

Gender Justice, Development and Rights

Maxine Molyneux and Shahra Razavi



This United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) Programme Paper has been produced with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). UNRISD also thanks the governments of Denmark, Finland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for their core funding.

Copyright © UNRISD. Short extracts from this publication may be reproduced unaltered without authorization on condition that the source is indicated. For rights of reproduction or translation, application should be made to UNRISD, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. UNRISD welcomes such applications.

The designations employed in UNRISD publications, which are in conformity with United Nations practice, and the presentation of material therein do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNRISD concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The responsibility for opinions expressed rests solely with the author(s), and publication does not constitute endorsement by UNRISD.

ISSN 1020-8186

Contents

Acronyms	ii
Acknowledgements	ii
Summary/Résumé/Resumen	iii
Summary	iii
Résumé	v
Resumen	viii
Introduction	1
Organization of the Project	4
I. Rethinking Liberal Rights and Universalism: A Theoretical Engagement	5
Capabilities, rights and neoliberalism	6
Universalism and multiculturalism	11
II. Social Sector Restructuring and Social Rights	14
III. Democratization and the Politics of Gender	20
IV. Multiculturalisms in Practice	25
Conclusions	31
Commissioned Studies	33
Bibliography	34
UNRISD Programme Papers on Democracy, Governance and Human Rights	37

Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
EZLN	Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista National Liberation Army), Mexico
FGC	female genital cutting
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MPs	members of parliament
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
NRM	National Resistance Movement, Uganda
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAS	Parti Islam SeMalaysia (Islamic Party of Malaysia)
PR	proportional representation
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party), Mexico
SERNAM	Servicio Nacional de la Mujer (ministry for women), Chile
UN	United Nations
WNC	Women's National Coalition, South Africa

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to Yusuf Bangura and three anonymous referees of Oxford University Press for their comments on an earlier draft.

Summary/Résumé/Resumen

Summary

In January 2000 UNRISD initiated a research project, Gender Justice, Development and Rights, to examine the ways in which liberal rights, and ideas of democracy and justice, have been absorbed into the agendas of women's movements and states in different regions. Twelve theoretical and empirical studies were carried out under the project.¹ They look at three discrete but interrelated aspects of liberal rights agendas: (i) social sector restructuring and social rights in the era of neoliberal economic policy making; (ii) democratization and the politics of gender; and (iii) universalism and multiculturalism in practice.²

The 1990s, a landmark in the international human rights movement, saw positive changes in women's rights and in human rights more broadly. The collapse of authoritarian regimes in many parts of the world gave issues of rights and democracy a major impulse. The decade saw growth in the size and influence of an international women's movement, linked through regional and international networks and able to collaborate on issues of policy and agenda setting. At the same time, the transitions from authoritarian rule in many regions presented women's movements with an opportunity to press for political and legal reform at the national level.

In much of the world, however, these advances in political and legal rights were not matched by significant progress in achieving greater social justice. Rising income inequality and widespread poverty in many countries have been accompanied by record levels of crime and violence. States are abdicating numerous responsibilities in the domains of economic and social policy, just at the moment when they are most needed to play a co-ordinating function between public and private provision. Where not starkly inadequate, welfare delivery under the new schemes has been patchy.

The mixed record of the 1990s lies at the heart of the international policy agenda—an agenda founded on two central elements: the consolidation of a market-led development model, and a greater emphasis on democracy and rights. The extent to which these two elements can be reconciled, or conflict, has been the subject of much scholarly and political debate.

The collection of theoretical and empirical studies on which this paper is based reflects on this ambivalent record, and on the significance accorded in international policy since the end of the Cold War to issues of rights and democracy. The studies engage with some of the most pressing and contested of contemporary issues—neoliberal policies, democracy and multiculturalism—and in so doing invite debate on the nature of liberalism itself in an era that has seen its global

¹ The studies have been brought together in Molyneux and Razavi (2002). This paper provides an overview of the issues and findings that emerge from the project, and is an abbreviated version of the editors' introduction. All contributions to the volume are listed at the end of this paper.

² A project workshop was held in New York in June 2000, in conjunction with the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century. The report of the workshop was published as an issue of UNRISD Conference News: *Gender Justice, Development and Rights: Substantiating Rights in a Disabling Environment*, Report of the UNRISD Workshop, New York, 3 June 2000 (written by Maxine Molyneux and Shahra Razavi).

ascendancy. These issues are addressed from two perspectives that cast contemporary liberalism in a distinctive light. First, the studies apply a “gender lens” to the analysis of political and policy processes, in order to illustrate the ways in which liberal rights, and ideas of democracy and justice, have been absorbed into the political agendas of women’s movements and states. Second, they contribute a cross-cultural dimension to the analysis of modern forms of rule by examining the ways in which liberalism—the dominant value system in the modern world—both exists in, and is resisted in, diverse cultural settings.

Social sector restructuring and social rights

If states have a duty to create the material and institutional prerequisites that can best secure the enjoyment of human rights, then social provision must be recognized as a key arena of state action. Yet the nature and extent of public sector responsibility for social provision is highly variable even in the welfare states, let alone in developing and post-transition countries. While a fuller picture of welfare reform in diverse regions would require far more comprehensive comparative empirical research than is currently available, the case studies on Chile, India and Poland raise some serious concerns. In these countries, economic and social policy reforms are reconfiguring women’s economic and social rights in distinct ways. In some contexts, policy reforms threaten to undermine the social gains that women have already made—although there is often resistance to such reform measures. Elsewhere, they deny even the prospect of the progressive realization of non-discriminatory allocation of decent jobs and public services, and broad-based social security systems.

While there are some positive aspects to the new welfare regimes, such as the involvement of civil society in welfare delivery, poverty relief often depends upon a predominantly female unpaid or poorly paid and unregulated workforce. Furthermore, there are questions as to the adequacy of the coverage and the quality of service delivered. Some fear that it may effectively split the “universal” welfare system into a patchwork of services that would continue to penalize the socially disadvantaged and do little to correct the inequalities that are endemic within the system.

Democratization and the politics of gender

The central instrument for the protection of rights has been, and must remain, the state. As women’s movements turned their attention in the 1990s to rights issues, they were drawn into engagement with the state as rights activists and as participants in government. Yet as the case studies of Iran, Peru, Uganda and South Africa show, this incorporation was partial and sometimes resulted in the co-option of women’s movements by authoritarian regimes. Under what circumstances, then, can women’s access to political office and the promotion of policies for gender equity be institutionalized? Whether states advance or curtail women’s rights cannot be explained in terms of any single variable, although democratic institutions and procedures generally allow greater voice and presence to social forces pressing for reform. Yet, while many countries now identify themselves as democracies, and have established institutions of representative government, the degree to which democracy has been consolidated and institutionalized is highly variable.

In the diverse contexts of the commissioned studies, women have in recent years become a visible political force both as individuals and as a social group, even under conditions that deny them full—or indeed, at times, any—political voice and representation. Where the latter occurs, however, there is a danger that women’s movements may be co-opted by states and thereby lose their ability to represent their constituency and to advance programmes of radical reform.

Multiculturalisms in practice

Three case studies commissioned by the project—Malaysia, Mexico and Uganda—invite us to consider the pertinence for developing countries of debates that, to a considerable degree, have been conducted in the different conditions of liberal democracies. In the latter the issue has been how to accommodate ethnic minorities’ claims for recognition within the terms of liberal principles of equal opportunity, tolerance and non-discrimination. Where these principles are enshrined in law, it is reasonable to expect policies that are consistent with them; and if this does not occur, then the processes of democratic demand-making can serve to create or correct them. However, in ethnically segmented societies ruled by authoritarian elites, such legal and political conditions do not normally prevail: here multicultural policies can serve to hinder equality claims rather than to advance them.

Feminism and multiculturalism may converge in their critique of “difference-blind liberalism”, but the extent to which their advocates can accommodate their respective claims varies. It is to some degree contingent on their political force and interpretative powers. In recent years, both feminism and multiculturalism have brought their often-divergent interests to bear on international human rights law and other areas of policy. The points of convergence between these two positions suggest some basis for a productive dialogue. In practice, however, the potential for dialogue depends on political factors: the ample scope allowed in the interpretation and implementation of these various laws can indeed facilitate a productive dialogue in the formulation of policies, but it can also lead to seemingly irreconcilable conflict over core principles.

Maxine Molyneux is Professor of Sociology at the Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London. Shahra Razavi is Research Co-ordinator at UNRISD.

Résumé

En janvier 2000 l’UNRISD a lancé un projet de recherche, Justice, développement et droits pour les femmes, afin d’examiner la façon dont les mouvements féminins et les Etats ont, dans diverses régions, intégré les droits libéraux et les idées de démocratie et de justice dans leurs programmes. Douze études théoriques et empiriques ont été menées à bien dans le cadre du projet.³ Elles ont trait à trois aspects discrets mais connexes du libéralisme face aux droits: (i) la

³ Ces études ont été rassemblées dans l’ouvrage décrit ici par Maxine Molyneux et Shahra Razavi (2002). Le présent document, qui est une version abrégée de leur introduction, donne une vue d’ensemble des enjeux et des conclusions du projet. Toutes les contributions réunies dans le volume sont énumérées à la fin du document.

restructuration du secteur social et les droits sociaux à l'ère du néolibéralisme économique; (ii) la démocratisation et la place du genre en politique; et (iii) l'universalisme et le multiculturalisme en pratique.⁴

Les années 1990 font date dans le mouvement international des droits de la personne par une évolution positive des droits des femmes, et des droits de la personne en général. L'effondrement des régimes autoritaires dans de nombreuses régions du monde a donné un essor considérable aux questions de droits et de démocratie. Le mouvement féminin international, dont la cohésion tient à des réseaux régionaux et internationaux capables de collaborer sur des questions de politique générale et sur les objectifs à promouvoir, s'est développé et exerce désormais plus d'influence. En même temps, avec la chute des régimes autoritaires dans de nombreuses régions, les mouvements féminins ont pu faire campagne pour des réformes politiques et législatives au niveau national.

Si les droits politiques et la protection juridique ont progressé, il n'en a pas été de même de la justice sociale dans une grande partie du monde. Dans de nombreux pays, les inégalités de revenus, qui se sont creusées, et les taux élevés de pauvreté se sont accompagnés de niveaux records de criminalité et de violence. Les Etats se démettent de nombreuses responsabilités en politique économique et sociale, au moment même où l'on aurait le plus besoin qu'ils assument une fonction de coordination entre les régimes publics et privés. Là où elle n'a pas été franchement insuffisante, l'aide sociale distribuée par les nouveaux programmes a été inégale.

Les résultats contradictoires des années 1990 sont au cœur de l'ordre du jour politique international—un ordre du jour fondé sur deux éléments centraux: la consolidation d'un modèle de développement dans lequel le marché est roi et une attention plus soutenue portée à la démocratie et aux droits. Ces deux éléments sont-ils compatibles ou antagonistes, et dans quelle mesure? Ces questions ont fait l'objet de nombreux débats intellectuels et politiques.

Les études théoriques et empiriques sur lesquelles se fonde ce document sont une réflexion sur cette ambivalence et sur l'importance accordée aux questions de droits et de démocratie en politique internationale depuis la fin de la guerre froide. Elles explorent quelques-unes des questions les plus pressantes et controversées de notre époque—les politiques néolibérales, la

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_21434

