Chronic Poverty
Research Centre

The efficacy of women's social movements to include chronically poor women and give voice to their demands

A literature review

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What is Chronic Poverty?

The distinguishing feature of chronic poverty is extended duration in absolute poverty.

Therefore, chronically poor people always, or usually, live below a poverty line, which is normally defined in terms of a money indicator (e.g. consumption, income, etc.), but could also be defined in terms of wider or subjective aspects of deprivation.

This is different from the transitorily poor, who move in and out of poverty, or only occasionally fall below the poverty line.

Abstract

Social movements are known to struggle to include, or be representative of, chronically poor women (Cleaver, 2005; Mumtaz, 2005; Schady, 2001; Thorp *et al.*, 2005). The objective of this review and annotated bibliography[1] is to examine social movements within and across various strata of society (i.e. not only the chronically poor; and case studies that include men and women), in order to identify the key features that may facilitate or limit the ability of social movement organisations (SMOs) to be inclusive of the chronically poor and give voice to their demands.

In the literature review, the key findings are presented as a set of six strategies for social movement organisations. Over the course of five chapters, evidence is presented which supports and contests these strategies.

- Ultimately, the review reveals that social movement organisations are said to be more able to engage in collective action that is inclusive of chronically women when they:

- promote inclusive organisational structures, including new, accountable leadership opportunities;

- promote a unified group identity; and

- effectively address the constraints on chronically poor women's participation through the delivery of key resources, such as basic needs that address asset and time poverty.

SMOs will best be able to promote and represent the voice of chronically poor women when they:

- prioritise awareness raising and information dissemination on rights and entitlements to their membership and to wider society;

- manage equitable relations with external agents, including donor bodies; and

- engage with the state in meaningful and innovative ways.

The literature review is followed by a selected annotated bibliography of the supporting readings, which draw upon social movement, feminist, collective action and gendered chronic poverty literature.

Keywords: awareness raising, chronically poor women, collective action, co-operation, inclusive social movements, feminist movements, gender-specific resources, gendered

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[1] See CPRC Working Paper 172 / CPRC Annotated Bibliography 7

poverty, group identity, leadership, movement building, membership, mobilisation, representative social movements, social movements, social movements of the poor, social movement strategies, state engagement.

Acknowledgements

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Contents

1   Introduction

1.1   Background

This literature review seeks to compliment earlier work on social movements and collective action undertaken across the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) (see, for example, Bebbington, 2006; Bebbington and Mitlin, 2006). As part of the CPRC's gender policy stream, this review specifically seeks to understand the transformative potential of social movements for chronically poor women and to provide concrete recommendations on how best these movements and movement organisations can be supported and empowered by the wider development community.

1.2   Objectives and structure

Social movements are known to struggle to include, or be representative of, chronically poor women (Cleaver, 2005; Mumtaz, 2005; Schady, 2001; Thorp, Stewart and Heyer, 2005). The objective of this review is to examine social movements within and across various strata of society (i.e. not only the chronically poor; case studies that include men and women) to identify the key features that may facilitate or limit the ability of social movement organisations to be inclusive of chronically poor people and give voice to their demands. This literature review and annotated bibliography draw upon a selection of social movement, collective action, feminist and gendered chronic poverty literature. The key findings are presented as a set of six strategies for social movement organisations (hereafter, SMOs).

This literature review does not assume that these six strategies are exhaustive or wholly conclusive. As Section 2.2, 'Gendered poverty and vulnerabilities of chronically poor women', discusses, the many time demands and responsibilities faced by chronically poor women may render social movement participation an impossible option for some women. Further, it cannot be assumed that participation in a social movement will be desirable for all chronically poor women, for reasons that will reflect the diversity of values and priorities that are held by chronically poor women. However, this review does seek to highlight the frequently identified barriers in the literature which preclude the inclusion of chronically poor women in social movements, or which limit their ability to have their voices heard, both within the organisation and in the community, once involved in a movement.

This literature review consists of five chapters: Introduction; Concepts and frameworks; SMO strategies: being inclusive of chronically poor women; SMO strategies: promoting and representing the voice of chronically poor women; and Conclusions.

The second chapter is 'Concepts and frameworks'. Rather than providing an exhaustive exposition of what in reality are lengthy and contentious topics, this chapter affords the reader a brief outline of fundamental issues that underpin this review. The chapter begins by

defining social movements and the term 'social movement organisation', as understood by this review. It also discusses perspectives on the potential utility of social movements for chronically poor women, by looking at how social movements could potentially bring about pro-poor social change. This is followed by a discussion of chronically poor women, and the gendered vulnerabilities they face. This is relevant in understanding why it is difficult for many chronically poor women to participate in SMOs, and why it has been challenging for SMOs to be inclusive of them. The ability of chronically poor people to participate in groups, including ideas on social capital and cooperation, is outlined in the following section. The final section discusses the factors and conditions which influence the emergence of social movements.

The third chapter, 'SMO strategies: being inclusive of chronically poor women', discusses the first three of the six SMO strategies discussed by this review which directly relate to issues of SMO inclusion. Section 3.1 discusses the importance of accessible leadership and the issue of power-sharing within SMOs that does not preclude the influence of the chronically poor. Section 3.2 explores literature on group identity. Ideas on group identity are important, as they contribute to understanding: what attracts and commits members to the movement; how movement action is sustained; how movement fractures are resisted in times of crises; and how confidence in the objectives of the SMO is inspired among membership. The final section in the third chapter deals with the gender-specific resources that directly address the societal issues and various forms of asset poverty which frequently make it undesirable or impossible for chronically poor people to become involved in social movement activities.

The fourth chapter, 'SMO strategies: promoting and representing the voice of chronically poor women', is subdivided into three sections, which consider the final three strategies discussed by this review. SMOs can promote and represent the voice of chronically poor women by, firstly, reducing dependency on funding and managing equitable external relations; secondly, prioritising awareness-raising and investing in technological tools that reach men and women at all levels of society; and, thirdly, utilising innovative state engagement strategies.

Throughout the review, literature draws upon theory and case studies from around the world to distil the broad structural, cohesive and strategic aspects of social movement organising which can shape its ability to facilitate membership and leadership among chronically poor women. These factors also relate to the ability of social movements to secure gender-specific, pro-poor membership base demands.

The concluding chapter of this review recapitulates the six strategies of SMO organising discussed by this paper: accountable leadership; cohesive membership identity; gender-specific resources; reducing dependency on external agents; prioritising awareness raising; and innovative state engagement which impact the ability of an SMO to include and

represent the chronically poor and give voice to the pro-poor demands of chronically poor people.

2   Concepts and frameworks

2.1   What do we mean by social movements?

In order to examine the potential for women's social movement organisations to include chronically poor women and give voice to their demands, it is first necessary to clarify what is meant by social movements in the context of this review. The objective of this review is to distil broad strategic lessons from a range of social movement experiences. For this reason, this review draws upon Batliwala's simple definition of social movements as 'an organized set of constituents pursuing a common political agenda of change through collective action' (2008a: 10), to permit discussion of a diverse range of social movements which have occurred in a variety of social and cultural contexts.

Social movements emerge from and are based upon collective action. Social movements consist of a visible constituency base or membership, where members are joined together in either a formal or informal organisation. Social movements also extend their reach through space and time. Movements are based on networks of informal interaction; an isolated organisation is not a social movement (Diani, 1992). Social movements demonstrate continuity over time: one spontaneous protest or single campaign is not considered to be a social movement, although they certainly can lead to the growth of one.

Feminist movements in particular have been characterised as having an agenda built from gendered perspectives, where women form the critical mass and the leadership; espousing feminist values, ideology and gendered political goals; consisting of flatter hierarchies or more collective leadership; and demonstrating gendered strategies and methods, which include women at every stage (Alpizar Duran, Payne and Russo, 2007; Batliwala, 2008a). Batliwala (2008a) distinguishes between building feminist movements and feminist movement building. The first is a process that mobilises women for struggles whose goals are specific to gender equality outcomes. The second could be defined as the attempt to bring feminist analysis and gender-equality perspectives into other movements.

There is no evidence to suggest that social movements are defined by singular organisations. However, social movements do need organisations, or a form of organisational structure, in order to mobilise resources and ensure coordinated action over a sustained period of time (Stienstra, 1999). As such, using the social movement organisation (SMO) as the unit of analysis, this paper will review the literature which discusses the structural, cohesive and strategic features which impact upon on how successful an SMO can be in, firstly, facilitating the participation of chronically poor women by confronting the multiple challenges they face and, secondly, in giving voice to their demands.

SMOs of the poor fall within Crowley *et al.*'s (2005) definition of 'membership-based organisations of the poor', or MBOPs. These authors define MBOPs: 'member-financed and member-controlled organisations of the poor that have the economic and administrative power to act independently...and some measure of financial and technical ability to survive and sustain their activities in the long run' (2005:3). These authors also use the 'organisation',[2] as the unit of analysis, defined as 'entities or structured arrangements of individuals oriented around a defined process in which individuals are assigned specific roles and responsibilities to attain certain goals' (Crowley *et al.,* 2005:3).The SMOs discussed in this review formulate political goals and have membership which engages in collective activities in pursuit of these political goals. An SMO will have various activities and strategies, which will range from peaceful non-violent resistance through to confrontational, militant actions. Alternatively or additionally, these strategies include public opinion building or advocacy strategies.

Chen *et al.* (2006:3) distinguish between membership-based organisations and non-governmental organisations. For these authors, membership-based organisations are fundamentally different from other non-governmental organisations. The democratic governance structures of membership-based organisations are intended to provide both internal accountability (leaders are elected) and external legitimacy (leaders represent their constituency) – characteristics which are not shared by other non-governmental organisations. While it is important to make this distinction, NGOs and membership-based organisations can enjoy close and important relationships (Alvarez, 2009; Chen *et. al.*, 2006; Crowley *et al.,* 2005; Hoare and Gell, 2008).

Finally, social movements have clear internal and/or external targets for their agendas of change. Batliwala (2008a:11) noted that SMOs activities target a range of actors:

- Their own membership or local communities (when mobilising to change discriminatory customs and social practices);

- Society at large (to change negative attitudes, biases or perceptions of themselves, e.g. racial, gender-based, ethnic or religious discrimination);

- Other social groups (in claiming land rights or fair wages from landowners/ employers);

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[2] Crowley et al. (2005) also distinguish between 'organisations' and 'institutions'. 'Institutions' are distinct from 'organisations', in that they refer to definable sets of socially accepted rules and practices that regulate social behaviour and govern different types of collective action. To illustrate the distinction, the authors consider a football team to be an organisation, whereas the game, which follows a set of rules, is an institution (Crowley et al., 2005:3).

- The state or other regimes in power (demanding legal reform, policy, change, or regime shifts, e.g. democracy, anti-neoliberalism);

- Private sector actors (to challenge employment practices, environmental damage caused, or natural resource appropriation);

- International institutions (such as the World Bank, UN, IMF, WTO); and

- A combination of the above.

Social movements over the past two decades have broadly experienced growing crises regarding increased SMO activity dependence on external funding and in determining a role for international donors in SMO growth that does not impinge upon movement agency or sustainability (Batliwala, 2008b). Feminist movements in particular have faced a number of related challenges, which have included: the co-option of feminist ideology by powerful mainstream institutions; resurgence of fundamentalism; funding diversions from movement building to projects and interventions; emphasis on quick fixes in development circles; NGO-isation of feminist movements as they compete for scarce resources; and the splintering of feminist movements ('NGO-isation' is to be discussed further below) (Batliwala, 2008a).

However, social movements remain key modes of contestation and social change around the world. Social movements challenge the structures which replicate chronic poverty (Bebbington, 2006; Chen *et al.,* 2006). By changing the way that the poor are seen within society (and how they see themselves) through consciousness-raising and political awareness, the SMO actors are able to have a direct impact on the assets they hold, and the opportunities they have access to (Chen *et al.,* 2006; Braunholtz-Speight, 2008; Sinha, 2003). Social movements can be opportunities for the excluded and the powerless to collectively express grievances, whereas alone they would have been silent or ignored (Crowley *et al.,* 2005; Dannecker, 2000). Social movements as a mode of change are less remote, easier to access and less expensive than formal law (Batliwala, 2008a) and can be used hold governments to account for signed international accords and domestic responsibilities (Sever, 2005). Women's social movements in particular are able to directly challenge the power and practice of patriarchy, and thus are far better able to tackle and bring down the barriers to women's equality and political engagement in the sites where they are most embedded (Batliwala, 2008a).

2.2 Gendered poverty and vulnerabilities of chronically poor women

Understanding the gendered poverty and gendered vulnerability issues that chronically poor women face is important in revealing the issues which challenge how far they are able to participate or be included in SMOs, and have their voices heard.

Concepts of poverty have broadened and deepened over the past decade (Shaffer, 2008). Firstly, ideas on poverty have expanded from a physiological model of deprivation to a social one, affording more attention to issues of vulnerability, inequality and human rights. Secondly, a range of causal variables which previously received little attention, such as political, social, cultural, coercive and environmental capital, are becoming key considerations in policy circles. The implications of this are that interventions which previously solely focused on human and economic capital are now being eclipsed by interventions which prioritise empowerment, social organisation, legal reform and human rights (Shaffer, 2008:27). This review of social movement organisation strategies intends to contribute to this expanded contemporary view of poverty.

Perspectives agree that 'poverty' and 'vulnerability' are distinct (Moser, 1998; Shaffer, 2008). For Moser (1998), poverty is a more static concept, as poverty measures are usually fixed in time. However, 'vulnerability' denotes a more dynamic process, which captures the changes that are occurring as people move in and out of poverty. As such, not all vulnerable women are necessarily poor at a given moment in time. Moser defines vulnerability as 'insecurity and sensitivity in the well-being of individual, households, and communities in the face of a changing environment, and implicit in this their responsiveness and resilience to risks that they face during such negative changes' (1998: 9).

This review understands chronic poverty as multidimensional deprivation that goes beyond very low income. While many of the world's poor fluctuate in and out of severe poverty, chronic poverty often lasts a lifetime. Chronic poverty is hunger, under-nutrition, illiteracy and poor sanitation, combined with poor access to basic health services, social discrimination, physical insecurity and political exclusion. Chronic poverty is often passed onto the next generation. Those trapped in chronic poverty often die prematurely from easily preventable health problems (CPRC, 2009:vii).

The relationship between gender and poverty is not only thought to be multidimensional, but multisectoral. It is not just experienced in the home, but in the community, the labour market, the legal environment, the social policy arena, in territories of war, conflict and natural disaster and a range of other 'spaces' (Bradshaw and Linneker, 2003; Chant, 2010). Not all poor women suffer from the same forms of gendered poverty. Gendered poverty may be compounded by other discriminatory factors on the basis of caste, class, ethnicity or religion.

It has been posited that households that are female-headed, due to death or divorce (formally or informally) of the male partner, or female-managed, due to long-term absences of the male partner, may suffer from unusual hardships (Huisman, 2005). Known as the 'feminisation of poverty', this thesis locates extreme poverty within female-headed households. Over the past 15 years, emphasis has been placed on the female-headed household as the locus of the deepest forms of poverty (Sen, 2010). Chant (2008) discusses

the 'feminisation of poverty' thesis at length, which, briefly articulated, is the overemphasis on women's monetary poverty and on female household headship (2008:187).

While this thesis has brought a greater attention to gender in policy circles, and distributed much-needed resources, it has also resulted in interventions which have intensified the time and responsibility burdens that many poor women face (to be discussed further below) (Chant, 2008; Chant, 2010). Further, the 'feminisation of poverty' perspective tends to marginalise men in analyses and programming. Such an approach serves to sanction and exacerbate existing gender norms and permit men to abscond from contributing to household survival or playing a role in poverty alleviation. The sidelining of men not only means that the burdens of tackling poverty in the home are not being shared, but that interventions cannot hope to renegotiate the gender relations that perpetuate women's vulnerability. Chant notes that such interventions will have 'little power to destabilise deeply-embedded structures of gender inequality in the home, the labour market and other institutions' (2008:185).

As such, gendered poverty resists theories which attempt to concentrate it in isolated persons or spaces (Chant, 2010; Sen, 2010). Gendered poverty may be experienced in multiple forms and severity even within the same home (Sen, 2010). Gendered poverty is experienced by men and boys as well as women, and is impacted by a range of shifting and interacting individual, household, local and national factors (Chant, 2010). These authors argue that, although households headed by women may well be poor, by foregrounding this phenomenon, much complexity is obscured, and much need may be missed. This idea finds support in Moser's (1998) work on assets and vulnerability, which noted: 'non-poor households are not necessarily the least vulnerable – strategies to increase short-term income may damage their long-term asset base' (1998:14). The embedded nature of gendered poverty necessitates the inclusion of gendered issues in all pro-poor governance, and calls for measures which not only lift women and their dependents from chronic poverty, but transform the socialisation of the next generation of males and females (Sever, 2005).

The gender-specific issues that make women particularly vulnerable to chronic poverty are well known: fewer benefits and protections under customary or statutory legal systems than men; lack of decision-making authority and control of financial resources; greater time-burdens, including the unequal distribution of labour and burden of care of the sick, elderly and extended family; greater responsibilities for household survival and childcare; social isolation; threats or acts or violence; economic and social hardships incurred through divorce or widowhood; fewer educational and skills-based training opportunities as compared to men (Ambler *et al.,* 2007; Chant, 2008; Hickey and Bracking, 2005; Huisman, 2005; Hulme and Sen, 2004; Mulikita, 2006). These vulnerabilities are intensified by individual and societal attitudes and values (e.g. low self-confidence in ability to effect change; taboos on women in politics, respectively) which constrict the capacity of women to break free of their circumstances.

Nevertheless, the idea of 'vulnerability' should not obscure the capacities that those who do live on the margins employ to cope with 'livelihood shocks' and emergencies. 'The means of resistance are the assets and entitlements that individuals, households or communities can mobilize and manage in the face of hardship' (Moser, 1998:3). The more assets people have, the less vulnerable they are considered to be. Moser explores five key assets which may be held in various quantities over various periods by the poor: labour; human capital; housing; household relations; and social capital. The chronically poor are thought to adopt collective 'risk-coping mechanisms' in the community, including mutual insurance, group borrowing, co-operation in technology adoption, etc., to manage shocks (Mwangi and Markelova, 2009).

Poor men and women also employ a range of strategies to respond to poverty in the household to manage risk and guard against insecurity (Moser, 1998; Sen, 2010). However, many of these responses place extra burdens on women and girls in the home and result in difficult time allocation dilemmas. Further, gender norms mean that women are expected to be self-sacrificing and less often recognise their own need for decent nutrition and healthcare. Care work and household maintenance are disproportionately carried out by women and girls, which limits the time that women have to engage in income-earning opportunities, social exchanges, leisure or rest (Sen, 2010).

These greater household responsibilities and time demands also mean that chronically poor women are frequently unable to benefit from, or in some cases are directly disadvantaged by, decentralised development interventions which devolve responsibilities for social programmes to the 'community' (or, largely women). Such development programmes have intensified the time burdens and responsibilities that women have for household survival, and thereby their economic vulnerability in an age when intergenerational reciprocity may be in decline (Chant, 2008; Chant, 2010; Molyneux, 2006; Sen, 2010). Women are an over-utilised resource and women's time burdens are an important constraint on growth and development (Chant, 2008; Chant, 2010; Sen, 2010). Chant's thesis on the 'feminisation of responsibility and obligation' describes the phenomenon of women being increasingly responsible for household survival (including the direct support of men), and simultaneously the protagonists of development interventions which seek to tackle their material poverty rather than their positions in society. Interventions which target women as 'conduits of policy' (Molyneux, 2006:439), reinforce traditional gender roles and marginalise the responsibilities of men have been seen to intensify the burdens of time and disadvantage on poor women. Time burdens are therefore an important potential barrier for the participation of chronically poor women in social movement organisations.

It has been argued that at the core of women's vulnerabilities to chronic poverty is a lack of voice and agency. The latter are key to accessing more equitable social, economic and political positions within society (Bird *et al.,* 2004; Hickey and Bracking, 2005). The marginalisation of women's voices is seen in the international policy context. The PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers) initiative was launched by the World Bank and the IMF

in 1999. In order to receive debt relief and concessionary loans, governments are required to submit a plan for poverty reduction, based on the specific needs of their citizens. This initiative was promoted as participatory and country owned (Bradshaw and Linneker, 2003).

However, a number of issues abound which limit how participatory the PRSP process can be, particularly concerning women's participation. When women did participate in official PRSP processes in Nicaragua and Honduras, their voices were often ignored or marginalised, as gendered concerns were considered to be of secondary importance (Bradshaw and Linneker, 2003). A poor reception to gendered issues in mixed civil society forums led to the silence of women or the withdrawal of participation. In Nicaragua and Honduras, splits were seen to occur within women's groups and women's movements on whether to participate in official PRSP processes, due to the difficulties inherent in having their perspectives and recommendations included in the final PRSP documents submitted by their governments (ibid.).

Ultimately, political and economic engagement is considered fundamental in eliminating gender-based poverty (Hoare and Gell, 2008). Improvements to women's agency are linked with improvements to maternal health, child nutrition, women's earning power and a greater control over fertility decisions, which are important factors in reducing chronic poverty (Hulme and Sen 2004).

2.3   Group formation and cooperation among the chronically poor

The seminal works on cooperation (Hardin, 1968; Olson 1965; Ostrom, 1990) have analysed the utility of the group from an individual maximising perspective. Contemporary collective action scholarship has introduced a variety of perspectives that an emphasis on self-interest alone fails to consider. Group formation or collective action is considered valuable to the poor in managing risk, sharing natural resources and in supporting various stages of production (Mwangi and Markelova, 2009; Upton, 2008).

It has been argued that organisations are important for the poor, because compared to poor individuals, organised groups have a better chance to have their voices heard, improve their wellbeing, access information channels, organise for collective action and compel those in power to pay attention to their needs . Poor individuals also gain access to a wider range of resources, skills, information, knowledge and experience, as well as to the power that their combined numbers and assets represent (Crowley 2005: 5). Thorp, Stewart and Heyer (2006) also assert that forming groups can offer the chronically poor greater voice and a potential route out of poverty. However, they also describe how chronically poor people may be less likely to form groups and less likely to make a success of groups, and how the poorest may typically be excluded from successful groups (2005: 1). The chronically poor are disadvantaged in group formation in a number of ways. As discussed above, chronically poor women in particular often have high burdens of responsibility in the home, which can make

participation in social movement activities prohibitively costly, with no firm guarantee of group success in accessing their demands (Chant, 2008; Chant, 2010; Cleaver, 2005; Mumtaz, 2005; Schady 2001; Thorp, *et al.*, 2005). Other factors include: social isolation and lack of networks (or inability to call upon networks (Willis, 2000)); low levels of assets; lack of recognition as citizens; low levels of the education necessary to appreciate the gains that social mobilisation can bring (Schady, 2001); and poor access to political institutions (Jones *et al.* 2009). These are the key factors which make it difficult for the chronically poor to participate in social movements (Hickey and Bracking, 2005).

However, this does not imply that chronically poor people do not participate in groups. It has been suggested that organisations of poor people around the world are central to achieving equitable growth and poverty reduction (Chen *et al.,* 2006). Among indigenous groups, traditional group organisation systems, such as the *ayullu* in Quechua-Aymara communities, operate based on systems of reciprocity or *ayni* and *minka*.[3] Examples of groups of the chronically poor may include: trade unions, savings-and-credit clubs, self-help groups, informal insurance institutions, village or slum associations and cooperatives of various forms (Chen *et al.,* 2006; Crowley *et al.,* 2005). Organisations of poor people are thought to occur along a continuum: from entirely self-sustained organisations of the poor, which are created, owned and sustained by poor members themselves, to those which are conceived and controlled by non-poor external agents (Crowley *et al.*, 2005:7)

The consideration of social capital is key in understanding how women may choose to cooperate within such groups in their communities. In Moser's (1998:4) classic paper on assets and vulnerability, she defines social capital as 'reciprocity within communities and between households based on trust deriving from social ties'.

The mobilisation of social capital is not static, and has been shown to be responsive to changing household and societal circumstances, which can consolidate or erode social capital. When households are coping, they support others. When their assets are depleted, they cease to support the community (Moser, 1998; Willis, 2000). Factors within the community also influence how women mobilise social capital: 'the greater vulnerability of poorer households to service deficiencies and cuts in public spending in turn has influenced their capacity to mobilize their labor as an asset…deteriorating access to services means more time is required to meet daily basic needs, with women most severely affected' (Moser 1998: 10). Servicing time-consuming basic needs, such as collecting water and maximising household labour, may mean women have less time available for community-based activities. Further, when social capital is eroded, for example through rising levels of violence in the community, the willingness of community members to participate in community-based organisations can be affected (Moser, 1998).

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[3] E. Karp-Toledo, personal communication, 2 March, 2010.

Socioeconomic status is also an important factor in social capital mobilisation. A study which has examined women's use of social capital between socioeconomic groups in Oaxaca, Mexico, challenges the assumption that network mobilisation for the exchange of goods and services only takes place between low-income groups (Willis, 2000). This paper highlights that network mobilisation requires the ability to reciprocate, and thus can exclude those who do not have the time or resources to engage in such exchange.

2.4   Factors which influence the emergence of social movements

Calhoun (1993) identifies three academic periods in social movement theory, typified by a shifting consensus on how and why social movements are formed. During the functionalist sociological approach, social movements were viewed as a deviant, irrational response to the strains of modern life. From the 1970s, the resource mobilisation theorists gained prominence, conceiving of social movements as rational action and applying theories of rational choice. Finally, the 'new social movement' theorists emerged, who asserted that movements today are categorically different from those in the past, prioritising the cultural and aesthetic aspects of social movements.

Today, gender has gained importance as an explanatory factor in the emergence, nature and outcomes of social movements. Since the 1990s, literature incorporating a gender analysis of social movements has surged in growth (Beckwith, 2001; Dannecker, 2000; Franceschet and Macdonald, 2004; Grewal, 2006; Lind, 2005; Rao, 2005). Taylor argues that gender constructs explain all social movements (even those that do not evoke the language of gender conflict or explicitly embrace gender change) through three broad sets of factors: the political and cultural context that supports and constrains protest; the mobilising structures and strategies through which protest is expressed, and the frames of meaning challengers use to identify their grievances and collective commonalities (Taylor, 1999:13). Calling for a greater fusion of social movement and gender literature, Taylor emphasises the need for theory that would address these intersections. Gender-specific investigations of social movements not only provide a tool for better analysis, but are also able to simultaneously highlight gender inequality as well as processes of resistance and change (Taylor, 1999:9).

Factors which may suppress the emergence of organisations of the poor include: traditional socio-economic 'levelling mechanisms' (protecting the privileged positions of local power holders); open suppression by dominant political groups; and the absence of policies and legislative and regulatory frameworks that uphold the rights of association, assembly and freedom of expression (Crowley *et al.,* 2005: 43). However, it has also been emphasised that social movements have flourished within a full spectrum of socio-political and historical contexts, which suggests that social movement emergence is not entirely predicated upon a set of 'enabling' or 'disabling' contextual conditions (Batliwala, 2008a: 53). Scholarship has identified factors which spark their formation in a variety of political settings. Relating this to chronic poverty, it has been argued that social movements emerge in response to specific

difficulties, challenges and grievances, rather than chronic poverty itself (Bebbington and Mitlin, 2006; Thorp *et al.*, 2005). Forms of grievances among the chronically poor are identified as:

- *Exploitation:* for example, in the workplace, which can give rise to trade unions and labour movements;

- *Dispossession:* such as the privatisation of natural resources, which can give rise to movements surrounding land and minority discrimination rights; and

- *Systematic socioeconomic exclusion:* where particular groups are consistently denied assets or services (Bebbington and Mitlin, 2006: 5).

Interestingly, the emergence of organisations of the poor has been linked to the availability of social welfare programmes and social safety nets. Crowley *et al.* (2005) note that, historically, in many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America, organisations of the poor in the form of mutual assistance groups have emerged in areas where there was an absence of formal safety nets and government or private programmes to address the basic needs of the poor (2005: 19). In contrast, examples exist where strong public welfare systems and social funds have acted as a disincentive for the poor to organise, as in the case of Mexico (2005: 19). However, the authors also acknowledge that since the 1970s, the rise of privatisation and the mainstreaming of 'participatory processes' have resulted in increasing government policies which create and expand organisations of poor people as part of decentralisation strategies.

And now a word on action strategies, or how SMOs choose to mobilise to access the demands they make once they have emerged. Social movement literature does not reach a consensus on the efficacy of specific mobilisation strategies/ideological strategies (i.e. negotiation vs. confrontation; violence vs. non-violence; direct action vs. passive resistance). The reality of effective SMOs appears to be shifting combinations of strategies that are responsive to the needs of their membership and the socio-political context of the movement itself. One view argues that women's movement action strategies reflect the pervasive, structural embeddedness of gender relations. Thus, women's activist organisations are diffuse, autonomous, fluid and local, as a large portion of participants' activism is embedded in beliefs and everyday actions (Taylor, 1999).

Some debate does surround the impact of rights-based claim strategies. Some literature maintains that rights-based claims (e.g. trade unions, landless movements, women's groups) are the most salient, effective way for chronically poor people and issues of poverty to be represented in social movements, and for the voices of the chronically poor to be heard (Harriss-White, 2005; Hickey and Bracking, 2005; Thorp *et al.,* 2005). However, such arguments lack clarity, as it is also acknowledged that not all local organisations and landless movements are welcome spaces for women, nor inclusive of the weak and marginalised

(Pimbert, 2006). Hickey and Bracking touch upon these concerns, adding that the very poorest may lack the capacity to make claims on their rights, and may prefer less confrontational routes out of poverty, such as patron-client linkages, or even isolation.

Ultimately, as will be discussed further below, effective SMO activities are diverse and transformative. The heterogeneous socio-political realities in which they operate necessitate a range of mobilisation modalities. This suggests that SMO action strategy typologies will have limited importance in practical discussions of how social movements are able to give voice to, or be inclusive of, chronically poor women as members. More important factors are how strategies are conceptualised, transformed, and cohesively adhered to within the life of an SMO, as is discussed in Section 3 below.

3 SMO strategies: being inclusive of chronically poor women

This section addresses key social movement organisational structure and activity strategies highlighted by the literature which can promote the inclusion of chronically poor women. While there is a dearth of literature focusing explicitly on social movements of the *chronically* poor,[4] this review will draw lessons from a broad range of social movements, relating them to the well known barriers and challenges that are specific to the experience of chronic poverty.

3.1 Build and support new, accountable leadership among chronically poor women

3.1.1 Confront power hierarchies within the organisation

The importance of inclusive organisations which resist replicating class and generational power imbalances within their organisational structure is frequently underlined (Al-Ali, 2002; Crowley, *et al.* 2005; Dannecker, 2000; Harcourt, 2006; Lind and Farmelo, 1996; Pimbert, 2006; Sever, 2005; Shekar, 2008). 'Maintaining members' equity stake in the organisation, ensuring that leaders are considered legitimate by members… appear[s] to be consistently important for successful MBOPs'[5] (Crowley *et al.,* 2005: iii).

A review of feminist organisations in Turkey and Egypt has found SMOs to only be representative of secular middle classes (Al-Ali 2002). Shekar's (2008) commentary on Fiji also suggests that feminist movements have a tendency to attract the educated elite. Power-sharing within the Fijian women's movement was riddled with tension, and illustrated the difficulty that some women's SMOs face in resisting the replication of patriarchal power structures. Lind and Farmelo (1996) argue that these class biases also pervade Western feminist literature, which focuses on middle-class women's movements.

Similarly, generational cleavages can be replicated within SMOs. A number of authors express concern that women's movements do not negotiate between the differences that occur across generational lines. Case studies reveal that in a number of societies older women may monopolise leadership positions within movements (Dannecker, 2000). Wilson *et al.* (2005) argue that, although young women's organising differs from that of earlier generations, young women are able to strengthen and re-energise women's movements.

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[4] The scarcity of literature on social movements of chronically poor women is also indicative of the limited models that exist in practice. Firstly, as previously discussed, Bebbington and Mitlin (2006) argue that social movements emerge in response to specific challenges/grievances, rather than chronic poverty per se. Secondly, the limiting/facilitating factors on movements of the chronically poor go some way to explain why chronically poor women are so frequently unable to participate in SMOs, as discussed in detail in Section 2.2.

[5] Membership-based organisations of the poor.

Movements need to be framed as relevant to all women and all ages, confront competition between generations and promote an inclusive agenda (Rosas and Wilson, 2003).

These authors argue that the future of women's movements demands that the link between older feminist and young women's organisations be strengthened. Combating intergenerational cleavages will not only lie in intergenerational dialogue, which gives equal weight to experience and fresh perspectives, but will involve a shift in structures which limit leadership opportunities across generations.

To confront these issues, Dannecker (2000) describes the importance of cultivating new leadership across age and seniority lines to enable women to challenge power imbalances in their daily lives (see Box 1).

Box 1: Promoting new leadership: confronting power hierarchies in Bangladeshi garment factories

Dannecker (2000) examines how hierarchies impact formal and informal instances of collective action within the Bangladeshi garment production sector. Women workers created an atmosphere of sisterhood within the garment factories, which allowed new, younger female workers to feel as though their interests were being looked after by the older, senior women operators. However, as senior operator approval was seen to be essential for any negotiations with factory management to take place, this power differential also had the effect of disentitling younger women to leadership opportunities. This hierarchy, formed around age and seniority, became an issue when the senior women operators chose not to act on behalf of the younger women, or when factory management quelled collective action efforts by satisfying the demands of the senior factory operators, and not those of the younger workers.

The formation of the Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers' Union directly addressed these power imbalances within the garment factories by placing emphasis on cultivating a membership base of leaders. The union drew its executive committee from women with at least five years' experience in garment factories. They existed as 'organisers', mandated to encourage the women to become their own advocates.

Recognising that some women would be more inclined towards leadership than others, these women were motivated and encouraged individually. All women were tasked with choosing how they would like to become involved in the union, even if this was just to use involvement in the union as a means to develop personally. The union provided an arena for women to gain confidence, and to challenge the power differentials within their homes and their garment factories – and ultimately within the union itself.

3.1.2   *Support new leadership among chronically poor women*

SMOs with accessible leadership structures are the most successful at engaging with their poorest members and being responsive to their demands. Due to the lack of an early generation of educated rural women, leadership positions in rural women's movements in India have a history of being filled by women from other social and physical locations, who base the movement's agenda on what they *think* that women want and need (Jackson, 2003: 461).

Promoting women leaders, both inside and outside of the SMO, is also an important step in creating a pro-poor policy environment for chronically poor women. Case studies from Mexico, South Africa, Kenya and the Czech Republic demonstrate that women must be their own advocates when accessing demands (Batliwala, 2008a). While an effective feminist NGO may encourage women to use their 'agency', they may not mobilise women from their constituency into primary leadership.

SMOs have a role in providing a supportive environment (opportunities and resources) to their chronically poor female membership to encourage the emergence of new leadership across age, seniority and class lines. Several authors contribute to the discussion of which tangible and intangible support resources must be provided to enable the meaningful participation of new (not necessarily young) chronically poor women leaders (Batliwala, 2008a; Dannecker, 2000; Harcourt, 2006; Hoare and Gell, 2008; Thorp *et al*., 2005). Hoare and Gell (2008), in particular, provide clear guidelines on how targeted training should be made available for women who wish to assume leadership positions. Context-specific training will provide women with campaigning and leadership skills, knowledge of political systems and structures, and legal-rights education. Such training should not preclude the illiterate.

Support resources and training should also be made available to newly elected women leaders, who may feel isolated and ill-equipped in what can be hostile, male–dominated environments. External agents may have a role in providing continued training and support wherever at this stage more in-depth training can be offered, such as in literacy skills, to allow new women leaders to be more effective in their roles. Ongoing training schemes in Haiti and Cambodia have included public speaking training and opportunities to share best practices among other women leaders (Hoare and Gell, 2008:13).

While the importance of greater leadership opportunities for chronically poor women is not disputed, we have seen that it cannot be assumed that women leaders will always hold themselves accountable to a gendered agenda (or indeed, that men will never choose to act in the interests of women) (Hoare and Gell, 2008, Rao, 2005; also see Jackson, 2003). Therefore, women's SMOs will have a major role in lobbying male and female officials within government to spread awareness about and commitment to gender-specific issues of poverty. Through training schemes and alliance building, SMOs have a role in lobbying female politicians directly – forging links between congresswomen and women's rights organisations. SMOs should also frame gender consciousness campaigns in ways which target male leadership. As the contemporary decision-makers in many societies, and as fellow citizens, women's SMOs cannot afford to bypass effective outreach to men in society.

3.1.3   *Build accountable leadership*

Accountable leaders are those who have the freedom to exercise an agenda steered by the needs and demands of their membership base that resists external capture by the state or elites (Goetz, 2002; Bebbington, 2006; Jones *et al.,* 2009). Crowley *et al.* find that: 'regular elections or periodic confirmation or rotation of leaders and mentoring of future leaders is important. Even though there is no hard and fast rule about the value of elite involvement, safeguards to avert "take over" by local elites often prove to be advantageous'(2005:44).

The literature reveals that power-sharing within the organisation can be hierarchical or more egalitarian, but the most important feature is that leadership demonstrates upward and downward accountability to all members (Batliwala, 2008a:67; Pimbert, 2006; Thorp *et al.*, 2005).

Hierarchical organisations have the potential to engage effectively with their poorest members. Pimbert (2006) notes that, while community-led food systems and organisations do not always share power equitably, decentralised, locally determined approaches play critical roles in sustaining farming, the environment and food security among the poor. Thorp, Stewart and Heyer (2005) cite Colombian coffee federations, Indian sugar collectives and fair trade cocoa syndicates in Bolivia to demonstrate that elites were able to mobilise social and financial capital to defray the costs of poor farmer participation in market networks. The key lesson that these studies illustrate is that democratic and accountable leadership will be an overriding factor in relation to horizontal or vertical governance structures: 'meaningful hierarchy with careful attention to democratic representation and downward and upward accountability are critical to the effectiveness of feminist movements' (Batliwala, 2008a: 67).

Accountable SMO leadership is representative of member needs and demands. As a grassroots SMO develops and seeks to step into the national and international arenas, the issue of how membership is represented can become problematic. Harcourt (2006) discusses the discontinuity between local and 'global' social movements, raising the question of how representative local level international actors can hope to be in the context of women's movements collaborating with multinationals such as the United Nations. Harcourt (2006) concludes that considerable tensions exist concerning how to bring new or old marginal voices into the global arena and how to build capacity to ensure renewed leadership. The strongest tensions are between those active at the local level and those in the international arena, not least as there is little way to guarantee who is 'an ally and who is not' (Harcourt 2006: 26). It is therefore difficult to assess how representative of local movements those conversing within the international area are in practice. Harcourt's major concerns include how to make global women's movements reflect 'place-based' struggles of women in their communities and localities, surrounding reproductive and sexual health, livelihood, home and rights.

Elite capture or regulation of SMO activities can also limit how accountable leadership can be to an agenda which is steered by the needs and demands of their membership base (Goetz, 2002; Bebbington, 2006; Jones *et al.,* 2009). Franceschet and Macdonald (2004) describe the encroachment of the state on the ideological goals of women's movements in Chile and Mexico. In Brazil, Houtzager (2008) has found government regulation of social organisations to explain the lack of debate over how minimum income programmes were designed and implemented.

However, the literature also reveals that the blanket term 'elite capture' is perhaps an oversimplification. Beard and Dasgupta (2006) provide a nuanced study of the influence of elites within grassroots-level development projects in Indonesia. The authors distinguished between 'elite control' (control over leadership and decision-making) and 'elite capture' (ill-appropriated power, whereby elites dominate and corrupt community-level planning and governance). Using three case studies, Beard and Dasgupta's analysis reveals a complex picture. Community development projects controlled by elites were shown to deliver resources efficiently to poor beneficiaries. Decision-making within these projects was not participatory or democratic, but local elites were accountable to the community, contributing time and knowledge to reach the poorest members of community. In another case study, where power was most evenly distributed, the community decided to limit resource allocation to its poorest members. While their findings underscore the fact that not all elites are corrupt, Beard and Dasgupta emphasise that the distinct advantage of broad-based participation and democratic governance is that it provides the opportunities and political space necessary for a community to redress elite capture and other issues when they arise (2006: 244).

3.2   Build and sustain an internally unified group identity

A collective sense of purpose within an SMO coordinates objectives. It is also the basis for attracting members and sustaining action and it contributes to rendering SMO objectives possible for the membership. Shared SMOs' objectives must incorporate the vision and the needs of the most vulnerable in order to successfully integrate chronically poor people into a supportive group structure.

A key feature of an SMO is, then, how a sense of unity is fostered between its members. Social movements frame events in such a way as to construct a collective identity for their members. Gender, shared histories and shared ideology are common foundations for the construction of a unifying group identity (Barker, 2006; Beckwith, 2001; Crowley, *et al.* 2005: 25; Gooptu, 2002; Kelly and Breinlinger, 1995; Neuhouser, 1998; Padilla, 2004; Taylor, 1999). This is an important aspect of social movement organisation, as it permits fragmented groups of competitive, diverse, conflictual women to create a collective, positive identity in response to a shared experience of oppression. In order for a sense of collective identity and a common purpose to develop, members must perceive a link between their own interests and the interests of others (Dannecker, 2000; Diani, 1992; Thorp *et al.*, 2005:13). Crowley *et*

al. (2005) add that occupational homogeneity within an organisation may be one way in which members obtain a strong unifying set of interests, concerns, skills and clarity on the obstacles to be addressed within the organisation. This unity helps to foster group cohesion around common objectives and strategies and helps to minimise conflict (2005:25).

Efforts to tie the interests of one to the interests of others in SMOs through an emphasis on group identity have the potential to sensitise more affluent group members to the experience of the chronically poor people within the group. Thorp *et al.*, (2005: 5) believe that the capacity of groups to reinforce identity, a sense of self and relationship to society, provides an incentive for cooperative behaviour and empowering action in the interests of the group. This unifying collective identity helps to guard against the fracturing of SMOs along lines of class, gender or ethnicity – where group action is quelled by target authorities choosing to selectively service the needs of SMO group elites at the expense of the demands of socially marginalised group members (Dugan and Reger, 2008; Dannecker, 2000).

Further, effective SMOs are also adaptive and able to redefine membership identity in response to challenges (Beckwith, 2001). This idea is echoed by Batliwala (2008a), who observes that mobilisations of indigenous women in Mexico and *piqueteras* in Argentina were very selective about how and when to claim autonomous identities. Electing when to embed claims within the political agenda of the larger movement (i.e. rights for indigenous women via rights for all indigenous people), was found to be critical in both case studies, in order to avoid splintering the movement and undermining group objectives.

The construction of unifying group identity, then, appears to be an important strategic tool for various SMOs. Kelly and Breinlinger (1995) outline the conditions via which an individual in a group may choose to improve their circumstances, individually or by joining forces with others. This work discusses 'social identity theory', which says that individuals are more likely to participate in collective action to bring about social change if they identify strongly with a group. Social identity theory distinguishes between whether the societal status quo being challenged by movements is considered illegitimate and whether the current regime is considered unstable. Social theory predicts that, in the case of perceived illegitimacy, unifying group identity may be drawn from feelings of personal or collective deprivation. In the case of perceived instability in the current societal order, a more important factor is considered to be the idea that change is possible, and the individual feels that s/he can make a difference (political efficacy). Evidence in support of the political efficacy hypothesis is divided, and some consider it secondary to group identification as a factor in collective action. Participation in politics and feelings of efficacy can be seen to reinforce each other, and in one study, feelings of powerlessness were empirically associated with inaction (Kelly and Breinlinger, 1995).

Neuhouser (1998) introduces a slightly different angle to group identity theory, with his notion of 'identity commitment'. His work, based on mothers in north-eastern Brazil, suggests that

individuals will exhibit more commitment to one identity where options for other forms of positive self-identity are limited or non-existent.

Shared histories and experiences are important contributory factors in group identity formation within social movements. Barker (2006) describes the unifying nature of the shared experience of poverty, discrimination, physical and sexual abuse, displacement and disenfranchisement, that brought Indian women together to fight for redress (see Box 2). Gooptu's (2002) account of sex workers in Calcutta demonstrates how a fragmented group of competitive, diverse, conflictual women could create a collective, positive identity in response to a shared experience of oppression (cited by Thorp *et al.,* 2005: 13). The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina were firstly women and mothers, but their identities as part of a movement were consolidated as the 'mothers of the disappeared' as a result of the state-sponsored disappearances of their children during the 1976-1983 military dictatorship (Padilla 2004).

Scholarship varies greatly in explaining how gender shapes group unity within social movement organisations. (Re)defining gender identities within the context of group objectives can be a key tool in creating an agenda which all members can make sense of and support (Beckwith, 2001; Padilla, 2004; Taylor, 1999). Padilla (2004) suggests that social movements develop women's awareness of gendered inequalities. Through activism, many of these women adopt 'feminist identities', which act to challenge these injustices. Though noting that her respondents did not explicitly use the term 'feminist', Padilla applies the term to describe the trend of greater self-esteem and empowerment among the women and a greater sensitivity to the situation and wellbeing of other women, which serves to reinforce the relationships between fellow women activists within a movement. Padilla finds such 'feminist identities' to increase female solidarity, activism and consciousness in a positive feedback loop.

However, other authors are more measured in their description of how gender shapes a cohesive group identity in social movements. Batliwala highlights that some movements are more 'explicitly' feminist than others. She asks why some movements choose openly to adopt feminist identities and ideologies to unite and mobilise their membership base, while others hesitate to do so, even when they are mobilising isolated, marginalised or excluded women to gain visibility, voice, power and/or influence. Case studies from Kenya, Czech Republic and the United States discussed women's movements that resisted framing their claims or identities in terms of gender (Batliwala, 2008a:55). This work raises separate but important questions about the implications of movements that identify themselves as feminist: who they include or exclude and what specific challenges they face or avoid.

Box 2: Challenging cultural politics: Indian Women's Rights in Canada

Barker's (2006) salient account deals with the implications of the 1868 Indian Act in Canada, and details the gendered struggle to transform cultural politics through social mobilisation. This Act was initially amended in 1876, establishing patrilineality as the criterion for determining Indian status. This was contested by women's activist groups in 1983 and 1985, who were successful in partially reversing the constitutional recognition of patrilineage as a decisive factor in Indian identity. Their efforts were met with a forceful backlash, headed by Indian men and their supporters, branding the Indian female protestors as threats to Indian sovereignty, 'selfish individualists' and as being complicit with a legacy of colonialism and the imposition of non- (even 'anti') Indian principles and norms on Indian peoples. Barker argues that this case study exemplifies the controversial intersection of 'rights' and 'tradition' in struggles for equality: 'the idea that by affirming Indian women's rights to equality, Indian sovereignty is irrevocably undermined, affirms a sexism in Indian social formations that is not only a residue of the colonial past, but an agent of social relationships today' (Barker, 2006: 149).

With echoes of Neuhouser's (1998) analysis, which posited that engagement in social movements increases as positive identity alternatives decrease, Barker noted that, with few opportunities for political power and economic self-sufficiency off the reserve, heterosexual Indians with status mobilised forcefully to block action that would challenge their autonomy. Indian men argued for their 'sacred rights', and sought to make themselves, as the representatives of those rights, immune from political reproach. Barker describes the unifying nature of the shared experience of poverty, discrimination, physical and sexual abuse, displacement and disenfranchisement that brought Indian women together to fight for redress.

This detailed study reveals women's mobilisation as a difficult but vital route from abject discrimination and poverty, drawing into sharp focus the legal, political and ideological challenges they face in transforming the institutions and the attitudes which perpetuate gender-specific injustice and vulnerability.

Rao's work (2005) offers a detailed critique questioning the unifying nature of gender. Following Molyneux, (1985)[6], Jackson (2003) and other authors who emphasise the multiplicity of gender identities, Rao notes that women have different sets of interests and one cannot assume that certain common interests, by virtue of their gender, will always be prioritised. As Jackson highlights, 'As a daughter, a woman appears to have the obvious interests in claiming a share of parental property… but as a wife she may also be against the land claims of her husband's sister, and as a mother she will not necessarily support a daughter against the claims of a son.' (2003:467). Illustrating this hypothesis with land rights claims in India, Rao (2005) does not find that gender identities always create solidarity among women. Women are seen to support projects of masculine land ownership to further the interests of their own household. In contrast, men who only secure rights to land through their wives support gendered claims of women to land. Lastly, the utility of unity between women in land rights claims is examined. Rao argues that bids are more likely to be

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[6] See Molyneux, M. 1985. "Mobilization Without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State and Revolution in Nicaragua." *Feminist Studies* 11:227-54.

successful when they align with influential men, even when women do successfully form collectives.

Finally, the importance of ideology in creating a unified purpose pervades all social movement literature to some extent, whereby each movement draws on a particular set of beliefs or creates their own. Indeed, Roche (1995) claimed that all movements were ideological. In some case studies, ideology provides the basis of group identity formation and thus sustained cooperation, e.g. the religious SMOs in the United States (Dugan and Reger 2006); anti-war movements; liberation theology in the cashew and sisal cooperatives in North East Brazil (Thorp *et al.,* 2005:10).

One common source of movement ideology is civil society–state relations, particularly in Latin America since the late 1970s (Marsiaj, 2008). Such movements created group unity via challenging inefficiencies or injustices within the state (e.g. neoliberalism, anti-privatisation effects of globalisation) (Lind, 2005; Molyneux and Razavi, 2003). Other movements use identity as a tool to create movement ideology. Beckwith (2001) uses the idea of 'collective action repertoires' to explain how a group frames its past experiences, future movement goals, and what strategies are deemed possible and permissible.

Finally, while the literature asserts that movements must be unified, it has been stressed that this does not mean they must be homogenous (Crowley *et al.,* 2005: 26; Dugan and Reger, 2006). Group identity literature is dominated by studies describing factors which encourage homogeneity of purpose. Relatively few authors discuss how to manage difference when it arises. Dugan and Reger's work (2006) seeks to fill this gap. The paper uses the term 'groupness', rather than 'collective identity', to indicate that successful group unity does not preclude a heterogeneous membership base. Diversity of opinions and idiosyncratic strengths within the group must be allowed to contribute to the overall SMO identity and mission. Group 'agency', in terms of feelings of purposefulness and efficacy, is an equally important contributor to the success of a movement. Groups are less likely to develop a sustained sense of joint agency when members are shut out of decision-making processes, or when individual strengths and ideas are ignored. An inclusive ethos, which respects the agency of individuals, is a key tool in including and empowering the voices of chronically poor people within the SMO structure. Further, such a unified approach enables an SMO to maintain a cohesive, committed membership in the face of political challenges and strategy modifications (Dugan and Reger, 2006).

3.3 Address constraints on the participation of chronically poor women through the provision of gender-specific resources

Social movements scholarship is clear that the provision of tangible and intangible support resources facilitates the meaningful participation of chronically poor women in social movement organisations and in political engagement (Dannecker, 2000; Thorp, Stewart and

Heyer, 2005; Batliwala, 2008a; Harcourt 2006; Hoare and Gell, 2008). As outlined in Section 2.2, chronically poor women are disadvantaged in group formation and SMO participation due to high levels of household and extended family responsibility and the high risks of time investment without a firm assurances of future benefits (Chant, 2008; Chant, 2010; Cleaver, 2005; Mumtaz, 2005; Schady, 2001; Thorp, Stewart and Heyer, 2005). Chronically poor women are often unable to control when they have children, and thus may not be able to plan participation in movements or movement leadership. There may also be restrictions on the mobility of women, for cultural or economic reasons (Hoare and Gell, 2008).

To be inclusive of chronically poor women, SMO strategy must seek to provide gender-specific resources which will address these barriers. The most widely cited key resource for chronically poor group members is access to greater financial security, such as credit, savings groups and solidarity funds (Ambler *et al.,* 2007; Batliwala, 2008a; Grewal, 2006; Hoare and Gell, 2008; Stienstra, 1999). In Bangladesh, the stated aims of the Independent Garment Workers Union were not only to improve the terms and conditions of employment for garment workers, but to offer various forms of support requested by members in meeting their daily needs (Dannecker, 2000: 36). Other important resources have been the provision of: legal advice (Dannecker, 2000); care services, childcare and mother's centres (Batliwala, 2008a:63; Hoare and Gell, 2008:10); language, literacy and other educational needs (Thorp, Stewart and Heyer, 2005:15; Dannecker, 2000:36); training (Mulikita, 2006:6); family planning (Padilla, 2004:100); and free transport/accommodation to attend meetings and conferences (Hoare and Gell, 2008:10). These resources are most effective when used in combination. In the Philippines and Honduras, for example, women receiving leadership training had access to free childcare. In the UK, free transport was available and training schedules did not interfere with the school day. Training also did not jeopardise participant access to state benefits (Hoare and Gell, 2008:10).

These provisions can do more than simply facilitate participation in the movement. The greater stability that these resources confer can contribute towards unity, self-esteem and self-empowerment, and can stimulate greater levels of democracy within the organisation concerning its development and use. These positive externalities have thus far been shown to build movements, foster greater group cohesion, and cultivate new and stronger leadership.

Leadership training in particular can be a valuable resource for chronically poor women who have previously been excluded from leadership opportunities. Hoare and Gell (2008) asserted that context-specific training can provide women with confidence, campaigning and leadership skills, knowledge of political systems and structures, and legal-rights education. Training, again, should not preclude the illiterate. SMOs that successfully make space for the chronically poor address the logistical difficulties and cultural barriers that women may face, even once training opportunities are made available (e.g. transport, time poverty, lack of permission to attend).

While SMO provision of resources has clear importance for the participation of chronically poor people, a balance must be struck between membership support and resisting 'NGO-isation'. NGO-isation describes an emphasis on the delivery of services and organisational survival, rather than constituency building and mobilisation, which leads to an increasingly de-politicised, top-down approach. NGO-isation can also arise from a narrow issue or service SMO focus, which resists deep analysis of the political economic system they are fighting to change (Batliwala, 2008a: 57; Vincent, 2008). NGO-isation was considered to be at its peak during the 1990s, when neoliberal governments throughout the region instigated cutbacks in social spending and turned to women's NGOs that they considered technically capable and politically trustworthy to take on social projects. Many feminist NGOs 'partnered' with governments as gender experts, often bypassing and displacing grassroots movement building.

However, recent literature by Alvarez revisits the notion of NGO-isation, investigating the role of NGOs in Latin America, where she finds the dichotomy between feminist NGOs and female social movements to be overstated (Alvarez, 2009). While NGO-isation as she understands it was a very real issue in the 1990s, she maintains that, even at the height of this period, feminist NGOs were responsible for important movement building work, such as: the production and promotion of feminist knowledge; funding; permanent headquarters for organising; and entry into a variety of public arenas. Today, Alvarez argues that feminist organisations in Latin America are moving beyond the 'NGO-isation phenomenon' as it was experienced in the 1990s. For Alvarez, the shifting and interdependent nature of feminist actors in Latin America and beyond should be recognised.

Finally, it also has been argued that resources should not be dispatched to members in a uni-directional fashion. In the case of membership organisations of the poor (MBOPs) authors have highlighted that some form of membership contribution to the organisation (whether as annual dues or some other non-monetary in-kind form) creates a strong incentive for members to take an interest in the organisation and to become 'actively involved in all stages of the planning, implementing and monitoring activities' (Crowley *et al.,* 2005:29; Chen *et al.,* 2006). Member-derived organisational support also greatly contributes to the sustainability and survival of the organisation. Unfortunately, these authors do not discuss the importance or feasibility of membership contributions in the context of chronic poverty. It is possible that contributions from the chronically poor – which do not damage their fragile asset base – could be seen similarly to inspire greater commitment to the organisation.

Having examined three key SMO strategies for being inclusive of chronically poor women, in the following section, this review turns to examine three important SMO strategies which may facilitate giving voice to their demands.

4 SMO strategies: promoting and representing the voice of chronically poor women

4.1 Reduce dependency on funding, and manage equitable relations with external agents

This literature review has discussed the potentially problematic nature of forming links with external agents (donors, NGOs, the state) in social movements, in terms of 'elite capture' and the potential for reduced accountability to chronically poor membership base demands. Some literature considers the role of external actors with caution: 'external actors are very frequently seen as *the* source – or at least a major source of the frequent failure of cooperatives' (Hoare and Gell, 2008: 11), and several argue that social movements must strive for greater autonomy (Goetz, 2002; Hassim, 2005; Harcourt, 2006).

Yet some scholars argue that linkages to external donors and political influence are necessities in order to attract funding, expertise and key political support, particularly within resource-poor movements of chronically poor women (Hickey and Bracking, 2005; Thorp *et al.*, 2005). External assistance to existing organisations of poor people can strengthen and reinforce organisations through technical assistance, such as group savings, literacy, numeracy, business management, short- and long-term planning, leadership training, conflict management, capacity building in group promotion, mediation with larger institutions, policy analysis and negotiation, forging partnerships and federations, designing and putting into practice communication and information strategies, follow-up on outcomes through monitoring and evaluation skills development, and other skills (Crowley *et al.,* 2005:15).

External agents can provide key resource gains to SMOs and their members. However, it is acknowledged that, where this role is excessively interventionist or disciplinary, this may be at the expense of empowerment, social cohesion and financial responsibility (Hoare and Gell, 2008:12). Inducing dependency on the services provided is a known issue for external agents, even in case studies where the external role is well played. External agents may also indirectly create further inequalities, through selecting which movements to support or not support.

Dependency on funding is cited as one of the most serious challenges facing social movements today (Batliwala, 2008b). This concern raises questions about how sustainable SMOs of chronically poor people can hope to be. To begin with, some SMOs may not have the connections or relationships necessary to acquire information about, or access to, funding opportunities. Secondly, donor policies can directly disable aspects of movement growth. The National Coordinating Committee of Indigenous Women in Mexico encountered difficulty in responding to member demands for training in political participation, because funding was conditional upon donor participation in designing and running the courses

(Batliwala, 2008a:58). Further, competition for financial resources between organisations is a frequently cited barrier to networking between SMOs on the ground and movement building (Lind and Farmelo, 1996; Schady, 2001; Mumtaz, 2005; Vincent, 2008). Subsequently, these authors have called for the need for SMO building to bring an end to their dependency on finance. Batliwala critiques contemporary women's movements which do not act until they have a grant. She calls for women's movements to return to the strategies of the 1970s and 1980s, when women's movements were more independent from financing and impacted the lives of women through creative use of the media to focus on issues such as violence, sex-selection, technology and family planning (Batliwala, 2008b).

Despite this perceived crisis in SMO organising, this review does see that, at their core, social movements remain reliant on networks of informal interaction (Diani, 1992). The power of diversified network formation between social movement organisations and parts of civil society in building membership and political support is well documented, and is certainly an essential part of successful awareness-raising campaigns. The success of one anti-domestic violence consciousness-raising campaign in El Salvador was attributed to the sheer range of collaborations that were fostered between campaigners, other women's groups and interest groups, and civilians with high visibility in society – which included bus drivers alongside government officials (Ambler *et al.,* 2007). Wildly disparate claimant interpretations of the same asbestos compensation case were found to depend in part on networking capacities in two rural towns. Although all claimants shared in landmark financial and political gains from the successful case, claimants from the more isolated town were only able to see the case as a bitter defeat, whilst claimants from the town involved in the networking and mobilisation process that fuelled the case perceived it as an overwhelming victory (Waldman, 2007).

Defining the role that external agents 'should' play is difficult. There are few documented solutions for this complex balance of issues. It has been suggested that richer members of groups may provide a substitute for external actors. But we have seen that such groups can be vulnerable to internal divisions and power imbalances (see Section 3.1.1). It has also been suggested that, in ideal situations, the role of the external agency becomes one of capitalising on local strengths (Crowley *et al.,* 2005:15). But what is the best way to achieve this, without undermining local autonomy?

Oxfam GB is developing ways to tackle this issue (see Box 3), indicating that NGOs can play strategic, self-critical support roles for grassroots SMOs. Oxfam GB's Leadership and Participation programme develops strategic roles for its on-the-ground partners, which are conscious of the distortive effects that poorly targeted NGO support can have on the agency and sustainability of women's movements (Hoare and Gell, 2008). Strategic support such as this is a good example of how NGOs can use their influence to support women's movements, without undermining the ability of women's SMOs to be self-determined and sustainable, thus providing a model for other SMO–civil society partnerships.

Box 3: Self-critical, strategic NGO support: Oxfam GB's Leadership and Participation programmes

There is a need for NGOs to be innovative and self-critical when deciding how to support women's SMOs. NGOs should evaluate, firstly, how their support may compromise the agency of grassroots women's leadership and, secondly, how the disbursement of funds and services may impact the sustainability of a movement. Oxfam GB also recognises that an important challenge for NGOs will be how to support the political participation of women leaders in political and economic institutions, without appearing to support particular political interests.

Poverty of time and resources are cause and effect of women's failure to gain full support from the political parties they represent. Oxfam GB's global Leadership and Participation programmes for women offer skills-based training, transport, leadership training and support and funding to tackle this cycle of women's political under-representation. Lack of funding in particular is a particularly problematic local barrier to women's political participation.

A key objective of Oxfam GB's Leadership and Participation programme is to develop strategic roles for its on-the-ground partners that are conscious of the distortive effects that poorly targeted NGO support can have on the agency and sustainability of women's movements. In Sierra Leone, women who stood in the 2004 local elections said that the small grants given to them by Oxfam GB's partner, the 50/50 Group, had made an enormous difference to their ability to launch political campaigns. However, Oxfam GB recognised that allocating funding in this way was not ideal, as, firstly, funding can only be a short-term solution to the problem and, secondly, it compromised the neutrality of programmes designed for women candidates.

While noting that the only sustainable solution is an improvement in the economic status and political agency of women, Oxfam GB believes that donor agencies may be able to engage in movement advocacy or forms of tangible and intangible support that do not compromise the agency of SMO membership and leadership or incite dependency. In Honduras, Oxfam's 50/50 Group is campaigning to reduce the requirements for standing for elections. Oxfam's partner organisations are choosing to press for a reduction in the campaign period, as a way to cut down on the amount of money women candidates would need to spend on campaigning.

4.2 Prioritise awareness-raising and invest in technological tools that reach men and women at all levels of society

In order for women to challenge patriarchal values, confront the balance of power within households and society, and improve gendered access to resources and opportunities, scholarship agrees that SMOs have a key role to play in raising consciousness, re-educating civil society and facilitating shifts in cultural politics (Barker, 2006; Batliwala, 2008a; Bebbington, 2006; Braunholtz-Speight, 2008; Marsiaj, 2008). As Jackson notes: 'norms, ideas, values and words are resources that can deliver power just as surely as ownership of means of production or material assets' (2003:475). Further, awareness-raising is considered a fundamental aspect of all successful women's social movements, as a gender-specific agenda will always include an aspect of value change:

> '...the power of social movements…lies in their capacity to change the terms in which societies debate poverty and social change and to influence the types of development and policy alternatives that are considered legitimate in a given social and political context' (Bebbington and Mitlin, 2006: i).

Chronically poor women often suffer from poor access to many forms of information, including: citizen entitlements; democratic processes and political reforms; services and resources; legal rights; and channels through which change can be demanded. One study in Nepal has found that poor women strongly felt that elites controlled information to stay in power. Improved communication channels were highlighted as a primary step in improving the political participation of poor women (Jones *et al.,* 2009).

Awareness-raising and civic education programmes are not only key routes of information delivery to the poor; they should be targeted at wealthier 'upper castes', as well as at those who face discrimination (Jones *et al.,* 2009). Men and women should be the targets of awareness-raising programmes (Sen 2000; Mulikita, 2006). This review has emphasised that men cannot be sidelined in efforts to include or hear the voices of chronically poor women. Awareness-raising is particularly vital to constituency building when it challenges injustices that would otherwise be generally accepted by men and women, such as domestic violence (Ambler *et al.* 2007; Padilla 2004). From the home, to the community, to wider society and government officials, hearing women's voices and renegotiating gender relations necessitates the consideration of how to engage with men at all levels.

A related issue, as discussed in Section 3.2, is the multiplicity of gender identities. Chronically poor women are a diverse group, and women will not always share a gendered perspective. Awareness-raising efforts that promote the position of women and reach existing women leaders are needed.

SMOs that focus on information dissemination to marginalised groups are able to build stronger memberships, reformulate the debate on poverty within wider society and foster demand and support for pro-poor legislation. One important way effective awareness-raising campaigns seek to engage with all members of society is by harnessing technological tools to broaden the reach of their message. SMOs which harness technological tools can promote innovative, cost-effective campaign strategies**.** The value of spoken and visual media can be a vital tool for SMOs to broaden the reach of their message, extending to geographically isolated, linguistically marginalised and illiterate groups (Vincent, 2008; Bebbington *et al.,* 2008). Green-Barber (2008:11) notes that:

> 'technological globalization[7] allows the traditionally excluded, such as indigenous groups, to overcome organisational obstacles to collective action, namely geographic, social and informational isolation, thereby increasing *capacity* for mobilization.'

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[7] An interesting paradox taken from the work of Brysk (1996) is that while indigenous social movements contest globalisation, the process of Indian rights activism depends on and deepens it. See Brysk, A. (1996), 'Turning weakness into strength: the internationalization of Indian rights'. *Latin American Perspectives* (23)2 (Green-Barber, 2008:11).

Green-Barber (2008) argues that, in cases where information technologies have been harnessed in the context of an indigenous social movement, three mechanisms have been able to occur: increased access to information; the creation and legitimisation of indigenous identities and culture; and the dissemination of international norms and discourse surrounding indigenous rights. Video technologies, the internet and radio programming in indigenous languages have been important in the empowerment and development of indigenous social movements in Bolivia, Mexico and Ecuador. Green-Barber argues that, in contrast, the relatively limited access to internet and other new media in Peru goes some way to explain the limited success of cohesive mobilisations surrounding indigenous rights.

Finally, the creative use of media is one key way to keep costs of social movement campaigning to a minimum, and thus directly addresses the dependency on funding that social movement scholars believe can be detrimental to furthering sustainable pro-poor agendas (Chen *et al.,* 2006; Batliwala, 2008b). Innovative usage of the media and technology can also be an important part of 'doing politics differently', whereby officials and the public are challenged to see an old issue in a new way (Vincent, 2008:2). Effective media campaigns can put pressure on the state to hear the previously marginalised voices of chronically poor women. One case study in Uganda cites the catalytic role a strong media campaign played in pushing through pro-women government reforms (Bird *et al.,* 2004).

4.3 Pair new forms of state engagement with ideological transformation via awareness-raising

Perhaps the most important, though not the only, way in which social movements give voice to their membership is through engaging with the state (Bebbington and Mitlin, 2006:14). Any attempt to meaningfully hear and respond to the demands of traditionally excluded chronically poor women calls for engagement with the state. Various scholars credit women's movements with deepening democracy, improving the visibility of women in the political arena, expanding women's citizen rights, and galvanising the creation of state agencies to address women's issues (Barker, 2006; Braunholtz-Speight, 2008; Marsiaj, 2008; Mwangi and Markelova, 2009; Sinha, 2003). Decentralisation, along with the appropriate devolution of resources, is thought to provide the best opportunity structure for the greater involvement of women and local SMO actors (Hoare and Gell, 2008; Thorp *et al.*, 2005).

An equally compelling body of literature argues that social movements will have limited success in impacting the systemic roots of poverty via engagement with the state. Social movements cannot expect to influence politics and policies directly (Sen, 2000; Goetz, 2000; Bebbington and Mitlin, 2006; Bird *et al.,* 2004; Hassim, 2005) and gendered political representation reforms tend to create 'a politics of presence rather than a politics of influence' (Bird *et al.,* 2004: 23).

At the root of case studies which support this more pessimistic hypothesis is that, in many regions, the cultural politics of patriarchy extends beyond the reach of legislative reform. Affirmative action policies to ensure that women made up 30 percent of government seats within Uganda were exploited as currency for elites (Goetz, 2002). Similar policy changes in Zambia faced challenges, as parties displayed unwillingness to take on female candidates; not least because their predominantly female electorate had shown a strong tendency to back male candidates over female candidates (Mulikita, 2006). An examination of the limited impact of the gendered quota system in Uganda illuminated five key shortcomings of quota systems in general: positive discrimination can undermine women's legitimacy; quota systems do not guarantee the recognition of gender issues in mainstream government; women councillors will not necessarily advocate for other women or for the chronically poor; and quotas do not address the barriers to full participation that women councillors may continue to face (e.g. limited mobility, which means they are unable to attend meetings) (Bird *et al.,* 2004: 23).

Aligning SMOs of chronically poor people with pro-poor political parties can be a way to engage with the political arena. However, despite the increased political commitment to poverty reduction and greater visibility of SMO agendas it can confer in the right circumstances, this union suffers from similar issues as when forming links between SMOs and external agents (see Section 4.1), and is vulnerable to capture and appropriation (see Section 3.1.3). Once in power, the parties may also lose interest in their issues and marginalise their decision-making power (Batliwala, 2008a).

These case studies demonstrate that traditional methods of state engagement (pushing for positive discrimination and legislation change) will face significant challenges, if not limited success. SMOs increasingly appreciate that their ability to influence democratic political processes is weak. This is seen clearly in the international policy context, in reference to the PRSP processes of Nicaragua and Honduras (see Bradshaw and Linneker, 2003, and Section 2.2). The very nature of democratic rule requires a majority vote, which may exclude the needs of minorities and the politically invisible. Even when movements are successful, this does not guarantee any level of political commitment among elites that is necessary to implement the redistribution of resources and opportunities.

In order to engage with the state in meaningful and accountable ways, analyses suggest that effective political participation strategies are those which side-step attempts to shape 'policy', and instead influence the nature of state–civil society relations in innovative ways. Three particularly significant strategies to open up the decision-making power of the state to marginalised civil society were identified by Bebbington and Mitlin (2006:26):

- *New governance systems that open up government processes.* The creation of people's assemblies which shadow local governments has been an important method

through which indigenous citizens in Ecuador have been able to monitor and rework existing government structures (Bebbington and Mitlin, 2006: 26).

- *New ways of thinking about development which influence public debate as well as programme and policy design.* The power of social movements to change ideologies surrounding poverty debates is well supported (Bebbington, 2006; Braunholtz-Speight, 2007; Marsiaj, 2008). Ideological change surrounding issues of poverty can be achieved via numerous routes. Movement activity may move debate into the popular press, and create dialogue through radio programmes, focus groups or through other campaigns. When debates occur, societal values are challenged and the 'hidden sources of chronic poverty' are made more visible – thus becoming subject to policy intervention (Bebbington and Mitlin, 2006: 11).

- *New ways of engaging the state in programmes designed by social movements.* SMOs can offer or co-produce pro-poor solutions to urban development problems that are otherwise unsolved, using innovative methods to engage the state in supporting and sustaining them. Vincent (2008) highlighted the efficacy of changing the 'terms of engagement' through non-traditional action, as demonstrated by informal settlement dwellers in Mumbai, India. Staging 'toilet festivals', local officials were invited to inaugurate new toilets and were confronted by the realities of living in slums without adequate water and sanitation. Previously apathetic local municipal officials were drawn into negotiations to supply sufficient resources and infrastructure for the informal settlers.

Combining strategies may also galvanise a new response from officials. Some recommendations suggest pairing political engagement with the state and legislative change with society-wide education and awareness-raising about gender equity issues, as described above (Bird *et al.* 2004). Men must be brought on board at all levels to accept and support the idea of women occupying positions of power (Sever, 2005; Bird *et al.,* 2004; Hoare and Gell, 2008), and SMOs must forge information-sharing links with women leaders who currently occupy positions of power (see Section 3.1.2).

Political engagement at the government level will not always be successful. When movements engage heavily with the state, but fail to secure membership demands, a variety of outcomes can ensue. Some case studies indicate that unsuccessful SMO political engagement leads to potentially extremist radicalisation of the group, as members may see less reason to engage with the government. This is well exemplified with the Unión Patria party failure in Columbia, whose systematic extermination by the Colombian state led to the formation of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), one of the oldest, and most resilient, guerrilla forces in Latin America. Bebbington and Mitlin (2006:12) discussed Ecuador, where perceived failure of the indigenous movement to have effected significant change while in government contributed to the increased radicalisation of the

movement. Unrest led the government to pass the governance of five highland provinces over to the army, in order to suppress further movement activity.

On balance, SMOs have also successfully used political participation deadlocks as an opportunity to create innovative movement strategies. An SMO in Porto Alegre, Brazil, experienced political participation failure, but then re-engaged with the state via new governance options through participatory budgeting[8] (Bebbington and Mitlin, 2006). It is here that the adaptability of an SMO becomes more important, as discussed in Section 3.2. Unified SMOs which are able to adapt and reconfigure strategies in the face of shifting socio-political realities will be best equipped to survive crises – a characteristic which gains significance when considering that failed political participation strategy has been identified as a heavily influential factor in the passive withdrawal of a movement, and the disbandment of an SMO entirely (Bebbington and Mitlin, 2006).

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[8] While further discussion of participatory budgeting falls outside the scope of this review, it is useful to note that gender budgeting itself has attracted significant debate. See: Budlender, D. (2009), *Ten-Country Overview Report: Integrating Gender Responsive Budgeting into the Aid Effectiveness Agenda*. New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women; Budlender, D. and Hewitt, G. (2002). *Gender Budgets Make More Cents Country Studies and Good Practice.* London: Commonwealth Secretariat; Judd, K. (ed.) (2002), *Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives: Strategies, Concepts and Experiences*. New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women.

5   Conclusions

The six SMOs strategies discussed in this review, although discussed separately, are fully inter-dependent.[9] Engaging with the state in substantive ways is predicated upon a shift in cultural politics which recognises women as legitimate leaders, which suggests the need for effective awareness-raising campaigns. An SMO will encounter difficulties in building leadership among chronically poor women without providing gender-specific resources which address the tangible and intangible barriers that women face to group formation and political participation. SMOs that engage with these issues are better equipped to coordinate objectives and actions, foster membership commitment and gain political support, even in the face of challenges – and thus are more likely to be successful in being inclusive of, and securing a pro-poor agenda for, chronically poor women.

In sum, in order to be inclusive of chronically poor women, key SMO strategy is threefold. Organisations should build and support new and accountable leadership among chronically poor women through accessible power structures throughout the organisation, and by mobilising the opportunities and resources necessary for new women leaders. It will also be important to provide supportive resources where possible to existing women leaders, and commit to sensitising both male and female community leaders to gender issues. Secondly, to attract membership, render movement goals possible, and to guard against movement fractures or co-option – building and sustaining an internally unified SMO will be important. SMOs around the world have achieved this by supporting the construction of a collective group identity, based around themes such as gender, shared histories or shared ideology. While this identity should be unifying, it should not disregard the idiosyncratic values of individual members, and should be adaptive in the face of shifting social, political or cultural realities. Lastly, gender-specific resources are key in facilitating the participation of chronically poor women, who face real barriers – in terms of time, support and information – to participating in social movements.

In terms of promoting and representing the voice of chronically poor women, three strategies here have been discussed. Firstly, it has been shown that the growing dependency of SMOs should be reduced, and equitable external relations with external agents, such as NGOs, donors and the state, should be maintained. Strategic support from external bodies will use their influence to support women's movements without undermining the ability of women's SMOs to be self-determined and sustainable. Secondly, SMOs should prioritise information dissemination and awareness-raising. This can be used in various ways which promote the voice of the chronically poor: to communicate the expressed views of chronically poor female

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[9] While these factors are largely inter-related, certain measures may call for innovative strategies in order to reconcile them, i.e. making gender-specific resources available to membership while reducing dependency on funding.

members; to spread information relating to resources and rights to chronically poor members and non-members; and to stimulate debate in wider society. The power of social movements lies in their capacity to change the terms in which societies debate poverty, and to influence which alternatives for social change are considered possible and desirable (Bebbington, 2006; Braunholtz-Speight, 2008; Marsiaj, 2008). Harnessing technological tools can promote innovative, cost-effective campaign strategies which target geographical and linguistic isolation. Finally, SMOs should prioritise engagement with the state in innovative ways. Although it is increasingly acknowledged that the power of SMOs to directly influence policy is weak, SMOs have experienced some success by attempting to influence state-civil society relations. Further, by pairing political engagement with society-wide education and awareness-raising about gender equity issues, SMOs have been able to influence both the parameters of social change and decision-making processes on local and national levels.

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