

Citizenship Discourse, Globalization, and Protest: A Postsocialist-Postcolonial Comparison¹

David A. Kideckel, Central Connecticut State University

Introduction: On postsocialist/colonial comparison

Recent scholarship recognizes important commonalities in postsocialist and postcolonial experience. Both Moore (2001:114) and Chari and Verdery (2009: 11) discuss substantive parallels in postcolonial and postsocialist states. Such states emerge from common structural conditions deemphasizing local versus metropolitan culture (ibid: 13, Young 2003), are burdened with imbalanced, distorted economies (Bunce 1999, Humphrey 2002, Stark and Bruszt 1998), struggle with democratization (Ceuppens and Geschiere 2005, Heintz et al 2007), fall occasional prey to compensatory and muscular nationalisms (Appadurai 1996, 2006), and have troubled relations with past histories and compromised members (Borneman 1997, Comaroff and Comaroff 2003, Petryna 2002). Thus postsocialist and postcolonial state political and economic organization and principles of belonging are up for grabs with these uncertainties mapping onto principles and discourses of citizenship, i.e. the way individuals conceive of themselves in relation to their state and in other transnational relationships (Ong 1999), respond to changes in state life, and express themselves politically and culturally as members of society. Uncertain citizenship, contested histories, and distorted economies often subject postsocialist and postcolonial states to significant activism (Young 2003). This paper thus seeks to articulate activist practice with variations in the nature of citizenship conceptions and discourses, offering a window into postsocialist and postcolonial similarity and difference.

Ethnographically, the essay compares protests and demonstrations in postcolonial Kerala state in southwest India² and postsocialist east central European Romania. As part of their “post” heritages, both states are marked by outpourings of activist demand. Such “contentious performances” (Tilly 2008), their claims, actions, and symbols, illustrate participant relations to their states and express political and social identities. They are, in other words, manifestations of citizen perceptions and discourses. Contentious performances are found in all social systems, past and present. However, postsocialist and postcolonial varieties share a commonality as their ultimate audience, if not proximate causes, relate to events, processes, and relationships off-shore from the state (Comaroff and Comaroff 2003: 633). Globalization and neo-liberal penetration commonly animate postsocialist and postcolonial politics. However, the way by which postsocialist and postcolonial citizens respond to such transformation varies according to the notions of citizenship they bring with them as they run to (or from) the barricades.

(Post-)Citizenship: A continuum

Citizenship rights and obligations are “an on-going process, a social practice, and a cultural performance rather than a static category” (Berdahl 2005:237). The practice of citizenship in postsocialism/ colonialism is historically influenced by transnational institutions and globalized conditions (Ong 1999, Sassen 2003). However, actual state societies are still the stage where individuals gain rights and obligations of social membership and enact these via citizen performances as in joining or avoiding organizations, voting or not, and protest and demonstration or apathetic response.

The historical and processual nature of citizenship, and the diverse role of the global environment point to important differences between postsocialist (at least of the East Central European variety) and postcolonial states for citizenship practice. In the case of Kerala and Romania citizenship perceptions and discourses grow from the nature and extent of popular participation in the processes by which socialist and colonial systems developed or came apart. This includes the role of elites and masses in the throwing off the socialist or colonial system, the breadth of anti-socialist/colonialist struggle, increasingly by the differential integration of states in the developing global system (Gupta and Sharma 2006), and the manner by which individuals are related to new capital and institutions (Balibar 2004).

Thus, two diverse forms of citizenship generally contrast postsocialist/colonialist states. In terms these rights- and grievance-based citizenship which are arrayed along a continuum based on: 1) degrees of expectation of the state; 2) the role (actual or desired) of citizen involvement in organizational life; 3) extent of delegitimation of the former socialist/colonial system; and 4) degrees to which the state or global institutions are the manifest focus of individual concern. Rights-based citizenship is more often found in postcolonial conditions owing to the extent of popular participation and either or both the integration of elites and “commoners,” in the anti-colonial movement, and the tensioned integration of the state in the global environment.

In rights-based citizenship, social membership is an active process. People see claims on the state as legitimate right, many engage politically to ensure those rights, or sympathize with those who do (Cairó 2001), and largely see global relationships as threat to their rights. Even where demands for rights are subverted by postcolonial force as, for example, in Indonesia (Tsing 2005), the legitimacy of citizenship rights is unquestioned, if unfulfilled. Thus in Kerala citizenship,³ people expect state support for their cause, no matter political orientation. They expect the state to meet their physical needs, or today even their right to live and earn apart from the state in a growing private economy. This practice grows from centuries-long activism where people challenged caste inequities, imperial and colonial control, and economic and social inequality. Kerala citizens speak often of rights (*avakasam*) to protest and for proper state response. People of all backgrounds turn out in large numbers in elections. Women and low caste groups are active politically. People are connected in a wide range of inter-locking institutions like labor unions, trade associations, political parties, youth groups, and neighborhood associations. The significant exception to this are the two million or so who comprise cyclical

labor migrants to the Arabian Gulf. Returning to Kerala they express degrees of alienation from Kerala associations (Raluca Nahorniac, personal communication).

In post-socialist states, such as Romania, citizens' claims are often "grievance based." Citizens see themselves as supplicants to and claimant groups are often pitted against each other. The demands grievants present are less rights people are likely to achieve than claims they will probably be denied. Similarly, grievance-based citizens are organizationally alienated and shy from participation in local groups, though they often address their concerns to international organizations. Romania's grievance-based citizens issue complaints (*plângeri*) and demands (*revendicări*). Typically, Romanian interest groups often factionalize into competing groups differentiated by small personal or ideological differences. Romanians thus feel a sense of isolation and often react to others' or even their own concerns with a "why bother?" attitude.

Command-obey politics fueled grievance-based citizenship and is long-standing in Romanian history and culture (see Buchowski 2004 for another Central European case). This system reached its heights in the years of Romanian socialism, culminating in the Ceaușescu reign. Even in the past when Romanians challenged systems of control, as in the Revolution of 1848, the Peasant Rebellion of 1907, and 1920s and 1930s worker restiveness, such movements were often intellectual-based, short-term out-pourings, and narrowly cast. Socialism cemented the supplicant, distanced quality of Romanians to their state. Even 1990s massive worker actions, including the Jiu Valley miners' *mineriade* (Gledhill 2005, Kideckel 2008, Vasi 2004) were as much in service to national politicians and against administrators as by and for citizen actors. The net effect of these actions produced an angry citizenry, alienated from the state, atomized, and protective of individual interests.

Citizenship in globalizing, shifting economies

Postsocialist and postcolonial states are intensely influenced by global forces. They affected the formation of the modern state and its current buffeting in Kerala,⁴ as well as the formation and unraveling of East Central European socialism by world recession, changing technology, and militarism. In recent years this process is intensified by expanding global capital in privatization, in regional integration in developing political and economic institutions, in communication, trade, labor and tourist migrations, and migrant remittances. Among global processes characterizing both types of states are: 1) intense privatization; 2) penetration of new business and capital; 3) chronic unemployment and labor migration to areas of global capital concentration; 4) decline of the state in daily life; 5) greater significance of international institutions and relationships; and 6) expansion in global consumables like cell phones, computers, Internet services.

Comparing our two cases, in essence globalization has largely replaced Romanian manufacturers with large Western capitalized enterprises like Siemens, Renault, Pioneer Seeds. As junior partner in the European Union, the Romanian government is handmaiden to this process. Compared to Kerala, Romania is more integrated into networks of global control, whose

presence has greatly neutralized globalization as a source of contention. All Romanian political parties seem committed to similar relations with external powers, contributing to a diminishing Romanian state and growing divide between people and state. Romanians, instead of challenging global structures, look to institutions like the EU and its Court of Human Rights, for redress. In turn, its citizens view the Romanian state as hopelessly compromised (European Commission 2005:17).

In Kerala globalization proceeds intensively but equivocally, sometime opposed, other times supported by state actors. With exceptions like American Infosys or Harrisons Malayalam, the British exporter of rubber, coffee, and tea, globalization is spearheaded by smaller capital interests. Software consulting services, call centers, apparel manufacturers, and commercial enterprises define the new economy compared to that previously based on services, agricultural production and processing, and small-scale manufacturing. Kerala government and political parties and leaders also have ambiguous relations to globalization, to which they are both partners and adversaries. As partner, the state and its dominant left coalition supports privatization, turning some enterprises, like Keltron Counters, manufacturer of electronic gauges, into joint ventures with private capital. Similarly, the state enabled development of Special Economic Zones (SEZ) like the Technopark or Apparel Park, in the Trivandrum suburbs. As adversary the Kerala state has (unsteadily) maintained the “Kerala Model of Development”⁵ and its large-scale redistribution on which so many depend in this region of high unemployment (Chakraborty 2009). Thus, the uncertain combining of an extensive state sector and galloping privatization give considerable room to students, trade groups, NGOs, and unions to demand their rights via protest.⁶

Globalization is also producing a transnational citizenry in Kerala and Romania via labor emigration. However, though physically transnational, such individuals’ role at home influence citizenship processes. Labor migrants are by and large politically conservative, and exert large influence by their remittances and in the narratives to others at home (Osella and Osella 2006). They also bring new consumption items and practices that become mania to some or *bête noir* to others among the home population (Lukose 2005a). Furthermore, successful returned migrants typically support privatization and global integration. Thus, transnational citizenship locally intensifies shifts in ownership, extends the space between public and private, and pressures relationships and values within their state societies. This is especially more the case in Kerala where labor migration is more frequently cyclical and successful returned-migrants often engage in breath-taking conspicuous consumption with mansions from one end of the state to the other.

Citizenship in Romanian and Kerala protest

Postsocialist and postcolonial uncertainties contribute to impressive histories of labor and social protest in Romania and Kerala (Crowley 2004, John 2005, Sreedhara Menon 1987). Though globalized change facilitates conditions for protest and demonstration, citizenship beliefs and orientations shape actual practices and outcomes. Romanians, through their grievances and

in opposition to others, seek improvement in their individual or group's position. However, via this strategy, they validate the present system to both themselves and others. Romanian protests are restricted in time, space, and audience. They are frequently directed against particular institutions, many in the private sector, but avoid generalized, systemic-wide challenge. Given their narrow focus, Romanian protest is readily neutralized by state practice, whether legally (Bush 1993, 2004), or through inattention, cooptation, or subversion. In contrast, in Kerala, persistent ambiguity between public and private sectors constantly galvanizes citizen demands for preservation of rights. Though Kerala rights-based protest is often single issue, just as frequently it challenges the structure of the transforming state. Kerala's citizens protest for the long-term. When you speak to people "on the barricades," they say they protest with optimism (*subha prathiksha*) and patience (*kshema*), and will agitate until positive resolution. These discourses thus intensify action, offering little hope of modulation.

Protests are enacted for diverse reasons. As (contentious) performances, they are evaluated by claims, themes, symbols, participants and audiences (Palmer and Jankowiak 1997). However, protests are unlike other performances as they engage state and global structures and thus produce and reflect citizenship (cf. Holston 2007). Protest activities are defined first by claims, whether political, cultural, or economic.⁷ Political protests are operationalized by political parties and related groups to support or oppose party or government policies or actions. They support one group or challenge another. The nature of political demonstration show the extent to which society's basic debates remain open. In post-socialist Romania, with globalization largely a *fait accompli*, few protests are political. Competition between political parties is separated from society, with politics enacted by parliamentary maneuver. Grievance-based citizenship furthers this by avoiding system-wide critique. In post-colonial Kerala a factionalized party environment, ideologically split over globalization, produces continual face-offs. Party factions jockey for power within larger formations, and an electorate split between left and right generates great numbers of demonstrations between party coalitions, many becoming violence. Citizen demand for rights plays into this as parties are considered either the source of or threat to rights. Thus, the political divide keeps postcolonial contestation front and center.

Cultural demonstrations are concerned with human rights, identity, religion, discrimination. Such issues potentially map on to global questions. Recent Romanian cultural demonstrations include marches supporting gay rights, protests against destruction of church property, or against biometric passports.⁸ In these Romanians often contrast their concerns with conditions elsewhere in Europe or refer claims to larger European audiences. In Kerala I witnessed cultural protests against alcohol abuse and the "alcohol mafia," against domestic violence, for scientific rationality and opposed to self-styled religious "godmen." Thus cultural protests also exhibit a critical difference. Romanians, riven by grievance, seek improved circumstances for themselves or their particular group, while in Kerala people address collective concerns about society as a whole.

The biggest globalization-related issue facing postsocialist and postcolonial states concerns the changing weight and meaning of public and private resources (Dunn 2004, Lukose 2005b, Verdery 2003). The public-private shift occurs in changing ownership and employment, in source, cost, and availability of services like education, health care, housing, and transportation, and in oversight of environmental, infrastructural, and social resources. In both Romania and Kerala these changes provoke extensive demonstrations. Economic protests include concerns over treatment of labor (e.g. strikes of Kerala gold and agricultural workers and Romanian auto and steel workers). Others concern privatization of public institutions or declines in safety, quality, costs, and availability of public resources (e.g. marches of Travancore Titanium and Kerala State Electric Board employees, by Romanian electrical and chemical workers and miners, or strikes of Kerala doctors and Romanian teachers). Still others critique the safety, quality, cost, and availability of private services and institutions (e.g. Kerala's private bus owners demand for a better competitive environment or strikes of Bucharest metro workers for better safety equipment and salary increases). Numerous economic protests focus on problematic global institutions (e.g. those carried out against the expansion of large, globally-based commercial ventures by the members of the Kerala small-scale trader association and in Romania by Roman Truck Factory workers, shut out from half their factory by their new owner, Renault (Sturzoiu 2007)). Finally others focus on state failures to honor obligations in transition to the private economy (e.g. Kerala Junior Health Inspectors and Junior Women Police Constables protesting exclusion from civil service positions and Romanian pensioners decrying limits on their pensions).

These protests have common elements, but vary in structure and expression due to differences in the degree to which globalization issues are settled and on the basis of citizenship orientations, which reinforce or challenge the state, frame contestation or acceptance, and facilitate or dampen subsequent protest. Protests in both Romania and Kerala exhibit strong repertoires (Tilly 2008: 89-90), where clearly defined elements are used repetitively. However, given the more settled postsocialist environment, protests here are more hedged around by state rules while postcolonial protest is more open to addition of new elements. Postsocialist protest is more restricted in social groups from which participants derive and in the audiences to which they are directed. Postcolonial protest more often seeks the entire state as audience and has more extensive system-transforming goals.

Both Kerala and Romanian protests have restricted forms; Kerala *jatha* (march), *dharna* (sit-down), *padayatra* (long march) *bandh* or *hartal* (general strike), or Romanian *marș* (march), *pichet* (picketing), and various strikes (*greve*)-of advisement, the Japanese strike with headbands and streamers, or the regular and general strike. However, Kerala protests are more innovative, like the tactic of protestors rolling prone (*shayana pradikshanam*) on the street or wearing sacred coconut bundles (*idumuddi*) on one's head while on the march. Romanian practices are fairly predictable from one picket or march to the next. The greater innovation of Kerala thus suggests the less settled postcolonial context.

Both Romanian and Kerala protests claim loss and threat (to jobs, resources, health, environmental well-being) and seek positive outcomes for participants. However, Kerala loss is expressed in more generalized terms, compared to Romania. In the former people demand that which is threatened as their right but suggest that threat to their rights is threat to all. In Romania, however, protestors see their losses as theirs alone, accepting divisions of neo-liberal globalization (Ietcu 2006). Issues of globalization are also more commonly raised in Kerala demonstrations where there are greater degrees of cross-institutional support compared to Romania, where protest and demonstration breaks down ecumenical alliance.

Degree of cross-institutional support is especially telling for protest differences. In Romania, protesting groups rarely support others, while in Kerala, some issues bring out different organizations, even those diametrically opposed in other contexts. These variations exist despite and because of the historic corporate organization of Romanian and Kerala society. Romanian socialist society was structured in a nested hierarchy of corporate groups where resources were exchanged for political passivity. Labor unions, for example, were “transmission belts” for resource delivery (e.g. subsidized housing, vacations) to compliant workers (Ockenga 1997). Though this structure was largely reproduced after socialism, unions, their federations, and confederations are loosely tied to the political parties and compete for membership and voice. Contrasting this, Kerala corporate structures developed via centuries of subaltern agitation where people organized from below and put into power the first freely-elected Communist government in history (Nossiter 1982).⁹ Left governments headed by the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) in coalition with other left parties periodically control the state’s government. The union movement is strong and virtually the entire economy, public and private, are organized (Ramachandran Nair 2006). Though Kerala’s organizational structure is equally tied to political factions, their history enables escape of institutional cocoons over various issues.

Comparing the two-month long, daily demonstration of unions and related groups protesting privatization of the Kerala State Electrical Board (KSEB) in Spring 2008 with Romanian demonstrations is instructive. KSEB protestors were a varied bunch. Virtually all Kerala trade union coalitions, left, right, or neutral, and often bitter enemies, protested to stop KSEB’s privatization. Though together in this cause, some groups avoided each other in front of Kerala’s government headquarters, the site of most Kerala protests. Members of the All India Trade Union Confederation (AITUC), allies of the Communist Party of India, and one of their affiliated unions, the Kerala Electrical Workers Federation often engaged in “parallel protest” with the Kerala Power Workers’ Federation/ National Trade Union Initiative, a non-affiliated union group. Though political opposites they turned out to march, chant slogans, and leaflet passers-by. Representatives of women’s groups, small trader associations, anti-alcohol protestors, and others also visited the electrical workers with greetings, support, and even contributions.

In Romania union protests are formalized and require only a predefined number of participating members. Representatives of other groups never assist, however. In a protest of Bucharest public nursery school teachers about lack of nursery school seats, the issue affected all

teachers' unions. But when I asked people of other unions whether they supported the protesting formation, they said it was not their fight, and the protestors do not support them. Similarly, when Romanian pensioners organized a retiree coalition in summer 2007 to challenge limits on pension increases, their attempt floundered as different groups demanded special treatment according to past occupational identities. Their meeting ended in bitter acrimony. The only recent issue that assembled an ecumenical group was the state-wide teacher protests bringing out all main teacher unions in autumn 2005 and 2007. These concerned teacher pay and perquisites and the size of the state budget devoted to education. However, all my informants, no matter their union affiliations, indicate the strikes were a failure as unity was not maintained and that union leaders gave into the state too easily.

Education as citizenship and protest

Education is especially implicated in the changing meaning of and membership in postsocialist and postcolonial states and the globalization-related growth of private over public sectors. This often makes educational issues a source of protest and demonstration. Both Kerala and Romania pride their educational achievements. Education figured large in both colonial and socialist society. Malayali demands for educational access, facilitated by Kerala's extensive Christian school network, was a basic demand of the equality movement (John 2005). Education was also a cornerstone of the Kerala Model of Development, contributing to Kerala's near-universal literacy. In Romania, development of education was a major socialist achievement and educational performance along with political trustworthiness combined to enable mobility. However, as schooling expanded, competition for scarce seats in higher education became especially heated.

Today, education in both postsocialism and postcolonialism is undergoing great change as both are pressured by privatization and related conditions (Tikly 2001). Public and private education intensely compete. Kerala private education was always richly endowed with Christian schools. Since formation of the modern state, however, Christian schools provided an ideological counterweight and challenge to the (leftist) state sector. There is also an intermediate ("state-aided") sector, where the state pays teacher salaries and school upkeep and private management, largely Christian, appoints teachers. Given this mixed structure, labor and control issues are especially prevalent in Kerala education. Teachers have union protections in state and aided schools but are highly exploited in private schools (Zachariah 2008), a situation which leftist groups challenge. Meanwhile curriculum is also contentious as leftist governments seek to develop certain ideological themes and rightists challenge those attempts (Lukose 2006). Education is so pressured as it is deemed critical for skills for emigration and success abroad or to gain a job in new global sectors of the Kerala economy, or in the state employment system (Osella and Osella 2000, Osella and Osella 2006). Educational results are considerably better in private and aided schools and the students there tend to derive from wealthier social segments. With increased competition, there is a virtual flood of students out of the state system and many

state schools are on the verge of closing. Thus a degree of class struggle is built into Kerala educational contentiousness.

In Romania, too, private education has flourished since socialism's end and, private schools from pre-K through university draw many away from the state sector, but offer teachers poorer pay and work conditions. However, many Romanian teachers in the state sector also double as private instructors, thereby deflating labor issues. Though the importance of education for social mobility has declined as commerce has become the main vehicle for success, competition for seats in supported state institutions and for high school and university degrees is still intense. This has produced scandals about bribing teacher supervisors for better results on high school graduation exams, in purchasing university diplomas, or private institutions offering degrees or programs for which they are not accredited. Most important for Romanian education are EU-backed reforms ensuring curricular standards and coordination of university educational levels, the so-called Bologna Process.

Educational contradictions in both Kerala and Romania especially motivate anger and protest. However, particular forms, goals, and practices again vary based on citizenship orientations and the kind and level of global integration. Kerala education is especially marked by battles between left and right political formations (see endnote 6 on the anti-Communist "Liberation Struggle"), and protests about educational issues were the most prevalent throughout my fieldwork. The most violent and intense protests concerned curriculum and the left-dominated government's attempt to provide new historiography in the seventh grade social science text (Government of Kerala 2008). Globalization was a background issue in virtually all Kerala educational protests, as demand for success in the global system pressures the state sector in favor of private and aided education (Lukose 2006). Protests included those against the "single window system," where the government sought to implement a computerized application and selection system for students entering state or aided high schools, of priests and nuns over government attempts to appropriate management's power to select aided school teachers, protests in favor or opposed to the government proposal to increase fees in private professional colleges. The anger expressed by left and right forces at the power and wealth of private schools versus government incursion into education was absolutely electric in these protests.

The 2004 Kerala student strike, which closed Kerala University for three months, reflected many of these essential splits. Ritty Lukose's (2005b) discussion of the strike defined "political" and "civic" opposing forces whose positions reflected the deepening split between state and private sector as sources of livelihood and identity. Their antagonism was intensified by the neo-liberal environment making state educational resources and the post-graduate job market much less predictable. The strike was led by the Communist Student Federation of India, and its youth wing, the Democratic Youth Federation of India. It was challenged by the Kerala Student Union, a wing of the right-center Indian National Congress Party, supported by an ad hoc coalition seeking an end to university politics. The proximate issues were a demand for educational subsidies by the "politicals" and withdrawal of the government from educational

realms, demanded by the “civics.” However, latent issues reflected postcolonial challenges to whole systems, and the critical concern for student rights as citizens.

Compared to Kerala, Romanian educational protests are less frequent and less about curriculum and access than about protestors’ (whether teachers or students) own stakes in the system. Thus Romanian students strike over conditions at their universities and teachers about their pay, but groups are less up-in-arms about private sector expansion and the diminishing state sector on which they depend. For example, a one day picket and march organized in June 2007 by the Spiru Haret Independent Teacher’s Union protested lack of public nursery school (*gradinița*) places in Bucharest for the coming school year. The protestors blamed local authorities for not releasing necessary construction funds (largely provided by EU grants). They said officials expected private kindergartens to pick up the slack. While marching from City Hall to the Education Ministry and on to the Prime Minister’s office, the teachers continually contrasted public and private nursery schools with class-based rhetoric, particularly that private tuition is so much greater, many children will be prevented from nursery school altogether.

Globalization also figured in this and other Romanian educational demonstrations, but was viewed equivocally. Comparison between Romanian defects and Europe’s qualities were constant. The teachers complained that public school over-crowding ignored European standards to Romania’s shame. They discussed how many children without nursery school places were especially needy as their parents worked in Italy or Spain and they are cared for by grandparents. This, was generally seen positively, and easily remedied by appropriate state action.

Conclusions: Protest and postsocialist and postcolonial identity

Protests and demonstrations, their symbolism, rhetoric, duration, degree of violence, and breadth of support, are windows into the role citizenship plays in shaping the character of postsocialism and postcolonialism. In both Kerala and Romania, spurred by globalization, a struggle exists between forces supporting the changeover to the private economy and those whose lives are more dependent on state-based economic resources. Though state and private sectors are in dynamic tension, the contest appears less settled in postcolonial than postsocialist states. To a great extent this is a function of history, citizenship practice, and levels of global integration. Malayali demand for their rights and Kerala’s global ambiguities keep protests vibrant, ecumenical, and system-challenging. In Romania, however, top-down politics, grievance-based citizenship, and greater degrees of global integration shape acceptance of the transformation and a bargaining quality to protest. Thus, in Kerala, state resource redistribution, the *sine qua non* of Malayali “citizenship rights” continues to be of greater concern than in Romania and the redistributionist state is considered either excessively threatened or excessively rapacious. In Romania, in contrast, citizens seeking their best deal see state employment more often as supplement or stepping stone to labor in the private sphere and state resources necessary for the moment but likely to be eclipsed later. In Kerala people decry or joke about the extent of protest, but when questioned about protestor motives generally laud them. In Romania, on the

other hand, observers of protest activities thought protestors excessively self-interested, even if some were believed to have a kernel of legitimacy.

By this account postsocialism and postcolonialism exhibit common concern with the bifurcation of public and private, no matter their different cultural substrates, particular integration into global relationships, or histories of protest. But despite this essential convergence, citizens of these two states treat this separation in widely disparate form. The extensive range of performances developing around this fracture in Kerala, fueled by demands for citizen rights, implies there is life yet in those groups and institutions committed to the vibrancy of the public sector, to challenging the unfettered growth of neoliberal, globalized capitalism, and galloping privatization. In Romania, though socialist practice has its supporters, the public sector is largely compromised and discredited by demands for redress of grievance as protestors seek their best bargain in the new system.

Further, I am certain this variation will persist, if not deepen. I write during one of the more severe economic downturns since the "Great Depression." No doubt the downturn will create additional demands on state systems and subject the privatized economy to greater scrutiny and criticism. One can detect movement of labor migrants back to Romania from Western Europe and to Kerala from the Arabian Gulf. Many return without employment, in need of health care, and with rampant family adjustment issues. The downturn also compresses the IT sector, in both countries a catalyst for globalization-related growth. In Kerala Technopark jobs are fewer, private schools teaching computer graphics, medical technology, and related fields have cut back enrollment or gone bankrupt. In Romania, the labor market is frozen and credit drying up. In these times we can only expect citizenship-based tendencies to deepen. As stakes over public and private grow sharper and human possibilities restricted, Kerala issues will sharpen and protests grow more frequent and violent. Romanians, however, are likely to become more atomized, fearful, and bargain-conscious. Thus the contemporary crisis of capitalism will truly highlight variation in disparate social systems. Postsocialist states, rejecting their past, top-down collectivities, will become more wedded to the global system while postcolonials, reminded of their past subalternity, reject it even further.

Notes

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² Kerala is only postcolonial with a liberal interpretation of state history. Comprised of three regions, only the northern third, Malabar, was formerly under British colonial administration. The southernmost districts of Cochin and Travancore were formally ruled by native royalty until 1957, though with great British influence, when they joined with Malabar to enter India as Kerala state.

³ Citizenship (*powharan*) is rarely used in Malayalam. When people define the concept they typically refer to engaging in appropriate behavior as in picking up one's garbage or not being loud in public.

⁴ The first Kerala government after formal integration into the Indian state in 1957, was a communist ministry headed by the "Malayali Lenin," E.M.S. Namboodiripad. As this government promulgated extensive land reform (of often Christian landowners) and threatened private church-run educational institutions, it was deposed in a series of violent clashes and demonstrations defined as the "Liberation Struggle" (*Vimochana Samaram*), involving the US Central Intelligence Agency (Krishna Iyer 1959, Moynihan 1978) and echoes in Kerala politics to this day.

⁵ The KMD was promulgated by the state's late 1950s communist government. Here state resources are directed to the poorest population segments in subsidies for education, housing, health care, etc. The KMD effect thus raised one of the poorest populations in India to health and educational levels comparable to developed societies. The KMD thus became a core aspect of Kerala identity (Cairó 2001) and even received international acclaim (McKibbin 1995).

⁶ Most recently Kerala has witnessed celebrated cases of the Coca-Cola boycott and protests concerning establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZ), and over the actions and loan policies of the Asian Development Bank (Aiyer 2007).

⁷ Research on Romanian and Kerala demonstrations was conducted in 2007 and 2008. In seven months of research in Kerala (January-July 2008) I inventoried protests and demonstrations mainly in Thiruvananthapuram, the Kerala capital. In Romania we observed and tallied protest activities in 2006 and the summer 2007.

⁸ These were organized by religious actors who feared the "666" inscribed on the chip would deleteriously harm those who carried these passports.

⁹ San Marino, the enclave on the Italian peninsula, actually had an earlier communist government which governed that country from 1941-57.

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