarily political or oppositional
  - Many *try* to avoid politics, affiliations w/parties
- Maturation of NGOs → expanding political space
  - Activist grassroots development NGOs
  - Often take role in oppositional politics

## NGOs as Neoliberal Partners

- Neoliberal NGOs, Global NGOs
  - The global poverty agenda
- NGOs/SMOs as advocating change
  - ‘NGOs are *part of* while trying to be *apart from*’
- Drawn into development business
  - Subcontracting work or international dev. Orgs
  - Cases of Jakarta, Hong Hong

## NGOs, SMOs and Development Alternatives

- Reformist strategies within BIG development
  - More transformative strategies in local contexts
  - More reformist strategies in local context
- NGOs and the problems of resources, capacity
  - Resource mobilization, technical expertise
- Inherent fragilities of social movements
  - Building more sustainable movements, SMOs
  - Getting better political institutions

## NGOs, Hegemony, Public Opinion

- Public opinion connects civil society, state
  - Instruments of hegemonic persuasion
- Limited scope for contestation
  - Danger of co-optation
- NGOs’ counter-hegemonic role
  - Strategic, evidence-based, counter-hegemonic knowledge
  - Hard to do in authoritarian contexts

## Conclusion

- Civil society as core theme
- Civil society in Asia has defied expectations
- Social differentiation
- Significance of SMOs/NGOs in development
- **Begin work on paper outlines**