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Dr Mohamed Salih

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Introduction

Despite the political upheavals, conflicts, war and genocide generated by unequal and unjust minority-majority relations, the term minority people entered social science terminology for the first time in 1932¹. According to Davis (1979: 2), minority studies were initially largely confined to the study of race/ethnic relations, culture, and religion, and it was only during the late 1970s that minority-dominant majority relations began to gain analytical and political significance. Three factors contributed to the increased interest in minority studies during this period: 1) the anti-colonial movement and the recognition of what Carpenter (1990) calls the 'South as a Conscious Minority'; 2) the maturation of the civil rights movement; 3) the genocide committed against the Jewish and Gypsy minorities in Europe between the First and the Second World Wars. In the international arena, it took the United Nations almost 44 years after the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human rights to adopt the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities* (December 18, 1992). Ironically it was the Representative of Yugoslavia who introduced the Draft Resolution (UN Doc. E/CN.4/1992/L.16) to the UN Commission on Human Rights for approval.

To be sure, the concern of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities with the equal enjoyment of all rights and non-discrimination in the application of these rights was directly or indirectly expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These rights also appear in a dozen or so conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966) and the Covenant on Civil Political and Cultural Rights (Article 27), and a multitude of other human rights instruments enacted within the orbit of the United Nations system.² This has culminated in a genuine international effort to stamp out the inhumane treatment of minority populations.

Such is the condition of minority groups that the sub-commission discussing article 27 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights has failed to reach a consensus on how a minority group should be defined.³ Many nations have perceived a binding definition either as an infringement of their sovereignty or a potential instrument to be used by minority groups to challenge their authority. The following definition was considered unacceptable by a num-

ber of representatives: 'a group of citizens of a state, considered a numerical minority and in a non-dominant position in that state, endowed with ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from those of the majority of the population, having a sense of solidarity with one another, motivated, if only implicitly, by collective will to survive and whose aim is to achieve equality with the majority in fact or law'. Since this definition was not approved by all country representatives in the Human Rights Commission, the Declaration remained without a binding definition, leaving the door open for states to add attributes or subtract those deemed politically controversial.⁴

Chaliand (1987:5-7) describes two historical causes for the emergence of minorities: first, groups long settled in a given territory which are invaded by, and later intermingle with, populations from surrounding territories. Second, minority populations introduced by force into new areas, such as Africans in the Americas or Indian labourers dislocated from their countries during British colonial rule (for example, the migration of Indian labourers to Britain, South Africa, East Africa and Fiji). ~

I add two more categories to the above: minorities in ethnically divided states with a large and often dominant ethnic group or groups. This is a general characteristic of almost all developing countries. Second, social minorities, or what Townsend (1973) referred to as individuals or families who have some characteristic in common which marks them off from 'ordinary' people. These characteristics prevent them from having access to, or being accorded, certain rights which are available to others, and make them less likely to receive a certain quantity and quality of resources. This category includes people with social handicaps, a different sexual orientation, children, the aged, etc. Townsend's definition therefore implies that there is no society in the world without a minority.

Sadly, since the adoption of (though not as a consequence of) the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities in 1992, the world has suffered several setbacks in minority-dominant majority relations: the Rwanda genocide, the mayhem in Bosnia and Kosovo, the wanton destruction in Chechnya, the waste of thousands of lives in Liberia, Sierra Leone and East Timor. The industrial world has also witnessed the emergence of neo-Nazi groups in the countries, such as Germany, that bred Nazism. The neo-Nazi assault on asylum seekers, immigrants and

minority groups in Europe has cost scores of lives in the first nine months of the new millennium.

A glimpse at the state of the world shows us immediately that, with 184 large and small states, 600 living languages and 5,000 ethnic groups (Kymlika 1995: 4), it is hardly a world of majorities. There are currently 52 unrepresented minority nations and peoples belonging to oppressed minorities which are aspiring to create autonomous nation-states separate from those they are coerced to identify with. In all of these cases, the majority controls the state and denies the minority the right to self-determination.

The very term minority – particularly disadvantaged minority – invites concern for physical safety, psychological well-being and material needs. This concern arises from the fact that these minorities exist among groups that possess the power to subject them to unequal treatment (Davis 1979: xiii). Equally, a minority – whether, cultural, religious or linguistic – is a social entity that manifests itself in a collective subjectivity (Fenet 1989:17).

A minority is not a passive entity. The political history of a large number of post-independent states is overwhelmed by minority struggles for self-determination, including territorial claims against occupation, or is full of stories of minority struggles for civil-rights, political representation and recognition in states constituted of a dominant majority.

Minority problems, as this paper will illustrate, are not the monopoly of, or an unholy characteristic of, industrial development or the developing world. They are a worldwide phenomenon which manifests itself differently in different historical contexts and socioeconomic and political environments. However, the similarity of the problems encountered by minorities in industrially advanced democracies and the developing world, whether social, cultural, religious or ethnic, alerts us to the importance of breaking down the boundaries of conventional definition to seek a comprehensive understanding of these problems.

This paper is not about romanticizing minorities or treating them as an undifferentiated social entity. Minorities are diverse, not only socially and economically, but also politically and in their capacity to access power and resources. Despite this great depth and breadth, historically the world of

minorities is a world of unequal treatment, injustice, marginality and struggle for survival and all those subjected to such treatment are a minority even where they may belong to the numerical majority.⁵ Minorities apply a wide variety of coping strategies, modes of struggle and collective action in dealing with oppression and improving their survival possibilities. The Tutsi in Burundi, the white minority in South Africa before the end of the apartheid regime, the Alawite in Syria, the Sunni Arabs in Iraq and the Jews in Israel are just a few examples of dominant minorities.⁶ Minority also does not include those who conceive of themselves as a 'superior minority', such as the minority populations of German origin in Latin America (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala and Peru) (Chaliand 1987: 6). The case of dominant minorities makes us realize that minorities are not the passive recipients of majority oppression, nor immune from oppressing others. To that extent, they are social entities, a construction of a social reality and their position in the polity of the nation-state. Nevertheless, on the whole, history has so far shown that there are more oppressed than oppressive minorities in the world.

This paper attempts to broaden the interest in minority studies by questioning the viability of convention politics of development to articulate minority interests. It argues that an alternative politics of development would betray its mission if it treated minority questions as a mere by-product of failed modernization, structural dependence, unequal exchange or dismal growth rate. In essence, the paper delineates minority issues within the current politics of development paradigm informed by modernization revisionism.

Hence this paper articulates the relationship between three interrelated trajectories: minority and the nation-state, minority and democracy, and minority and authoritarian development. It interrogates the political making of minority in a nation-state legitimized by majority nation or nations, hence creating a potential majoritarian tyranny. Embedded in the discourse of nation-state and liberal democracy, majoritarian tyranny is not a by-product of the democratic nation-state, it is part of it.

As will be illustrated in the course of this paper, although the nation-state is presumed dead, a virtual nation-state has persisted, aided by a virtual majority, a reference point in the struggle for legitimacy to sustain the majority's holding of power. In the circumstances, social constructs such as state and democracy have become the dominant institutions entrusted with legitimiz-

ing the tyranny of the majority. Because the state commands protective and restrictive powers, its failure to intervene in protecting the minority in the face of majority oppression identifies the state with that oppression. In such circumstances, the only safeguard against state totalitarianism lies less with the democratic nature of the state and more with the interplay of diverse interests and expectations the state is obliged to serve. Hence while political pluralism may deter state oppression, it does little to prevent the abuse of the minority by renegade interests that are, according to their adherence, served by authoritarian rather than democratic means.

Minorities and the nation-state

State formation, a comparatively recent historical phenomena dating back to the 16th and 19th centuries, marked the shift from the conception that the state should coincide with a proper boundary to that of a state with a given people who constituted a nation. The people who comprise the nation, according to Beetham (1999: 209) 'became the sole source from which the state could derive its legitimacy; and the nation became the sole legitimate object of people's political allegiance'. The nation-state became a universally accepted phenomenon only after the Second World War, augmented by the end of colonialism and the emergence of independent states in the ex-colonies. The so-called new states are in fact a colonial construction with a much more recent experience with modern conceptions of nation formation. As colonial constructions comprising a multitude of nations, post-colonial states have been in continuous search for a dominant nation that satisfies the requirements of a semblance of the European nation-state. In fact in most developing countries, the dominant nations assume the role of providing the symbols of nationhood, including a dominant language, a dominant culture, even a dominant religion.

The idea of the nation-state implies that nations consist of people who consider themselves one, with a historical identity, geographical contiguity and shared cultural characteristics. Nations 'require a state to protect their cultural identity, economic well-being and distinctive way of life' (Beetham 1999: 217). This narrow definition of nation-state has been shaken but not

completely dismantled as many commentators would have hoped.⁷

However, in the real world, nation-state theory, as depicted above, has been confronted by several challenges. There is hardly a state in today's world that conflates nation and state, or without a sizeable minority. This is more so in the developing world, where each state is the home of scores of ethnic groups, nations, peoples and nationalities. It is here that the search for a nation to ensure majority support and state legitimacy becomes more difficult and the concept of nation-state itself becomes elusive.

The challenge for the nation-state lies in its ability to develop institutions that are capable not only of being even-handed but also of awakening the invisible voice. More important for such institutions is to make that voice heard and ensure that its legitimate grievances are acted upon. Civil wars and long struggles for self-determination are often fuelled by a nation-state controlled by an arrogant majority that does not listen to minority grievances. Taylor (1998: 204) warns of the real danger of the lack of communication in minority-dominant majority relations, saying that where minority groups are not heard, a minority may feel that their way of seeing things is different from the majority. The minority may also feel that it is generally not understood or recognized by the majority. Consequently, the majority may also not be ready to alter the terms of the debate to accommodate its differences with the minority, and therefore that the minority is being systematically unheard. If the minority felt that its voice couldn't really penetrate the public debate or part of the state as a deliberative unit. In my view, minority-dominant majority conflicts often occur when the minority – for real or imaginary reasons – feels that the majority uses its privileged position to deny it a voice in the political arena as part of the deliberative unit called the state.

The centrality of the state in society, its pervasive nature, capacity to influence events, protect, oppress, control and distribute resources make it a focus of intense competition between diverse social forces. Both minority and majority seek to find expression in the state institutions and the private and public spheres it creates. Minority and majority also aspire to control the state, the ultimate authority for law, the use of power and coercive sanctions backed by the monopoly of force. The state's capacity to extract revenue, recruit personnel and provide sources of income and privilege also attracts intense competition and conflict.

The coexistence of nations and/or cultural communities (identifiable by ethnicity, religion or language) within one state constitutes a challenge to the nation-state's capacity to be even-handed. Conflicts occur when the state is incapable of living up to its responsibility as an arbiter of different minority-dominant majority claims. Historically, intense competition develops into violent conflicts in which majority or minority resorts to force. Such situations may include instances when the minority demands a measure of political autonomy, or outright separation, or incorporation in an already existing state. Beetham (1984: 218) explains how minority-dominant majority tensions can exacerbate and develop into major conflicts, leading to genocide, discrimination, oppression, dislocation and displacement. I will elaborate each of these further with a few examples.

Genocide

Examples of genocide are the cases of the European Jews and the more recent events in Rwanda. In the first case, it is estimated that in 1939 about 10 million of the estimated 16 million Jews in the world lived in Europe. By 1945 the holocaust had claimed the lives of almost six million European Jews, with an estimated 4.6 million perishing in Poland and other areas seized by the Soviet Union and occupied by Germany. The suffering of the Jewish minority in Europe is beyond imagination. However, equally alarming is the treatment of the Palestinians by the state of Israel and the re-emergence of neo-Nazism. With the memories of the holocaust still very much alive, these developments are bewildering and disheartening and show that the lessons of history have hardly been understood.

A more recent case of genocide took place in Rwanda. The genocide committed by the Hutu majority against the Tutsi minority, which claimed more than 800,000 lives and displaced another million people, shocked the world. But there was another tragedy in Rwanda about which the world has kept silent – the genocide of the Batwa, the minority of the minority. The Batwa of Rwanda comprise some 10,000 to 20,000 people, and inhabit an area of about 26,338 km² on the Rwandan side of Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Batwa constitute 0.4% of Rwanda's 7.3 million inhabitants, a small minority compared to the Hutu (85%) and the Tutsi (14%). In common with the Hutu and the Tutsi, all Batwa speak

Kinyarwanda, the main language of the populations of Burundi and Rwanda. The Batwa have historically been an oppressed minority in the competition between the Hutu and the Tutsi to control the state. Sebalinda (1993: 164), the Deputy Legal Representative of the Association for the Global Development of the Batwa of Rwanda (ADBR), summed up the sentiments of an excluded minority and the manner in which it has been treated by the Tutsi-Hutu dominated state apparatus thus: 'From time immemorial, the Batwa were considered by their neighbours as mentally backward, as buffoons, as executioners, as imbeciles, as villains, indeed as next to wild beasts and fit to be marginalized. The Hutu and the Tutsi were clearly their masters during the Monarcho-colonial period as well as after independence. ... During the First Republic that lasted twelve years, nothing was done for the welfare of the Batwa. They were always excluded from the country's wealth. Even though a bit was done to improve their situation during the Second Republic, such as allowing access to secondary school education and even to university for a small number of Batwa, it was too little to be significant. Thus no Mutwa (or Batwa) is to be found among ministers, director-generals, province governance, district chiefs, local councillors, heads of public institutions or private enterprises', including those in their area and where qualified Batwa are in great numbers.

Discrimination and oppression

Slavery and apartheid are the most extreme forms of minority oppression. Here I would like to highlight the case of slavery in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Mauritania's population (estimated at 2,581,738 in July 1999) is divided into mixed Maur/black (Berber) 40%, Maur (Arab) 30% and black 30%. About 15% of the black population are slaves owned by whites or Arabs. The practice of slavery in Mauritania is not new. Since the 12th century descendants of Arab and Berber from the north, known as *beydane*, began the enslavement of the black Africans, mainly the Tukulor, the Fulani, and the Wolof. French colonialists outlawed slavery in 1905, but to no effect. Slavery was outlawed again at independence in 1960, and for the third time when Mauritania joined the United Nations in 1961. The prohibition of slavery was written into law in Ordinance no. 81.234 of 9 November 1981. Article 1 (State Integrity, Equal Protection) of the 12 July 1991 Constitution goes further, stating that: 1) Mauritania is an indivisible, democratic, and social Islamic Republic; 2) the Republic guarantees equality before the law

to all of its citizens without distinction as to origin, race, sex, or social condition; 3) the law shall punish all particularistic propaganda of racial or ethnic character.

The continuation of slavery in Mauritania could be attributed to the state's identification and expression of the majority's interest in cheap labour and the suppression of the aspirations of its black populations. Historically, on the eve of independence in 1960, Mauritania had to choose where the country belongs: in Africa, where it is located, or in the Arab world. The Arab and Berber populations wanted the country to be part of Morocco, which mobilized the Arab world to assist it in annexing the north. The African Mauritaniens formed two political parties which demanded that the country should either be independent or federated with Senegal (Dialo 1993). The tension between those who claim that Mauritania is an Arab nation and those who claim that it is an African country with diverse nationalities has continued unabated until the present day. However, behind the African-Arab divide there is slavery, the shame of humanity.

I am ashamed to mention that there are reports of a resurgence of slavery in the southern parts of my country of birth, the Sudan, as a result of problems no different from those haunting political minorities elsewhere in the world. No matter how some apologists may claim that what is taking place in the Sudan is a traditional form of labour recruitment, or the taking of prisoners of war or captives of choice, the fact of the matter remains that an extreme injustice has been committed against the conscious minority of Southern Sudan.

The Muslim Rohingya are one of 21 ethnic groups in Burma of which the Tibeto-Burman, the Tai, the Karen, and the Mon constitute the majority. The Rohingya originated from the Middle East, living as traders in the coastal areas. Some of them amassed wealth, which became the envy of the ruling Tibeto-Burman majority. Again, the idea of the nation-state is behind the oppression and subsequent struggle for self-determination of the Rohingya. The origins of their struggle lie in the struggle for independence which united the Burmese against the British rule. However, after gaining independence, the Burmese freedom fighters led by Aung San pressed for the development of a Burmese nation-state predicated on the Burman majority identity. After the 1962 military coup which brought General Ne Win to power

(1962-1988), ethnic-minority groups were further marginalized and felt that they were being treated as second-class citizens. In relation to the Burman majority and are socially, politically and culturally discriminated against. Since then, ethnic minority groups have been at the forefront of the armed struggle against the military dictatorship. The Rohingya have also suffered grave human rights abuses committed by the state organs. It is true that all the people of Burma have suffered under the military rule, but the minorities have suffered most from the reconstruction of a nation-state that does not satisfy the minimum requirements of nationhood.

Dislocation and displacement

External global influences result in dislocation and disparity, leading to conflict intensification and a serious threat to social peace. In the case of Indonesia, many observers agree that tensions between the majority Indonesians and the minority Chinese, who control most of the nation's wealth, existed long before the crash of the Asian markets in 1994. However, there is also a commonly held view that the crash contributed to the aggravation of minority-dominant majority relations.⁸ From the 1965 attacks on the Chinese minority to the Medan labour riot in May 1994, many Indonesian Chinese have been physically assaulted or even killed in arson attacks, and their businesses torched or looted. The May 1998 riots are reported to have claimed the lives of 1300 ethnic Chinese.

Taking advantage of the efforts to democratize the Indonesian state, ethnic Chinese began to seek ways to reinvent their culture, language and religion. I am very sceptical whether the current democratization process will provide sufficient guarantees to safeguard the ethnic Chinese, who represent only 3-3.5% of Indonesia's 220 million people, and how much of their historical identity will be tolerated and hence accommodated by the Indonesian state and majority populations.

The broader implications of these case studies challenge the assumption that the state is always even-handed in using its monopoly of power to stifle the rights of its citizens – majority or minority. In reality the state does in certain historical circumstances keep silent, refrain from protecting its minority, or deliberately organize it to commit atrocities against its minorities. The latter is very well represented by the cases of the European Jews, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and the like. In all these cases the state abused its dual

function of restriction and protection by neither restricting those poised to attack the minority, nor protecting the minority by exercising its right to compel compliance through the use or threat of force. The majority that gives legitimacy to the state also lays claim to restricting the legitimate authority to use power and coercion to justify obedience. Although the state is legally mandated to ensure compliance with the 'rules of the house', this principle is unevenly used – as the case studies have shown.

Minority conflict within real or imagined nation-states stems precisely from the tension between the conception of the nation-state and the state of a national majority from which it derives the claim to power. The state becomes an embodiment of authority, rights, liberty and freedom – all of which are socially constructed by the majority. While minority position in the state is dependent on how broad the majority defines these value-laden concepts, the practical implications of their application in real life situations would have serious implications for the majority.

The minority-dominant majority case studies reveal claims of the eclipse of the nation-state to have no practical or theoretical foundation, as there are no states without peoples whether they are defined by ethnicity, language, culture or any other attributes. This is even more so in the developing world where there is no evidence to support the myth of the decline of the nation-state. In the developing world we are in fact confronted with an increasing number of nations in search of states out of the multitude of nations that compete to maintain, reinforce or transform the state of the nations into a nation-state. The majority of those who are in search of a state are minority groups that have not been able to identify with artificially constructed nation-states in which they have found little or no opportunity to express their historical identities and are unrepresented, excluded, even oppressed and discriminated against.

Although some have argued that this is the result of the development of transnational, mainly regional identities, such as the European Union, it is the pervasive role of globalization, international migration and other factors that have delimited the imposing presence of the nation-state in the industrially advanced countries. This optimistic view could be confronted with the presence of strong national or sub-regional identities within some of the EU states (Britain, Spain, France, Italy, Germany and Belgium, to give only a



few examples). The mistake often made is the confusion of the conventional functions of the state with what constitutes the state. If the state is constituted of people and derives its legitimacy and authority from those who constitute it, the main change that has occurred during the late 20th century is that the state constituents have become more diverse, through migration – forced or spontaneous. This diversity is a source of enrichment as well as cause of conflict between values and belief mixed more intensely than ever before. While the conventional nation-state has lost its quasi-national identity, it has been replaced by a virtual nation-state with a distinctive historical identity vis-à-vis the other minority historical identities that co-exist with it. Minority-dominant majority relations, questions of multiculturalism and its critics stem from the very co-existence of a dominant state that strives to discharge its functions to a confident nation-state that envisages no threat from its majority. In contrast to the confidence of the virtual nation-state, there is the vulnerability of ordinary citizens of the original state who, are not confident, accommodating or tolerant.

The vulnerability of the states that are in search of nations, and the confident virtual nation-states that have become more sensitive to minority issues have not managed to develop institutions capable of dealing with these issues. The legacy of the nation-state in developing countries still haunts the politics of representation, order and development and its distinctive role in minority-dominant majority relations. While the nation-state in the west found in democracy the magic of representation, the uncritical transfer of this magic to developing countries has in some instances just created more problems.

Minorities and democracy

Governing minority-dominant majority relations and their representation in the modern nation-state has produced some of the most creative, as well as the most absurd, political arrangements in human history.⁹ They range from federalism and decentralization to apartheid, Fascism and Nazism. However, this is not the subject of this paper. This section is concerned mainly with minorities and democracy in an attempt to show how, although minorities may fare better in a democratic regime, minority position depends more on

the nature of the dominant nation that constitutes the nation-state than on democracy. In order to articulate this position, I introduce two notions of majoritarianism. The first is the majoritarian tyranny thesis and its critique. The second is derived from the specificity of the developing world context, where the absence of nation-states redefines democratic majority in terms of majority ethnic, religious, cultural or linguistic group. Although majority has different connotations in mature and transition democracies, it has two common features in both types of democracy: 1) majority rule in both cases is in reality a minority rule and 2) the majority is a social construct informed by the dominant power structure.

Regular and periodic elections in which political parties and organizations freely compete for power are considered a prudent institutional mechanism for ensuring representation and participation in the political process leading to the formation of a government. As an institutional framework for practising politics and competing for controlling state power, political parties endow regimes with internal and, nowadays, external legitimacy.

In parliamentary democracies, the chief executive is elected by and responsible to, the legislature (Lijphart 1984). The government must at various junctures acquire legislative majorities in order to perform its constitutional functions. In general there are two critical tests of government majorities: confidence motions and final votes on bills (Strom 1990). Majority rule is at the heart of the notion of a democratic nation-state in the western tradition, since the government is voted in by a majority of the population according to individual preference.

The universal preference for majoritarian democracy, despite its tyrannical potential, can be justified according to Dahl (1989) on four grounds: 1) it maximizes self-determination, or the insurance that the greatest possible number of people live under a government they have participated in choosing; 2) it is the necessary result of the reasonable requirement that decisions in society are agreed by the majority; 3) it is more likely to produce correct decisions, i.e. a majority is one way to test whether an assertion is true 4) It maximizes utility, in other words, a larger number of citizens gain at least as much benefit (or utility, or satisfaction, etc) than under minority rule. However, Dahl is mindful of the fact that power is exerted from multiple centres, which ensures a balance of power between contending actors.

Although this is true for those who command the majority, its relevance to minority groups with no influence on the polity of the dominant 'nation' is questionable.

All four attributes are positivist structurally determined by the aggregation of individual preferences, which are considered more tangible and verifiable. Majoritarianism is therefore considered superior to other forms of representation because 1) it gives equal consideration of interests by availing adequate and equal opportunities for expressing societal or national preferences (Dworkin 1983, Miller 1973); 2) in the liberal tradition it ensures the presumption of personal autonomy through voting at the decisive stage (Rawls 1993; Dahl 1989); 3) in the enlightened tradition it vindicates the democratic process and its outcomes (Gray 1986); 4) It contributes to a widely accepted and supported national policy framework and ensures majority control and influence of state-wide policy decisions (Barry 1989); 5) ideally, state legitimacy holds governance accountable to citizens (Held 1996).

There are two contradictory notions in how the dominant discourse of liberty and freedom has been associated with the question of power. Liberty and freedom are positive expressions of rights that, in majoritarian democratic societies, are restricted by law and regulated by the state. Liberals generally consider restrictive and regulatory state institutions and legal instruments in the field of individual property as an invasion of private property rights. In this scheme of thought, liberals are so blinded by protecting property rights that they contrive to undercut both state and democracy.

Although the attributes of majoritarian rule are discernible, the question often asked is whether the minority is rational in discharging its responsibility to the majority. To what extent can democracy itself be used as an instrument perpetuating majority dominance over the minority to the extent of oppressing its legitimate claims? Is the expectation then that the minority should be submissive in the face of a demographic majority capable of translating human numbers into instruments legitimizing majoritarian tyranny under a democratic rule?

State neutrality, supported by a modicum of legal instruments, is conceived as a way of restraining the majority from abusing the rights of the minority. The question is how can the state (democratic or authoritarian) be neutral in value-laden issues such as power, freedom, liberty and rights, particularly in

situations where it is constituted alongside the value preferences of the majority? Plant (1991:77) asks, 'how natural is it that liberalism, committed to moral neutrality, should turn its attention away from the goals of human fulfilment just because these are contestable'. By implication, state neutrality itself is a political ideology committed to serving the interests of those who either have enough so that they do not need the state or want the state to become a mere 'gatekeeper' of their interests, while they exercise dominance. State neutrality not only unravels the tension between liberalism and democracy, as has commonly been stated in the literature (Gray 1986:74), but questions whether majoritarian democracy makes the minority subservient to the majority through a crude aggregation of individual preferences.¹⁰

If the critique of majoritarianism is relevant to western societies, where it originated, the relevance of this critique to societies where political community matters is even more profound.¹¹ The social environment, within which political parties have been conceived, established, managed and operated in any society influences their relationship to power and the state. In most of the developing world, with a few exceptions, ethnicity, religion, culture and language socially inform the political parties, and not modern ideological strands. Developing country political parties are elite-dominated yet they do not reflect the claims to modernity espoused by the elite. Political mobilization continues along ethnic, religious or linguistic lines, thus denying the spectre of political modernization.

The concept of state neutrality becomes obsolete in societies where the elite of the largest religious, ethnic or linguistic group also forms the majority, as defined by the performance of political parties in elections. A pervasive and limited elite (limited by economic opportunities as well as sufficiently long-experience with democracy) in democratic societies contributes to the concentration rather than the separation of power. This is mainly because, as legal institutions competing for access to power, political parties' main concern is to monopolize power in all its manifestations (legislative, executive and judiciary). In states that consist of several nations, the neutrality of the state, which promises an unrealistically heightened expectation of justice, is compromised by this tangle of nation and state. As an imported notion, liberal democracy denies the realities of most of the developing world, in which collectivity rather than individuality counts. If political community is lost to the

western world, there is no reason to believe that communal values and collectivity are lost to the rest of the world (Plant 1991). Here lies the poverty of individualistic egoism and its conjuncture with majority rule.

Obviously, the democratic nation-state ensures the dominance of the dominant nation or nations that constitute the majority. Furthermore, it denies minority possibilities to secure political representation in two ways: 1) minority strength lies not in aggregated individual preferences, but in the ability to use the collective will of its membership to survive, sometimes against an oppressive majority; 2) by assigning individual preferences a legal entity and a higher value in the democratic process, majoritarian democracies attack the very basis of minority strength by laying the political ground rules that stifle their collective strength.

In fact, liberalism and democracy are at odds, particularly as the former makes a deliberate separation between economic and social freedoms on the one hand and political freedom on the other. Whether freedom is the absence of impediments to motion, the absence of deliberate interference by other people, or the personal possession of physical objects (Miller 1991), we are made to believe that there are positive (protective) and negative (restriction) freedoms. The first is the deliberate relegation of the individual's social environment to a secondary position. Liberals adhere to this notion because by negating that the individual's freedom depends on material resources the issue of economic redistribution is presented as unimportant in attaining freedom. In other words, by separating economic freedom from social and political freedom, liberals hope to keep the economic domain of freedom untouched by the state.

The theoretical polemic on majoritarian tyranny aside, the empirical evidence about how democratic governments command a small proportion of votes is equally revealing. Voter turnout across the globe rose steadily between 1945 and 1990 – increasing from 61% in the 1940s to 68% in the 1980s. However, the post-1990 average has dropped back to 64%. Figures from 1945 to 1997 reveal that Western Europe has maintained the highest turnout (77%), followed by South, North and Central America (68%), with lowest turnout in Africa (53%). Voter turnout in the Middle East and Asia hit high points in the 1980s (62%) but slipped back in the 1990s (54%). Globally, turnout during 1990 and 1997 dropped sharply to 62%, the lowest

in post-war history (IDEA 1997).¹²

Although the statistics for voter turnout have been constant on average, the fact remains that no government in the democratic world has been able to win the majority of votes. To that extent a parliamentary majority is not necessarily backed by the majority of the voters, due to differences in voter turnout. Judging by the rates of turnout I have just shown, any political party that could win 35 to 45% of the votes of the 70% who actually voted could attain a commendable parliamentary majority.

In terms of voting age population (VAP), voter turnout is actually disappointing. For instance, during the 1990s VAP turnout for the USA was 44.9%, for India 59.2% and for the Netherlands 75.2%. The lowest VAP turnout was in Sub-Saharan Africa: Egypt 27.7%, Senegal 26.7%, Burkina Faso 26.7 % and Mali, the lowest of the lowest in terms of VAP turnout, was 21.9%.

It is obvious that parliamentary majority says less about the participation of the majority of the population eligible to vote and more about the majority that has actually voted.¹³ To this extent, majority is more the faith, fetishism and a social construct generated by majoritarian tyrants. It is a system of representation based on a positivist aggregation of individual preferences that keeps silent about those who have not voted because it assumes that it is difficult to verify their preferences.

Obviously, the debate on elections in the developing countries and majority representation is relevant to the current upsurge of democratization in the developing countries. This is so because these countries have devoted much attention to ensuring majority rule in what is sometimes tantamount to the neglect of the minority in Westminster-style democracies premised on first-past-the-post or 'the winner takes all' majoritarian tradition. Majority rule as prescribed in western democracies has often clashed with the conduct of democracy in severely divided societies. Majority ethnicity, language, culture, religion are often used to justify its control of the state, power and the resources that come with it. The struggle to control the state often develops into a source of conflict, particularly when difference is used as instrument of political domination or a justification for supremacy over others.

The current democratization crusade is based first and foremost on the centrality of private property rights; second, liberty, including the right to basic physical security, the freedom of speech and conscience, freedom of movement, the right to privacy and the right to participate in politics; third, limiting the scope of the state; fourth, the liberals have a divided attitude toward the market, the system of private property and free exchange of economic goods and services; fifth, progress, in promising enlightenment, tolerance, individual freedom and equality of opportunity (Festenstein 1998: 14-17). The main problem here is that regardless of the general sentiments of the liberal democratic conception of the state, market, property and individual freedom, the question remains in what type of societies this conception applies and under what circumstances.

In severely divided societies the problem is less of managing diversity than of accommodating minorities in a fair system of power sharing. Obviously, minority representation in first-past-the-post democratic systems poses a serious challenge to the capacity of the system to be genuinely democratic. Because numerical minorities lack sufficient votes to ensure effective representation, the capacity of democracy alone to ensure equitable and just representation is questionable. Where the disadvantages of numerical and social minorities are combined, they would certainly lose out in first-past-the-post systems because they command neither sufficient material resources nor votes to be fully represented in the legislature, and hence feel alienated by the very democratic process.

However, the minority/majority question is not only a quantitative one about assembling votes. The difficulties occur in three problematic areas. Firstly, in cases where the majority vote for candidates from their own ethnic groups, the largest ethnic group also produces the largest number of members of parliament and may therefore control the state indefinitely. The predictability of the ethnic vote may make a mockery of the elections, infuriating and frustrating the minority ethnic groups. Secondly, minorities living under a dominant 'supermajority' may resort to non-democratic means, such as the military, to control the state. Thirdly, interest aggregation through minority group coalitions could provide a possible answer to the tyranny of the majority. However, such an option depends on the minorities being large enough in number to tilt the political process in their favour.¹⁴ Minorities are disadvantaged not only because they are small in size, although this is an important

factor in their rising to power in a parliamentary democracy. In some instances, it is also because they are consciously excluded and as such unable to influence the political process on an equal footing with the majority.¹⁵ While the majoritarian tradition has its merits (such as maximizing utility and self-determination), majority rule without legislative safeguards and long democratic experience, can be used as an instrument of domination. Minority groups that feel they have no hope of accessing state power and influencing decisions that they may perceive as detrimental to their well-being (or survival) may take extra-jurisdictional steps (such as military coups, election rigging, fraud, etc.) to control the state.

The minority position in the nation-state and how it may fare in majoritarian democracy cannot be isolated from the wider political and economic environment within which democracy operates. Because the state consists of a set of organizations judicially located in a particular territory, invested with the authority to make binding decisions and to implement these decisions using force if necessary, it is also an arena where different social forces compete for power. Power – the ability to make policy decisions, influence and even change policies through legitimate means – is neither neutral, as liberals make out, or without anchorage in the social forces that make up society. In developing countries, the state assumes an even greater significance in the pattern of power that determines access to social and material resources. The centrality of the state becomes more significant in the field of development, where the combined effects of resource distribution and conflict over resources are apparent. The social forces that control the state are also capable of using the state organizations to pursue their interests in an arena characterized by domination and opposition.

The formation of political parties and institutions identical to those in the west would strengthen rather than weaken the very forces that western observers hold responsible for conflict and political instability. The majority of the political institutions are often ethnically, culturally, religiously and linguistically based and represent distinct nations. In the democratic game, however, the elite considers them modern political institutions with no connection to traditional values. In other words, the political parties the elite creates out of the womb of traditional values are expected to behave like their western counterparts, a responsibility these prototype institutions are ill-prepared to undertake in form or content. Second, instead of integration, democ-

racy opens the door to political participation, but often not on terms originally anticipated by its architects. Although this should be viewed as a positive outcome, minorities tend to overreact to expansion of their interests, including the possibility of realizing their own independent state. Third, the majority may use the power of the vote or the fist of the security forces to stall political decisions necessary for undertaking significant reforms.

In most developing countries, the dominant forces structurally determine the fate of democracy. People's voices are either selectively heard or systematically silenced, using democracy as an instrument of oppression. However, an authoritarian circus rotating between military and civilian politicians fosters the circulation of authoritarian development benefits. Thus, like authoritarianism, democracy under conditions of extreme poverty leaves the door wide open for the enrichment of a politically vocal, educated urban, rent-seeking and land-based elite. It leaves out minority because it commands the votes and material resources to enable the access power or pursue its interests.

Minority and authoritarian development

Conventional authoritarian development refers to authoritarian regimes performing well in terms of economic growth, while denying the human and other civil rights of their citizens. Implicit in this notion of authoritarian development is that the state is neutral in abusing the rights of citizens regardless of religious, ethnic, political or linguistic affiliation. This is in fact is one of the common trappings of western originated development theories that treat underdevelopment from a nation-state perspective. I redefine authoritarian development from a minority perspective to denote state policies that displace people from their sources of livelihood in the name of development. The tenets of this definition will be elaborated below.

In the developing world development is a resource in its own right and an activity which various social forces try to define according to their interests. But the struggle for development is not only a demand or self-serving interest, because from perspective of most developing countries, development is an ideology encompassing the dual discourses of modernization and nation building. Ake (1996: 7) succinctly argues that, 'development is an attractive idea for forging a sense of common cause and for bringing some coherence

to the fragmented political system inherited from the colonial rule, a system suffocated by an irresponsible political elite'. More importantly, even where modernization is rejected in favour of indigenization, development could not be abandoned because it was the ideology by which the political elite hoped to create a sense of unity, survive popular discontent and perpetuate its control of state power. As an ideology, development is also an expression of the preferences of the individuals aggregated in a dominant majority, represented by a minority elite capable of using state power to advance their own particular notion of development.

National development, whatever that is taken to mean, is justified even if it entails the eviction, displacement or impoverishment of the poor or denial of the resources essential for their livelihood. Within development ideology, the elite of the dominant majority in the developing world found an easy prey in the lands and resources of minority groups. I am not aware of any developing country that has not stipulated special provisions for what are known as 'development tenure policies'. These policies empower state agents to evict people from any land, river or sea coast that the state decides to use for national interests, including development, military purposes, etc. Understandably the state has become an arena of conflict between competing social forces and those forces that have been able to dominate it can also dominate others and subjugate them to their will.

Authoritarian development contributes to the impoverishment and displacement of minorities that inhabit areas endowed with natural riches. In most such cases, because of majoritarian democracy or totalitarian regimes, the victim's voice is inaudible (Mohamed Salih 1987, 1994 and 1999). A global minority (backed by the international community) is supported by a powerful national business elite (backed by the state). It uses state power to control resources (such as land, water, minerals, oil etc.) and evict local communities from resources vital for their survival. The eviction in most cases takes place without consultation or compensation.

Authoritarian development denies peoples the right to livelihood resources in the name of progress and nation building. In reality it frustrates both. Its dismal record includes the destruction of the lives of peoples such as the Nuba. Numbering over one million people, the Nuba are the indigenous inhabitants of the Nuba Mountains of Western Sudan. Politically and eco-

nomically marginalized the Nuba are undergoing a sinister campaign of human rights abuse by the Sudanese state, including genocide and ethnocide (or cultural genocide). Between 1973 and 1994, the Sudanese government introduced large-scale, privately-owned agricultural schemes in the Nuba Mountains, about 2000 km southwest of the capital, Khartoum. People's attempts to relocate in other areas were hampered by the state. The large-scale privately owned mechanized farms (covering over eight million hectares) exclude small peasants, while their location in the intermediate land between the semi-arid zone and the rich savannah is a potential source of conflict between pastoralists and farmers. The appropriation of Nuba land by a privileged political and business elite in the name of development has occurred under both democratically elected and non-democratic Sudanese governments. In fact, when it lost seats in the Nuba Mountains during the 1986 elections, the Umma (Nation) did nothing to stop the Popular Defence Force (the government-organized militia) from committing a series of massacres between 1986 and 1988 (Ryle 1988). The same democratically elected government prevented the Nuba victims of the 1985 drought and famine from resettling in the more fertile lands southward. As a startling illustration of the alliance between authoritarian development and state oppression, the army and the police force prevented the victims of drought and famine from moving into 'state-owned' fertile lands. The state staunchly opposed their spontaneous settlement, claiming that these exceptionally fertile lands were demarcated for future expansion of large-scale private mechanized farms (Mohamed Salih 1999a and 1999b). These farms have in recent years been distributed to an expanding Islamic business elite supported by various Islamic banks and financial lending organizations.

In the developing countries, there are 95 recorded incidences of displacement by authoritarian development. The majority of the victims are minority groups referred to in other literature as indigenous peoples. Among the major features of authoritarian development are the following:

- 1 It serves interests (global capital, national private interests, rent-seeking politicians etc.) other than those of the intended beneficiaries, to the detriment of local communities.
- 2 It is implemented from the top down, without the consultation or involvement of local communities.
- 3 It uses force and coercion, including the police and the army, to evict

those who oppose evacuation.

- 4 It does not compensate those who are evicted and are left to fend for themselves after having been stripped of the land on which they depend for their survival.
- 5 It abuses the human, economic and political rights of those evicted from their sources of livelihood by force and denies them the right to self-development.

In short, authoritarian development is characterized by excessive centralization in which development is treated as a monopoly exercised by the central organs of the state. It reflects the way in which development is defined in terms inconsistent with the interests of the local peoples and the minority groups alienated from their land and other natural riches. In the face of the appropriation of local community land, collective minority struggle becomes a major institutional framework for protecting common interests and channelling resentment against poverty-inducing development policies. For its part, the state perceives local communities' survival concerns and livelihood struggles as testimony to the misconception that ethnicity is a hindrance to development and an archaic institutional framework for political organization. Authoritarian development treats minority rights as an obstacle to development and a source of conflict detrimental to development.

By its very nature, authoritarian development contributes to conflict and political oppression, and invites insurgency. It is an arena where the limitations of majoritarianism are revealed and its capacity to tame the state is in question. In other words, authoritarianism breeds violence and invites more authoritarianism, and increasingly develops brutal ways of using the state's monopoly over the use of force and coercion to legitimize its holding onto power.

Authoritarian development is a mirror of how the dominant majority treats its minorities. In democratic states, authoritarian development represents the will of those who represent the majority the operate the nation-state and could therefore be a direct consequence of majority tyranny. The dominant forces that control state power also control and distribute resources to the majority in anticipation of political rewards. In fact authoritarian development creates an arena for the state to demonstrate its monopoly over the use of power in coercion, not to maintain peace and order as originally premised,

but to ensure compliance with undesirable policies. In this respect, the relationship between authoritarianism and state oppression is all too obvious. With the failure of the state to become an arbiter of different ethnic claims or an engine of development, the use of force and coercion to secure political legitimacy became a dominant feature of authoritarian development. In these circumstances, both democratic and authoritarian states have shifted their main objectives away from development to simply managing and maintaining peace and order. In response, the people's recipe for humanizing development is to democratize the state. Restructuring authoritarian development requires the reversal of the logic of exclusion and the empowerment of institutions that foster distributive justice and empower the poor to access resources vital to their survival such as land, water, forest. These are the very resources that authoritarian development appropriates as an exclusive domain for its destructive interventions. True democracy is akin to true development and both should ideally be responsive to people's needs, and particularly to the needs of the excluded minority.

Authoritarian development has had negative consequences for minority groups because democracy legitimizes the policies of democratically elected governments. The current democratic crusade condones the notion that if it is majoritarian then it must be democratic, therefore allowing virtual democrats to behave like dictators and go along with it. When the state colludes with the dominant minority, the state often uses democracy to perpetuate hegemony rather than to advance rights, liberty and democracy. The adoption of non-democratic measures is often justified against the backdrop of achieving 'national' objectives through a democratic mandate.

Conclusion

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a proliferation of international conventions, declarations and covenants with some reference to minority issues. It took these intentions more than three decades to mature and culminate in the enactment of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to Ethnic, Religion and Linguistic Minorities. This declaration cannot be viewed in isolation from the problems inherent in the three trajectories which I have tried to explicate – the nation-state, democracy and authoritarian development;

and even more so as the catalogue of genocide, discrimination and oppression of peoples belonging to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities shows no signs of decreasing. Because of the centrality of state, democracy and development in the excesses committed against minority groups, the ethos inherent in these social constructs should be criticized and not idealized. Hence, minority-dominant majority questions cannot be isolated from the wider debate on state, democracy and development.

I have tried to explain that tense minority-dominant majority relations have engulfed the state in a heightened politics of order in which it strives to contain minority discontent.¹⁶ In the developing world, development is still the rallying consensus, even though it represents a missed opportunity to engender democratic values. Authoritarian development has become an instrument for legitimizing the state while disempowering the minority. In fact, it has become a source of intense social conflict, liberation movements and insurgency, thus challenging both state legitimacy and the politics of order.¹⁷

Implicit in this paper is the contention that the triple heritage of democracy, human rights and institutional governance has given way to two major contradictions between state and democracy, and between liberty and democracy. The omnipotence of the majority which legitimizes the state takes the form of a despotic public opinion used by the state operators to justify minority oppression. Crick (1962), a devout critic of democracy, laments that in its extreme form democrats are obliged to accept decisions reached by the majority even when the majority favours rule by a tyrant. In such circumstances, the state will be the provider of neither liberty nor democracy for the oppressed minorities.¹⁸ In virtual democracies, state legitimacy justifies authoritarian development, therefore taking by the left hand the constitutional rights it has given by the right.

The question that I pose here is where does the politics of order leave minorities in the politics of alternative development? The simple answer is nowhere. A more realistic answer is that the world is probably at the crossroads. This is illustrated by the emergence of neo-Nazism, ultra-nationalists and political opportunists – such as George Speight, the Fiji coup leader who ousted the majority Indian government. Another example is the Ivory Coast government's Ivorization policy, endorsed by the 2000 Constitution.¹⁹

The politics of development promised that 'stable and consolidated democracy correlates with a higher respect for human rights. Likewise, democracy offers the possibility of political stability and with it the opportunity to redirect resources and build institutions that can foster the cause of development through fairer competition, participation and civil and political liberties' (Sorensen 1993: 88). The alternative politics of development, on the other hand, questions democracy's capacity to promote development, social welfare, human rights and political stability without due consideration to minority-dominant majority relations. Within this premise, there is ample evidence to challenge the corroborated evidence which shows that democracy promotes development and vice versa (including Sorensen 1993; Bagchi 1995; Cammack 1997; Bhardwaj and Vijayakrishnan 1998). Certainly, this assertion is true in the context of mature polyarchies and less so in countries that have just began to experiment with a democratic tradition based on individual preference while the bulk of the society is organized in diverse minority political communities.

In the new context of development, minority-dominant majority problems have contributed to the reincarnation of the politics of order, with two distinct features: 1) a critique of the majoritarian ethos ushered in the current tampering with the triple heritage of democracy, human rights and good governance; 2) the presence of a heightened tension in minority-dominant majority relations, both in the industrially developed and developing countries, leading to the search for solutions outside the existing state institutional make up – social movements, liberation fronts, insurgency etc. The politics of alternative development becomes an alternative to authoritarian development and thus integrates minority concerns as part of a paradigm shift that searches for commonalties while acknowledging difference. The alternative to this alternative is a polity beyond the bounds of civility and devoid of all that is humanely desirable and practically possible.

This paradigm shift signifies a move from development to the bare maintenance of peace and order, including humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping and crisis management, and would do little to aid the triple heritage of democratization, human rights and good governance. It is in fact a homecoming, retracing the footsteps of the politics of development.²⁰ Surely, a politics that is proud of returning to its roots would inherit an entire package structurally linked to those roots. It has to succumb to all the critique its

antecedents had to endure.

Unless critically examined, the new politics of development may ensure neither development nor order. It would in fact do little to allay our fears of the presence of a majority that can use the instrument of representative government to block essential changes in the minority-dominant majority relations.²¹ It is not comforting either to realize that the dominant nation within the nation-state should abandon its responsibility to a vocal minority that claims a virtual majority voice by striving to deny its existence. A *polis* without a *demos* is a political abstraction hostile to majority rule no matter how we define it, and one that is uncomfortable with the ethos of mutual co-existence.

Although the alternative politics of development is, to a large extent, preoccupied with old problems, it is so in a changing global context. Its main features include the strengthening of democratic institutions such as political parties, associations and civil society organizations; constitutional and electoral reforms; reinforcing the rule of law and the legislature, and enhancing the role of global governance; and strengthening the private sector as part of, in my view, a misconceived concept of civil society.

The politics of order in the western liberal democratic context is not concerned with how to improve minority-majority relations, but with how to access power. Minority-dominant majority relations themselves can be used as a political resource for accessing power. Human history, distant and recent, is full of political opportunists who have turned minorities into enemies in order to win elections and maintain a grip on power. Only time will tell whether these strategies, including the promises and failures of multiculturalism, will bring about social peace.

As in the conventional politics of development, the alternative politics of development conceptualizes democracy as a process leading to the restructuring of authoritarian development. However, the alternative politics of development would find it impossible to achieve this goal without democratizing development, thus giving voice to the minorities that have suffered from the excesses of authoritarian development.

By its very nature, the democratic nation-state, real or virtual, perpetuates

majoritarian tyranny, which in the developing countries represents a devout ally of authoritarian development. Worse is the assumption that democracy can thrive under conditions of rampant poverty, illiteracy, underdevelopment and exploitation. By arguing that economic well-being is not necessarily a prerequisite to the consolidation of democracy, the new politics of development has unwittingly replayed the liberal separation between freedom and material good.

From the minority perspective, the fate of liberal democracy has already been decided by the pervasive nature of authoritarian development and a majoritarian tyranny embedded in the politics of numbers. Authoritarian development is incapable of either advancing freedom from poverty or offering an alternative development vision that creates opportunities, transparency guarantees, and social security.²² If minorities are excluded from power sharing by majoritarian ethos, those very ethos have been at play in the struggle to control state power through democratic means. Once power is secured, it is used either by the majority to deny the minority the right to development or to impose authoritarian development agents. Both democratic and authoritarian states are engaged in the practice of unjust authoritarian development. In the best of the development agencies' intentions, these correlates (democracy and development) pertain to the fact that the democratic crisis in the developing world is ultimately linked to authoritarian development as the major source of democratic malice.

The minority-dominant majority debate requires a broader understanding of what development entails, whether the way it has been practised is conducive to democracy and what role the state can play instead of succumbing to the liberal tradition (discussed earlier), which calls for rolling back the state.

Alternative development that has minority as part of its agenda requires what Khotari (1993:123) calls, 'an alternative agenda in which the minority would see fit to serve its interests'. This is 'not a spectacular or revolutionary capture of power with a view to producing a national utopia. It is, instead, far more mundane yet far more basic – of taking the people seriously, respecting their thinking and wisdom, and adopting attitudes and values that respond to their voices. Voices from below, voices of the powerless who have so often entrusted power to a political party or a set of parties within the par-

liamentary framework but whose expectations have all along been belied'.

On the other hand, the alternative politics of development is wary of the current institutionalization of the critique of resistance to structural change and the adherence to, even worshipping of, a 'business as usual' approach, an approach that addresses the symptoms and leaves the structural problems intact. This view has to be seen within the political space available to a majority that is neither unified nor uniform, a majority that often contains enclaves of oppressed social minorities.

Majoritarian Tyranny in a World of Minorities is not just an inquiry into the world of the excluded, the underprivileged and oppressed, and those who betrayed their human senses and succumbed to the familiarity of the norm. It is a critique of civilization's failure to harness its mimetic impulses. A destructive force seems in waiting, ready to attack.²³ In his response to the perilous case of minority – dominant majority relations in India, Ghandi lamented 'history will judge civilization and people with power by the way they treat their minorities'. It could be that in these real or imagined expressions of minority or majority visions lies the true nature of oppression and injustice in their most benign yet inhumane form.

Sadly, despite its quantum leaps in science, technology, political and economic organization and other fields of human ingenuity, civilization has yet to harness its mimetic impulses. In this respect alone, the critique of majoritarian tyranny is neither a rejection of democracy nor a call for the eclipse of the state. It is a critique of how social constructs such as state, nation, democracy, majority and minority mediate the structures that strive to control power in order to define and redefine their positions in relation to these constructs.

Surely, at the most personal level, if we look within our inner selves we may well realize that there is a minority inside each of us. The world is truly one of minorities, dominated by a virtual majority that is capable of exacting its tyrannical whim on the real majority. On the whole, minority-dominant majority tensions reveal the structural deficiencies and problems confronting the majority, rather than the minority's incapacity to contribute its share to society.

Notes

1. Young (1932) used the term minority in his book entitled *American Minority Peoples: A Study of Racial and Cultural Contacts in the United States*.
2. These include organizations such as Minority Rights Group which was established during the late 1960s, and the Covenant of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organizations (The Peace Palace, The Hague, February 11, 1991).
3. For more material on various aspect of minority, human rights and international law see Watson (1990) *Contemporary Minority Nationalism*, Brolmann *et al.* (1993) *Peoples and Minorities in International Law*; Heraclides (1991) *The Self-determination of Minorities in International Politics*; Lerner (1991) *Group Rights and Discrimination in International Law*; Bloed (1999) *Protection of Minority Rights through Bilateral Treaties*
4. For example, the representative of Germany was one of the most outspoken critics. He made it clear during the deliberations on the Declaration that 'minority rights may not be interpreted as entitling any group of persons living under the terms of immigration laws, to form within the state, separate communities'. Quoted in the views of the Human Rights Commission, para. 15, see A. Phillips and A. Rosas (1993: 29).
5. Although women are a majority in the world, the United Nations consider them a minority, a point raised at the 1995 Beijing conference on women's issues and civil rights. People with a different sexual orientation from the majority of the population are also considered a minority if the majority discriminates against them. See Townsend (1973) for more on social minority.
6. See McLaurin (199) *The Political Role of Minority Groups in the Middle East*.
7. For more on this trend of writing see Caporaso (1989) *The Elusive State*; Hoffman (1995) *Beyond the State*; Holton (1998) *Globalization and the Nation-State*, among others.
8. For instance, 'Home Affairs Ministry No.455.2-360/1988 on the Regulation of Temples' forbids any land from being acquired for the construction of Chinese temples, building any new temples, expanding or renovating existing temples, or using any other building as a temple. The second such policy is the Circular of the Director General for Press

and Graphics Guidance in the Ministry of Information No.02/SE/Ditjen-PPGK/1988. The Circular on Banning the Publication and Printing of Writings and Advertisements in Chinese Characters or the Chinese Language restricts the use of Chinese to a single newspaper called *Harian Indonesia*. These measures were taken on the ground that dissemination of materials in Chinese or Chinese characters will obstruct the goal of national unity and the process of assimilation of ethnic Chinese.

9. For earlier writings on this see de Tocqueville (1945) *Democracy in America. The Henri Reeve text*.
10. According to Gray (1986:74) limited government in the liberal tradition 'need not be democratic government'. While, on the one hand, unlimited democratic government cannot be liberal because government authority invades all domains of liberty and independence, from a liberal point of view even a limited government is a form of totalitarianism – the form predicted and criticized by J. S. Mill in *On Liberty*. Also see Macewan (1999) *Neo-Liberalism or Democracy* for a critique of the unholy relationship between market and democracy under the current neo-liberal crusade.
11. For liberals the notion of any system of government that regulates property rights and individual liberty by the vote of the majority cannot satisfy the requirements of a democratic government. When a limited government is accepted then it must provide equal protection for individual rights. Although democratic governments may provide better bases for accountability in carrying out legal and constitutional provisions, there is no reason to believe that democracy alone can ensure respect for individual or, for that matter, collective minority rights.
12. For another critical commentary on prospects for democracy worldwide see Vanhanen, (1997) *Prospects of Democracy: A Study of 172 Countries*.
13. See Lakerman (1959) *Voting in Democracies: A Study of Majority Rule and Proportional Electoral Systems*. For the questions involved in minority government see Strom (1990) *Minority Government and Majority Rule*.
14. An example of this type of scenario is provided by the aggregation of minority ethnic groups which voted Daniel Arap Moi into power in Kenya's 1996 presidential election, beating Ford, who was supported by the country's two largest ethnic groups, the Lou and Kiku.

15. The case of the Creole minority in Sierra Leone – with their material wealth and education – can be contrasted with that of the Hutu majority in Burundi. The first is a demographic minority, while the second is a political minority despite its demographic dominance.
16. On the politics of order see Randall and Theobald (1998) *Political Change and Underdevelopment* and *Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries* and Sørensen, (1991) *Democracy and Democratization*.
17. See Mohamed Salih (1999a and 1999b) in *Environmental Politics and Liberation* and *Land Alienation and Genocide in the Nuba Mountains*, respectively.
18. See Hoffman (1995) *Beyond the State*, pp. 200-202.
19. The Ivory Coast's Constitution of 2000 was enacted against the backdrop of Ivorization policies that stipulate that non-authentic Ivorians cannot run for political office. Former Prime Minister Allessane Ouattara's was excluded from the 1999 presidential elections, because of allegations that he had not provided adequate proof of Ivorian citizenship. This is similar to the case of Ex-President Kaunda of Zambia who was prohibited from re-running in the 1996 Presidential Elections because, according to the Government, he is not Zambian.
20. Wiarda's (1997) *Cracks in the Consensus: Debating the Democracy Agenda in U.S. Foreign Policy*, reveals the current policy-makers despair with regard to the increase in conflicts, even in democratic countries.
21. For more on this see Diamond (1993) *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries*.
22. Sen (1999:38) in *Development as Freedom*, argues that there are a number of interconnected and mutually reinforcing freedoms that influence and are influenced by development. These are 1) political freedoms, 2) economic facilities, 3) social opportunities, 4) transparency guarantees and 5) protective security.
23. See Horkeimer, quoted in Mohamed Salih (1992), on European values in international relations.

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