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978-0-521-68687-7 - Social Democracy in the Global Periphery: Origins, Challenges, Prospects

Richard Sandbrook, Marc Edelman, Patrick Heller, and Judith Teichman
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Social Democracy in the Global Periphery

Social Democracy in the Global Periphery focuses on social-democratic regimes in the developing world that have, to varying degrees, reconciled the needs of achieving growth through globalized markets with extensions of political, social, and economic rights. The authors show that opportunities exist to achieve significant social progress, despite a global economic order that favors core industrial countries. Their findings derive from a comparative analysis of four exemplary cases: Kerala (India), Costa Rica, Mauritius, and Chile (since 1990). Though unusual, the social and political conditions from which these developing-world social democracies arose are not unique; indeed, pragmatic and proactive social-democratic movements helped create these favorable conditions. The four exemplars have preserved or even improved their social achievements since neoliberalism emerged hegemonic in the 1980s. This demonstrates that certain social-democratic policies and practices – guided by a democratic developmental state – can enhance a national economy’s global competitiveness.

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Acknowledgments

This book, which emerged from a movable seminar, has received generous intellectual and financial support in the course of its travels. Our first two-day symposium at the University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Studies, in the winter of 2003, established a pattern: a public forum followed by a private all-day session involving the four authors. We would like to thank Professor Louis Pauly, the director of Toronto's Centre for International Studies, for his consistent financial and personal support for this project.

Richard Sandbrook, a University of Toronto political scientist who has focused his research largely on the political economy of Africa and globalization, had enticed the other three authors to join this project during the summer of 2002. His aim, as he explains it, was to enlist the cooperation of talented area specialists with an interest in distributional issues and diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Judith Teichman is a political scientist at the University of Toronto who has long studied the politics of neoliberal reform in Chile and elsewhere in Latin America. Patrick Heller, a sociologist at Brown University, has written a well-received book on Kerala's political economy of development. And Marc Edelman of Hunter College, City University of New York, has pursued extensive and broad-based anthropological studies of Costa Rica, especially concerning the role of peasants in globalization. Sandbrook's three co-authors would like to acknowledge his leadership role, not only in inspiring this project but also in so effectively pushing it toward completion.

Although this team was well prepared to write an interdisciplinary and transcontinental comparative study, we realized that the process might not be easy. Would we get along? The first movable seminar in Toronto removed that concern; the authors could, indeed, cooperate and even gracefully concede points in heated debates. Other symposia followed, as the authors conducted further field research and resolved methodological and analytical disagreements. Our second two-day symposium, in November 2003 at the Watson Center for International Studies at Brown University, allowed us to gain valuable feedback from Brown's renowned

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comparativist scholars. Professor Barbara Stallings not only generously provided the funding for this meeting through her Political Economy of Development program, but also contributed valuable ideas in our public seminar. Further symposia took place in Toronto in March 2004, Hunter College of the City University of New York in July 2004, and again at the Munk Centre, University of Toronto, in January 2005. Then the writing of the final draft proceeded in earnest.

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The authors have drawn heavily on the extensive research on Kerala, Costa Rica, Mauritius, and Chile of historians and social scientists who are nationals of the country they study. We wish not only to acknowledge this debt, but also to identify a peculiar interpretive problem to which this debt gives rise. Many of the Keralite, Costa Rican, Mauritian, and Chilean researchers upon whose work we build are, appropriately, social critics. They subject their own political leaders, institutions, and movements to withering criticism, based on an acute awareness of how the reality of their countries diverges from such ideals as equality, solidarity, and participatory democracy. We have certainly been influenced by these critics. Each of the cases we have studied, considered in its own terms, seems to have fallen short of its promise. However, viewed through a

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comparative lens, the democratic and social achievements of these four cases stand out and demand an explanation. It is this comparative perspective that leads us sometimes to depart from the despairing tone of much contemporary scholarship.

We also wish to acknowledge our resourceful research assistants, all of whom made significant contributions to the final work. Richard Sandbrook wishes to recognize the fine research work carried out in Mauritius by Hansa Munbauhal in 2003–2004, while she was a Masters student at the University of Mauritius. Judith Teichman thanks Sandra Dughman, a political science and law student at the University of Chile, who helped with data collection in Chile during 2003–2004. Marc Edelman gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the staff at the documentation centers of the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, University of Costa Rica, and the Consejo Nacional para Investigaciones Científicas y Tecnológicas. And Patrick Heller expresses his appreciation to Rajesh M. Puliya from the Centre for Development Studies in Trivandrum, who assisted with collecting data for this project.

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