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

An annotated bibliography

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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.

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Abstract

Social movements are known to struggle to include, or be representative of, chronically poor women (Mumtaz, 2005; Schady, 2001; Thorp *et al.*, 2005). The objective of this annotated bibliography and the accompanying literature review¹ 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.

The selected annotated bibliography of the supporting readings, which draw upon social movement, feminist, collective action and gendered chronic poverty literature, is accompanied by a literature review where the key findings are presented as a set of six strategies for social movement organisations.

Keywords: awareness raising, chronically poor women, collective action, co-operation, inclusive social movements, feminist movements, gender-specific resources, gendered poverty, group identity, leadership, movement building, membership, mobilisation, representative social movements, social movements, social movements of the poor, social movement strategies, state engagement.

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¹ See CPRC Working Paper 171



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1 Introduction to annotated bibliography

1.1 Background

Social movements are simply defined as 'an organized set of constituents pursuing a common political agenda of change through collective action' (Batliwala 2008a:10). Social movements are known to struggle to include or be representative of chronically poor women (Mumtaz 2005; Schady 2001; Thorp, Stewart and Heyer, 2005). The objective of this review and annotated bibliography 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 the chronically poor and give voice to their demands.

In the literature review, the key findings have been presented as a set of six strategies for social movement organisations (SMOs). SMOs 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 the participation of the chronically poor 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 commit to awareness raising and better 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. In the annotated bibliography to follow, the supporting articles are presented.

1.2 A guide to methodology, structure and contents

This annotated bibliography was prepared as part of an internship with the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, which took place in July 2009. Keyword searches of academic journals were used to identify texts relating to social movements, collective action, feminist action and gendered chronic poverty. While this rapid-fire method did not result in an exhaustive review of each of these broad areas, it is hoped that the collection of texts here will at least provide a window into the extensive available literature on these topics.

Literature included below discusses social movements within and across various strata of society (i.e. not only the chronically poor; case studies that include men and women). Studies are based in countries that are developed to lesser and greater extents. Common themes among the reviewed texts were identified and categorised, in order to broadly distil the key features that may facilitate or limit the ability of social movement organisations to be inclusive of the chronically poor and give voice to their demands.



This annotated bibliography is divided into five chapters: introduction; concepts and frameworks; strategies for being inclusive of chronically poor women; strategies for promoting and representing the voice of chronically poor women; and further reading on collective action. The structure mirrors that of the literature review as far as possible to aid ease of reference. Abstract lengths vary in length. A number of literature summaries are extended to detail particularly relevant, useful or unique ideas with respect to the objectives of this review. Within each section, studies are presented and summarised in alphabetical order, according to the author's name.

The second chapter, on concepts and frameworks, summarises the literature which provides the basis for the discussions which follow. This includes literature which discusses: definitions of social movements; the gendered poverty and vulnerability issues experienced by chronically poor women which impact upon social movement participation; forms of group formation and cooperation among the chronically poor and finally, the factors which influence the emergence of social movements.

The third chapter on SMO strategies for being inclusive of chronically poor women is subdivided into three sections. The first section summarises literature espousing the importance of inclusive, accountable organisation structures, within which: traditional social power hierarchies are confronted; leadership generation and support is prioritised; and elite/state capture is circumvented by strong, accountable leadership. The second section consists of literature which pinpoints group identity formation as key in the creation of an internally unified social movement organisation. The third section summarises how SMOs have been seen to address constraints on the participation of chronically poor women through the provision of gender-specific resources.

The fourth chapter, on SMO strategies for promoting and representing the voice of chronically poor women, is also subdivided into three sections. The first includes the literature which discusses issues surrounding managing SMO funding and relations with external agents. The second section includes the literature which focuses on the role of awareness-raising and the use of technology by SMOs. The third section consists of summaries of how SMOs have engaged with the government and state actors.

The final chapter provides brief summaries of extended reading on collective action.



2 Concepts and frameworks

2.1 What do we mean by social movements?

- Alpizar Duran, L., Payne, N. and Russo, A., (eds.) (2007). *Building Feminist Movements and Organisations*. London: Zed Books.

Type of resource:

This book is an international collection of essays and case studies exploring diverse strategies of women's and feminist organisations and analysing the important lessons learned from a diverse range of movements.

Abstract:

Alpizar Duran argues that feminist movements are facing serious challenges, such as armed conflicts, the advance of HIV/AIDS, the rise of fundamentalisms, and the increasing scarcity of resources for work on gender equality. This book argues that a revision of the internal dynamics and work of feminist organisations is necessary in order to face these challenges effectively. For example, women's groups and NGOs must put in place clear mechanisms, internal policies and resources that ensure inclusion, participation and accountability at organisational level to avoid accidentally replicating patriarchal values and structures.

Different leadership styles and decision-making models must be explored and applied within feminist organisations to ensure that issues of empowerment and leadership are dealt with. Reconnecting with grassroots and building constituencies at the ground level is extremely important in order to communicate what the feminist movement has achieved at intergovernmental level. In order to gain political sustainability, feminist organisations must change their approach to funding and re-politicise their relationship with donors by creating spaces in which to discuss funding priorities and define terms of engagement on the basis of a women's rights' agenda common to the whole movement.

- Batliwala, S. (2007). 'Taking the power out of empowerment: an experiential account'. *Development in Practice*, (17)4-5. Retrieved 20 June 2009.

Type of resource:

This paper is a concise introduction to the development of the term 'empowerment', its adoption by social movements and the politics of language appropriation in the development world.



Abstract:

Batliwala traces the centuries-long evolution of the concept and practice of 'empowerment' and its adoption by radical social movements, particularly women's movements, from the 1970s onwards.

It documents that by the late 1990s, 'empowerment' had become a buzzword. Situating the analysis in the context of women's empowerment interventions in India, the article describes the dynamic of the depoliticisation and subversion of empowerment efforts which challenged engrained structures of social power. Batliwala examines the contemporary embodiments of 'empowerment' efforts, examining the 'downsizing' and constriction of the concept within state policy; the de-funding of genuine empowerment strategies on the ground; and the substitution of microfinance and political quotas for empowerment.

- Batliwala, S. (2008a). *Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements*. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). New Delhi: Brijbasi Art Press.

Type of resource:

This paper communicates much of the research findings of the Building Feminist Movements and Organisations Initiative launched by AWID in 2006. The aim was to understand feminist movements in their global context, so that the development community might better strengthen the capacity of women's movements to organise and build.

This text draws on women's social movement organisation activities (many of which are movements of poor women) from around the world to comment on which strategies have contributed to their survival. Few studies encountered by this review deal directly with the issue of poor women's social movement organisation strategy, and none draws on such a diverse set of social movement experiences. For this reason, this is a central text for this review.

Abstract:

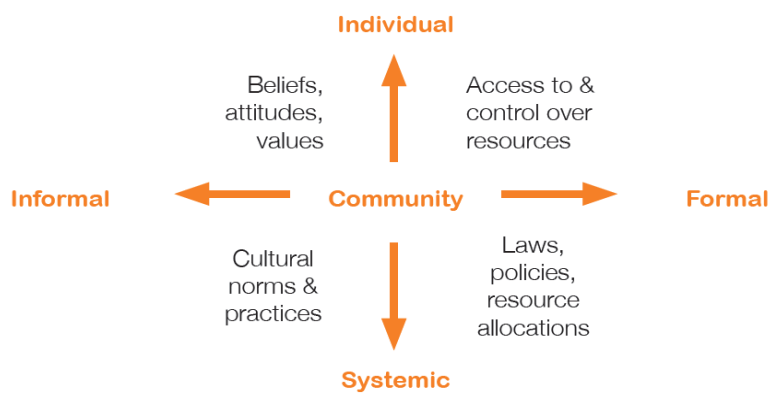
Batliwala first sets out to explain what is meant by the term 'movement', given 'it is used to describe virtually any collection of organisations or any joint activity'. Some examples of disparate groups described as movements are given: groups of organisations working in a particular region (the African Women's Movement) or country (the Indian women's movement) or sector (the women's health movement), etc. The simplest definition of a movement here used is 'an organised set of constituents pursuing a common political agenda through collective action'. Key characteristics are: a visible constituency base or membership; members collectivised in either formal or informal organisations; continuity over time; collective action and activities; use of a variety of actions and strategies, from confrontational to public opinion building; clear internal or external targets in the change



process – i.e. their own membership or communities (such as in movements against discriminatory customs and social practices like female genital mutilation (FGM)), or against the state/regime in power.

This paper then goes on to explore specifically feminist movements, which it defines as having an agenda built from a gendered analysis of the problem; whereby women form the critical mass; which espouse feminist values and ideology; which have women's leadership; and so forth.

The method by which movements enact change or the dynamic of change defined is best described in the following diagram:



Other key reasons why movements enact change are that they are less remote, easier to access and less expensive than formal law; and because constituency-based movements, using consciousness-raising, political awareness and other strategies that challenge the power and practice of patriarchy, are far better able to tackle and bring down the barriers to women's equality in the sites where they are most embedded.

Batliwala makes an interesting distinction 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, e.g. the Greenbelt Movement, under Wanghari Mathai. The paper argues that feminist movements are considered to have been severely weakened over the past 10 or 15 years by:

- (1) The co-option and/or distortion of feminist ideology, discourse and agendas by mainstream institutions and social forces, i.e. governments, multilateral institutions, donors...
- (2) The resurgence of fundamentalism of all kinds – economic, religious, ethnic, and other.



(3) The gradual but accelerating flow of major donor resources away from movement-building approaches and towards projects and interventions that supposedly show more visible and measurable returns.

(4) A magic bullet syndrome or a growing delusion that there are magic bullets and quick fixes, which can override the need for more fundamental but painful and longer-term transformative processes.

(5) The 'NGO-isation' of feminist movements as they struggle to conform for resources.

(6) The level of specialisation and diversification, which is now such that some see movements as splintered.

(7) Lost clarity in terms of theories of change; in the 1970s-90s, movements were built on the premise that the transformation of gender relations would occur only when feminist movements were able to transform engrained ideologies, the distribution of public and private resources and the structures through which patriarchal and elitist norms were perpetuated.

The second section of this paper examines 10 case study movements from around the world, focusing on a variety of issues from women in the indigenous people's movement of Mexico to the Dalit women's movement in India and GROOTS Kenya, where the flagship programme is on the property rights of women and orphans. Interestingly, GROOTS movement describes itself as a movement that is 'first and foremost a community development organisation'.

The third section outlines some of the key insights from the study:

- Women's movements – some with very strong feminist ideologies – have arisen in widely differing contexts. This suggests that theories about enabling and disabling conditions for movement building need to be reconsidered. Strong women's movements are not only possible, but could be formed in response to hostile conditions that affect not only women, but their families and communities. The notion of a need for 'democratic space' or liberal democracy for popular organising is undermined by the examples in this study from Czech Republic and Iran, where women have found ingenious or subversive ways of mobilising.
- The power of movements, and particularly of women's movements, derives from their being the primary agents of change. This is different to their having 'agency', which is popular in rhetoric, because while even an effective feminist NGO will enable women to use their agency, they may not consciously or unconsciously actively move women to primary leadership.
- In many of the case studies, the movements have reframed feminism; particularly from the urban middle class feminist issues. Indigenous women have created, for instance, an analysis that asserts their unique culture and the power of their relationships with land and natural resources, whilst simultaneously challenging not only their culturally-rooted oppression, but also the dominance of mainstream culture and government policies.



- Although many feminists and other movement participants may be critical of them, some of the movements have used mainstream development interventions and services, such as self-help groups, home-based care or managing subsidies, as the base for movement building. They appear to be successfully going beyond the usual limits of these activities to create political consciousness and a longer-term political agenda, for instance the self-help member groups of GROOTS Kenya.
- The case studies demonstrate that one must define the 'radical' nature and activism within the socio-political context in which movements have evolved and not against ideological standards, i.e. the framing of issues by Czech mothers could appear conventional if we fail to recognise that their organising began in the Soviet era.
- Factors inhibiting or constraining movements are NGO-isation and the narrow service focus without broader political understanding or analysis; movements being built from above with little or no organised base; and when movements align themselves too firmly with political parties (i.e. the *piqueteras* in Mexico).
- A key lesson emerging from this comprehensive study is that movements were not found to be flat but hierarchical: in a democratic and accountable manner. 'Meaningful hierarchy with careful attention to democratic representation and downward and upward accountability are critical to the effectiveness of feminist movements.' (p. 67). A question for further examination is how accountable in reality are the structure that these movement create?

■ Lind, A. (2005). *Gender Paradoxes: Women's Movement, State Restructuring and Global Development in Ecuador*. University Park, PA: Penn State Press.

Type of resource:

This book charts the influence of women's movements in state action since the 1980s in Ecuador, documenting the role that movements can and have played in renegotiating women's relationships of chronic poverty.

Abstract:

Since the early 1980s, and Ecuador's 'free market' strategies that exacerbated the debt crisis, new forms of social movement have arisen among the country's poor, including women's groups. This book focuses upon women's participation in the political and economic restructuring of the past two decades, showing how Ecuadorian women have reinforced, embraced and challenged the neoliberal model in their daily struggle for survival.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and employing an approach combining political economy and cultural politics, Lind charts the growth of several strands of women's activism and identifies how they have helped redefine the real and imagined boundaries of neoliberal development discourse and practice. She examines the effects of state development policies upon women in various social sectors; women's community development initiatives and



responses to the debt crisis; and the roles played by feminist 'issue networks' in reshaping national and international policy agendas in Ecuador and in developing a transnationally influenced, locally based feminist movement.

- Roche, M. (1995). 'Rethinking citizenship and social movements: themes in contemporary sociology and neoconservative ideology'. In K. Nash (ed.) (2000), *Readings in Contemporary Political Sociology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Type of resource:

Roche seeks to distinguish between different social movements, placing an emphasis on their ideological context. This northern-focused study is an examination of the changing nature of social movements and new ways of categorising them.

Abstract:

Roche distinguishes between various types of social movement. Roche differentiates between progressive social movements (feminism); 'anti-progressive' social movements; 'non-progressive' social movements (i.e. anti-progressive movements by elites to maintain control); and, within the former, 'anti-social' movements (which engage in destructive behaviour, such as gang warfare). Roche's overriding idea is that exclusion from full citizenship leads to anti-social behaviour and attitudes. Roche's final movement type is the 'ideological' social movement, which creates discourses. Ultimately, Roche argues that that all social movements are bound up with cultural contestation and change and that all movements are ideological.

This paper seeks to link social movements and issues of citizenship to changes in global political economy. Roche discusses citizenship based on T. H. Marshall's post-war² (and Northern) period model; that citizenship consists of civil, political and social rights – with the latter provided by the welfare state. Roche calls this into question given the current transitional period in the global political economy, characterised by globalisation and individualisation, claiming that the state no longer has the same degree of control over the economy. This crisis in the welfare state (in Northern countries) has ramifications for social movements concerned with citizenship.

² See the following titles on the work of T.H Marshall:

Marshall T. H., (1964) 'Citizenship and social class' (1949), *Sociology at the Crossroads*. New York: Doubleday.

Marshall T. H., (1981) *The Right to Welfare*. London: Heinemann.



- Stienstra, D. (1999). 'Of roots, leaves and trees: gender, social movements and global governance. In M. K. Meyer and E. P. Prügl (eds.) (1999), *Gender Politics in Global Governance*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Type of resource:

Stienstra discusses the centrality of organisations to social movement activity; social movement resources; the emergence of social movements; organisational and leadership within SMOs; and influencing state-civil society relations. This article appears in a collection of essays relating to gender governance, that seeks to highlight how women's movements have developed and been influenced by shifts in global governance.

Abstract:

Stienstra discusses social movement theory which suggests that social movements arise in order to change the way politics is done, by creating greater opportunity for citizen participation and by re-creating what we understand to be political spaces. Relating back to resource mobilisation theory, she notes that although social movements are not limited to organisations, they do need organisations in order to mobilise resources over a sustained period of time. Stienstra asks how hierarchies and leaders emerge in an SMO. Critical theory suggests that we might find more interactions between the state and civil society than is commonly recognised, because both are mutually reliant; at the core of global governance are commonly held norms and principles which are the product of relations between state and civil society. This article emphasises the necessity of investigating the impact of specific global institutions (like the IMF) upon the development of international movements and non-governmental organisations.

Ultimately, the article emphasises that the 'ecosystem' of gender, global governance and social movements is complex and that there can be no easy victories for social movements when working against the institutionalisation of particular power relations. Sidney Tarrow (1994)³ and Jutta Joachim (1999)⁴ suggest that social movements can be effective when there are political opportunity structures. An opportunity structure becomes available when there is 'an opening up of access to participation, shifts in ruling alignment, the availability of influential allies and cleavages within and among elites' (Tarrow 1994: 86). But it is important to note that social movement action requires large-scale mobilisation of resources (e.g. money, knowledge), particularly when attempting to influence the state.

³ See Tarrow, S. (1994). *Power in Movement: Collective Action, Social Movements and Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

⁴ See Joachim, J. (1999). 'Shaping the human rights agenda: the case of violence against women'. In M. Meyer and E. Prügl (eds.), *Gender Politics in Global Governance* (pp.142-160). Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.



2.2 Gendered poverty and vulnerabilities of chronically poor women

- Bradshaw, S. and Linneker, B. (2003). *Challenging Women's Poverty: Perspectives on Gender and Poverty from Nicaragua and Honduras*. London: Catholic Institute of International Relations.

Type of resource:

This report was commissioned by the Catholic Institute for International Relations. It considers women's voices and participation in the context of international poverty reduction policy. This paper is highly relevant for the purposes of this review, as it describes the challenges of inclusion that women have faced, even in the face of so-called 'participatory' poverty reduction policies. For this reason, an extended abstract follows.

Abstract:

This paper consists of five sections, which look at the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) process in Nicaragua and Honduras. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) initiative was launched by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1999. The initiative was promoted as being country owned and participatory and taking a multifaceted approach to poverty. However, this report questions the extent to which they have led to participatory pro-poor pro-gender poverty reduction policies. The PRSP initiative assumes that civil society participation will lead to the inclusion of gendered concerns. Firstly, in the absence of guidelines concerning 'participation' it remains clear that this may or may not take place, or concerns raised here may fail to be included in the final PRSP. Secondly, it cannot be assumed that civil society participation, even when it does take place, will lead to pro-gender policy outcomes, because women's voices may go unheard. This report argues that the World Bank approach promotes gender equality as a means to increase economic growth and efficiency, rather than a development objective in its own right.

Section One: The PRSP policy context

This section discusses the emphasis that the World Bank and the IMF place on economic growth, even in the presence of a development discourse which now includes gender, equality and civic participation. To obtain debt relief, a country must submit Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which must meet the approval of the joint World Bank and IMF board. However, this section outlines the various factors which hinder the ability of the PRSPs to be participatory or gender-sensitive. A key issue outlined is that although submitting countries must employ macroeconomic policy which meets the approval of the board, no such guidelines exist to ensure that the submitting governments include gender equality measures in the PRSPs, or that they have been constructed in a participatory fashion. The structure of the PRSP process favours the submission of a document which



falls in line with World Bank and IMF ideology, rather than encouraging innovative strategies which may arise from civil society participation.

Section Two: The PRSP process in Central America

This section examines the PRSP process in Nicaragua and Honduras. It highlights the experiences of civil society organisations, and how they have interacted with the so-called participatory framework of the PRSPs. Particularly in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch and the surge in civil society organisation growth that sought to contribute to and monitor the reconstruction, access to official processes was limited, in terms of actors included and topics discussed. Some organisations set up unofficial alternatives to the PRSP process. However, ultimately, the official or unofficial civil society recommendations had little influence on the PRSP process. Nevertheless, the governments promoted the PRSPs submitted as participatory, seeing as the consultation had taken place. The cases of Nicaragua and Honduras demonstrate that a strong civil society on its own is insufficient to ensure a participatory process. More important is the relationship between the government and civil society.

Turning to gender, limited support for gendered issues in mixed gender civil society forums led to hesitancy to participate on the part of women. There remains a divide among women's groups and women's movements over whether to participate at all or whether to boycott the processes.

Section Three: The PRSPs of Nicaragua and Honduras

This section presents a gendered analysis of the PRSP documents submitted by the governments of Nicaragua and Honduras. It focuses on the invisibility of women in the proposals and the absences of a pro-gender poverty reduction agenda. Where women have been included, this section critically examines this inclusion and its implications. Where women are included, differences between groups of women (e.g. by age) are often ignored. In other instances, they are used as 'transmission mechanisms' (p. 21) so that goods and services can be provided to others, particularly to children. They are absent from discussions surrounding macroeconomic policy. Other issues highlighted include the fact that mechanisms which reproduce inequalities are not considered; and the failure of the documents to consider the unintended outcomes that may arise in households from targeting women as beneficiaries (e.g. increased violence from men). It is noted that many proposals, such as investment in human capital, are included in order to promote economic growth, rather than as worthy development objectives in their own right.

Section Four: Conclusions

Bradshaw and Linneker conclude that there are a mixture of internal and external constraints on the formulation of PRSPs, and a mixture of top-down and bottom-up processes that



create contradictions that are difficult to resolve. Although the PRSPs are promoted as being participatory and country-owned, there are a number of reasons why they may not be in practice. Firstly, no guidelines or requirements exist on the notion of 'participation' and so it is up to the willingness of the government in question to employ 'participatory' processes – and to include or not include these voices in the final document. Secondly, there is an incentive for governments to produce PRSPs that align with known World Bank and IMF priorities, even if these clash with country priorities. Thirdly, time constraints and the urgency of debt relief need may incite the government to rush participatory processes or not hold them at all.

Bradshaw and Linneker recapitulate the contradictions and constraints which limit the extent to which current PRSP processes can lead to a gendered strategy document. In particular, they highlight how the problematic notion of 'participation' also cannot be assumed to lead to engendered PRSPs, largely due, again, to the absence of gender as a key requisite component of PRSPs. One cannot assume that, even when women participate in the government consultations surrounding the PRSPs, this will lead to gendered concerns being voiced or included in the PRSP documents.

Section Five: Recommendations

The recommendations cover five key areas. The last area is specifically directed at women's movements, and so will be examined in greater detail.

The first considers the range of new guidelines that need to be put in place by the World Bank and the IMF concerning gender and 'participation'. The second area examines the various strategies for introducing gender into PRSP documents. The third area calls for the monitoring and evaluation of women's participation in the PRSP process and PRSP outcomes. The fourth area examines the revisions necessary to the participatory process. Notably, it calls for greater visibility of women (in all their roles as producers and workers, not just carers and victims). It also calls for the improvement of women's capacities to participate in lobbying appropriate parties in the formulation of the documents. The possible unintended consequences of policies (such as violence and conflict) need to be incorporated into PRSP policy considerations.

The final recommendations discuss five key ways to support women's movements to be a voice in the PRSP process:

- Continued funding for the expression of women's movements.
- Social communication strategies using all available media (TV, billboards, radio) are considered vital to raise public awareness of the diverse roles women assume within society and the economy.
- Supporting women's networks domestically and internationally.
- Training opportunities to develop women's ability to critique policy and propose alternatives that take their socioeconomic realities into account. Education which



removes the boundaries (perceived and real) that may prevent them from participating in debates surrounding economics.

- Monitoring the implementation of PRSPs, and the independent evaluation of processes and outcomes from an independent gendered perspective to inform and form the basis for pro-poor pro-gender action and activities.

- Chant, S. (2008). 'The "feminisation of poverty" and the "feminisation" of anti-poverty programmes: Room for revision?'. *Journal of Development Studies*, 44(2), 165-197. doi: 10.1080/00220380701789810.

Type of resource:

In this paper, Chant investigates the 'feminisation of poverty' – an idea which has foregrounded gender in poverty programming, but has also sometimes exacerbated the burdens of time and responsibility that women have in the home and the community.

Abstract:

In the first four sections, Chant focuses on answering four main questions. The fifth and final section points to possible directions for policy.

What are the common understandings of the 'feminisation of poverty'?

Chant summarises common characteristics of the theory, which include that the following: a) women experience a higher incidence of poverty than men; b) the poverty experienced by women is more severe than that experienced by men/women are more prone to extreme poverty; c) the poverty experienced by women persists over longer periods; d) poverty among women is rising; e) women face more barriers in lifting themselves out of poverty; e) the feminisation of poverty is linked to the feminisation of household headship, whereby women-headed households are the 'poorest of the poor'; and f) female-headed households transmit poverty to children.

Here, Chant discusses the origin of the term, and reviews the studies which reveal the disconnect between the theory and the available sex-disaggregated data on poverty. Lack of appropriate sex-disaggregated panel data makes it impossible to establish how many women are poorer than men, how much poorer they are, and how gendered gaps in income are evolving over time. Chant argues that, even in the presence of such data, income disparity is not where the core of women's disadvantage is to be found.

What purposes have been served by the popularisation and adoption of this term?

In this section, Chant acknowledges the advantages of the widespread acceptance of the feminisation of poverty theory, namely that increased resources have been captured for increasing women's literacy and education, facilitating their access to micro-credit, enhancing



their vocational skills, and/or providing economic or infrastructural support to female-headed households.

What problems are there with the 'feminisation of poverty' analytically, and in respect of how the construct has been taken up and responded to in policy circles?

Chant outlines the analytical and programming issues that have accompanied the widespread acceptance of the feminisation of poverty theory. These include:

Analytical problems

- (1) Lack of attention to differences among women, such as age.
- (2) Over-emphasis on income, and neglect of other more abstract aspects of poverty. Women's position in society is marked by legal, political, cultural and religious discrimination – lower income is hardly the primary location of women's disadvantage. Further, household income is less important than women's ability to access and manage household resources: 'While poor female heads of household clearly have problems to contend with, including a limited asset base in terms of labour, incomes, property and so on (see Bradshaw, 2002: 12)⁵, their counterparts in male-headed households may actually end up in the same position due to restricted access to and control over household assets' (p. 184).
- (3) Paradoxical over-emphasis on female-headed households. Chant notes that while 'feminist research has often identified that men are a major cause of women's poverty in developing countries – especially at the domestic level – the feminisation of poverty suggests that when women are without men, their situation becomes worse' (p. 176).
- (4) Neglecting to consider men and gender relations.
- (5) Missing the major points about gendered poverty: a 'feminisation of responsibility and obligation'? The burden of household survival has long been documented to fall largely on women's shoulders, but Chant notes that the responsibility for dealing with poverty, making inputs into daily survival and moving out of poverty is increasingly the responsibility of women. She writes: 'This is not only because they cannot necessarily rely on men and/or do not expect to rely on men but because a growing number seem to be supporting men as well. Also disturbing is that women are forced into accepting rather than challenging these mounting responsibilities in a spirit of quiet and self-sacrificing acquiescence' (p. 182).

Policy problems

- (1) Poverty reduction and reduction in gender inequality are not one and the same.

⁵ Bradshaw, S. (2002) *Gendered Poverties and Power Relations: Looking Inside Communities and Households*. Managua: ICD/Embajada de Holanda/Puntos de Encuentro.



(2) Women as a 'conduit of policy': the tendency to orient anti-poverty programmes to, and most commonly through, women. By leaving the relationship between gender and poverty unproblematised, too often instead of development working for women, women end up working for development (p. 183).

(3) Women portrayed as 'victims', who require 'special support' rather than equal rights.

(4) Neglecting to consider domestic gender inequalities.

(5) Men are missing from anti-poverty interventions. Gender projects and policies are often limited in their benefits when men are left out.

(6) Missing 'real' empowerment through programmes which target the material *condition* of women rather than their *position* in society. Further, even fewer have challenged either the condition or position of men in society.

How do we make the 'feminisation of poverty' more relevant to women's lives – and empowerment – at the grassroots?

In the section, 'Room for revising the "feminisation of poverty" thesis', Chant suggests that the way forward will be to keep the term, but revise it in a number of ways to better tackle the issue of gendered poverty, both analytically and methodologically. She highlights that there is a need for a greater emphasis on inputs rather than just incomes, which not only seeks to quantify women's level of poverty, but their burden of dealing with it. Considerable revision is needed to the persistent bias towards female household headship; this will be aided by more data that is disaggregated by age and other factors, in order to differentiate between sub-groups of women.

Overall, Chant argues that 'the 'feminisation of poverty' thesis tends to have translated into single-issue and/or single group interventions, which have little power to destabilise deeply-embedded structures of gender inequality in the home, the labour market and other institutions' (p. 185). She concludes that revisions to the thesis are necessary that not only consider women's incomes, but also their existing inputs and responsibilities within the home. Women are an over-utilised resource and, currently, women's time burdens are an important constraint on growth and development. Chant also highlights the need for the 'co-responsibility' development paradigm to denote a one-way process. This calls for the support of men, employers and public institutions in domestic labour and unpaid care work.

- Chant, S. (2010). 'Gendered poverty across space and time: introduction and overview'. In S. Chant (ed.) (2010), *The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy*. Cheltenham: Elgar.

Type of resource:

This is the introductory chapter in the volume, *The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy*. A primary aim of the text is to describe and examine



the character, causes and consequences of gendered poverty and how such factors and interactions may be conceptualised, investigated and measured (p. 3).

Abstract:

At the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in 1995, it was asserted that women represented as much as 70 percent of the world's poor, stimulating revitalised widespread focus on reducing poverty among women. This renewed commitment to the reduction of gendered poverty has been reflected in the international policy arena. International aid bodies have underscored gender as critical to their overall mission of poverty reduction. For example, gender has been incorporated into World Bank and IMF discourses on poverty reduction, and is considered to be an important part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) initiative launched in 1999.

However, gender and poverty experience a complex, multidimensional and multisectoral relationship. This 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 in a range of other 'spaces'. 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 (for example, age, 'race', household headship and composition, urban versus rural provenance and residence, migration within and across national borders).

Chant discusses the place of income-related indices in determining women's wellbeing. While income remains an important aspect of determining women's disadvantage, more 'robust' indicators are thought to be access to land, agency in decision-making, legal rights within the family, vulnerability to violence, and (self-)respect and dignity (p. 3).

Chant notes that while, on the one hand, the concept of the 'feminisation of poverty' has served as important guiding rhetoric for policymakers and has secured resources for women, it has also resulted in problematic interpretations of gendered poverty. Chant considers the 'feminisation of poverty' to be a process rather than a state, as the phrase implies; she believes that it has to an extent oversimplified the interactions between poverty and gender. Some individuals in need are overlooked; other individuals, such as female heads of households, are scapegoated as contributors to the 'problem', and gendered power relationships within the home and the community are not examined.

Chant underscores that interventions which solely address the material conditions of women cannot be expected to significantly tackle the decision-making inequalities that characterise the disadvantaged position of women.

The remainder of Chant's chapter is dedicated to presenting the organisation of the *Handbook*:



- Part I: 'Concepts and methodologies for gendered poverty'
- Part II: 'Debates on the "feminisation of poverty", and female-headed households'
- Part III: 'Gender, family and lifecourse'
- Part IV: 'Gender "race" and migration'
- Part V: 'Gender, health and poverty'
- Part VI: 'Gender, poverty and assets'
- Part VII: 'Gender, poverty and work'
- Part VIII: 'Gendered poverty and policy interventions'
- Part IX: 'Microfinance and women's empowerment'
- Part X: 'New frontiers in gendered poverty research and analysis'

- Huisman, H. (2005). 'Contextualising chronic exclusion: female-headed households in semi-arid Zimbabwe'. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* (Journal of Economic and Social Geography), 96(3), 253-263. August. Retrieved 18 June 2009.

Type of resource:

This article outlines the factors which have contributed to rural poverty in Zimbabwe, with a focus on the differing vulnerabilities of 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. This article is an example of the 'feminisation of poverty thesis', whereby proponents locate the most severe types of chronic poverty in female-headed households.

Abstract:

Huisman defines poverty as a state of permanent vulnerability and powerlessness. The article discusses the gendered issues (insecure access to key production factors necessary for land cultivation; poor access to services such as education, healthcare and credit; poor access to cash flow income; limited economic opportunities, resources, services and representation; behavioural patterns) that deepen suffering for lone Southern African rural women. While social networks emerge as an important area of support and security for these women, Huisman finds access to these will be affected by a woman's circumstances (i.e., whether she was widowed or divorced). Divorcées experience higher levels of social exclusion and, therefore, greater vulnerability to poverty.



- Hulme, D. and Sen, B. (eds.) (2004). *Chronic Poverty in Bangladesh: Tales of Ascent, Descent, Marginality and Persistence*. Bangladesh: Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

Type of resource:

This extremely comprehensive 200-page report on the various modes and drivers of chronic poverty in Bangladesh asks why does development (indeed, 'history' broadly speaking) provide opportunities for some not only to grow out of poverty, but also to claim for themselves a share of sound progress, whilst others are wholly excluded and slip deeper into poverty, or are confined to the fringes of society.

Abstract:

Attempting to unpick each of the social dynamics, life contexts and economic modalities that foster chronic poverty in Bangladesh, this report looks not only at the macro-economic conditions and development shifts affecting Bangladesh but also at domestic political/economic patterns (like inequality measurements) and poverty trends. The central message of the study relates to the importance of according adequate attention to the issue of 'income turbulence' below the poverty line.

In Chapters 6 and 7 the emphasis is on 'Transformative structures and transmission mechanisms', but the editors differentiate between 'The insecurity dimensions of chronic poverty' (Chapter 6) and 'The opportunity dimensions of chronic poverty' (Chapter 7). In the former chapter, such issues as child nutrition, the impact of economic shocks, ill-health and violence against women (see particularly box 6.1, p. 97) are examined. In the latter, of particular relevance is a section on women's agency, where the authors tease out the correlations between four aspects of women's agency and chronic poverty alleviation. This first is that there are general improvements in women's wellbeing, i.e. improving reproductive health; the second point is that improved agency can give women greater control over fertility decisions – and one of the major aggravating factors of descent appears to be associated with family size; third, greater women's agency can directly influence the nutritional status of children – with positive effects for schooling performance; fourth, women's earning can play an important role in generating additional savings/collateral for poor households.



- Molyneux, M. (2006). 'Mothers at the service of the new poverty agenda: Progresa/Oportunidades, Mexico's conditional transfer programme'. *Social Policy and Administration*, 40(4), 425-449.

Type of resource:

This article discusses social protection in Latin America through the lens of how mothers are positioned within Mexico's flagship anti-poverty programme – Progresa/Oportunidades, initiated in 1997. This paper contributes to understanding the gendered burdens of responsibility that women face. It highlights the fact that, currently, development programmes too are contributing to this burden, thereby reinforcing gender roles.

Abstract:

The first section outlines the gendered assumptions that have governed Latin American social welfare provision; the second provides the background context for the emergence of the new approaches to poverty; and the third subjects the Mexican programme to a gender analysis which highlights its selective construction of social need.

Molyneux discusses the successes of Mexico's Oportunidades conditional cash transfer scheme. She outlines how it has enabled low-income households to cope financially with the demands of school-age children, and how it has also made progress in detaching poverty relief from political patronage. Stipends paid to mothers enable young people from poor households to access education and health.

However, Molyneux notes that it is only in the construction of children's needs that the mothers receive entitlements, in order to better fulfil their maternal responsibilities. The responsibilities that motherhood brings within the family are reinforced by society; but there is little recognition of the economic vulnerability that may accompany this responsibility, especially in an age where inter-generational reciprocity may be in decline. Cash transfers and food handouts are conditional on 'co-responsibility' on the part of communities (mothers) to ensure children's school attendance and health, for example, by taking them for medical check-ups and participating in health workshops. The programme relies heavily on mothers, and makes little effort to involve fathers in any of the unpaid volunteer work upon which the success of the programme is dependent. Molyneux highlights the marginal role that fathers play in childcare, and argues that this role is further marginalised by the design of the programme. This echoes Chant (2008)'s hypothesis about the 'feminisation of responsibility and obligation' for managing poverty,⁶ 'with women being made to do more to ensure household survival, when men are increasingly doing less,' (2006: 440).

⁶ Chant, S. (2008) (op cit). 'The "feminisation of poverty" and the "feminisation" of anti-poverty programmes: room for revision?' *Journal of Development Studies*, 44(2), 165-197. doi: 10.1080/00220380701789810.



Ultimately, Molyneux considers the programme to embody 'assistentialist' interventions, which do little to question or tackle the root causes of women's economic vulnerability. She considers that Oportunidades creates a dependency on a subsidy which confirms mothering as women's primary social role, and does little to secure sustainable livelihoods.

- Moser, C. (1998). 'The asset vulnerability framework: reassessing urban poverty reduction strategies'. *World Development*, 26(1), 1.

Type of resource:

This paper considers the assets that are held by the poor, ranging from the tangible, such as labour, human capital, to the more intangible, but critical, assets, such as household relations and social capital. This summary highlights Moser's ideas on poverty vs. vulnerability, the management of assets by the poor, and Moser's perspectives on social capital and how it can be eroded in the community.

Abstract:

Moser briefly discusses the prevalent dualism in contemporary thought on poverty measurements. The first focuses on income and consumption. The second school of thought rejects income-consumption indices as too simplistic, and not reflective of the experiences of the poor. These practitioners argue for a participatory approach to determining poverty levels, which includes focus groups, visualisation and transect walks. However, this approach generally has yet to develop a general, operationalised framework for participatory local-level poverty reduction interventions. Moser argues that poor people are managers of a complex portfolio of assets, which income-poverty indices fail to capture. Such measurements do not take into consideration the range of external factors which impact the lives of poor people, nor are they able to reflect poor people's responses to economic difficulty.

The asset framework developed in this paper intends to contribute to a better understanding of what assets poor people have and, importantly, how poor people manage the resources available to them. The framework intends to provide a generalised methodology for measuring these assets, and includes policy perspectives on how opportunities can be provided, and barriers removed, to ensure that these resources are maximised.



Moser discusses five key assets which poor people may hold in various quantities over various periods: labour; human capital; housing; household relations; and social capital. Social capital is considered to be the 'active reciprocal support networks within communities, particularly between women and participation in community activities, facilitating trust and collaboration' (p. 14). Moser highlights the importance of these assets being available to poor people in the 'right mix' (p. 15) in order to protect themselves from shocks: large stocks of social capital may be of little use if a household lacks a house or education. When analysing not only the threats (in urban settings, three are classified: commoditisation; environmental hazard; and social fragmentation), but also the resilience inherent in vulnerability, Moser's focus on assets gains importance. She writes: 'the means of resistance are the assets and entitlements that individuals, households or communities can mobilize and manage in the face of hardship' (p. 3). The more assets people have, the less vulnerable they are.

Moser makes an interesting distinction between 'poverty' and 'vulnerability'. For Moser, poverty is a more static concept, as poverty measures are usually fixed in time. However, 'vulnerability' denotes a more dynamic process, and better captures the changes that are occurring as people move in and out of poverty. She adds: 'although poor people are usually among the most vulnerable, not all vulnerable people are poor, a distinction which facilitates differentiation among lower-income populations' (p. 3). In her discussion of the fieldwork, the example of child labour illustrates this distinction well. When children are sent out to work (or kept at home to work), this reduces household 'vulnerability' to shocks, but does not keep households out of poverty. Households with children working are not necessarily above the poverty line (p. 9). 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' (ibid.). Yet, for Moser, the term 'vulnerability' should not obscure the capacities that poor people have to cope with 'livelihood shocks' and emergencies.

For Moser, social capital ('reciprocity within communities and between households based on trust deriving from social ties') (p. 4), is not only an important determinant in building and maintaining the trust necessary for social cohesion and change, but also an important determinant of the feasibility and productivity of economic activity. Moser highlights that social capital is not static. Changing circumstances can consolidate it or erode it. Further, the flow of social capital cannot be taken for granted. When households are coping, they support others. When their assets are depleted, they cease to support the community. Some households are pushed into economic crisis to such an extent that they can no longer sustain reciprocity (p. 13).

Another important way that social capital could be eroded was by surges in violence, perceived to be linked to economic crisis. Rising murder rates and burglaries in study communities had the effect of threatening personal safety and making people reluctant to leave their homes after dark. Participation in community-based organisations (CBOs) was seen to decline as a result. In two communities, these organisations played a critical role in



negotiating for improved services supplied by government agencies or NGOs, which suggests that these declining stocks of social capital had a direct impact on accessing and maintaining social and economic infrastructure (p. 14).

- Sen, G. (2010). 'Poor households or poor women: is there a difference?' In S. Chant (ed.) (2010), *The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy* (pp. 101-104). Cheltenham: Elgar.

Type of resource:

This article examines gendered household responses to poverty, and how these interact with social policy. This chapter appears in Sylvia Chant's 2010 edited volume, *The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty*.

Abstract:

In this chapter, Sen discusses the gendered impacts of poverty and household responses to impoverishment. Over the past 15 years, much emphasis has been placed on the female-headed household as the locus of the deepest forms of poverty. Sen discusses recent work which reveals that, although households headed by women may well be poor, much complexity is obscured by foregrounding this phenomenon.

Coping strategies which unequally divide household resources mean that that poverty is not evenly distributed even within and between households. Conversely, among richer households, poverty may be experienced by some: gender bias can operate to disadvantage women and girls in receiving health services and education. All households, whether male- or female-headed, poor or non-poor, must be analysed.

Sen discussed a range of strategies via which poor men and women respond to poverty in the home to manage risk and guard against insecurity. Many of these responses place extra burdens on women and girls in the household and difficult time-choice allocation dilemmas. Care work and household maintenance, which is disproportionately carried out by women and girls, limits the time that women have to engage in income-earning opportunities, participate in government programmes, social exchanges, leisure or rest. Further, gender norms mean that women are expected to be self-sacrificing and so less often recognise their own need for decent nutrition and healthcare.

A key issue raised by Sen is that this time poverty can mean that women are unable to benefit from, or in some cases are directly disadvantaged by, decentralised social programming which devolves responsibilities for social programmes to the 'community' (or, largely, women).

In order to move forward, Sen considers the collection of more gender-based information on gendered household coping strategies essential. Such information will be vital in



understanding better how gendered poverty is affected by and affects social policies and the unseen burdens that are placed on women.

- Shaffer, P. (2008). 'New Thinking on Poverty: Implications for Globalisation and Poverty Reduction Strategies'. DESA Working Paper No. 65. New York: UN-DESA. Available online: <<http://ideas.repec.org/p/une/wpaper/65.html>> (accessed 3 November 2010).

Type of resource:

This paper on paradigm shifts in poverty analysis was originally prepared for the Expert Group Meeting on Globalisation and Rural Poverty organised by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, 8-9 November 2001.

Abstract: This paper examines the main expansions in thinking on poverty that have occurred over the past decade. In contemporary thought on poverty as a concept, more attention is paid to ideas on vulnerability, inequality and human rights. There has been a shift from a physiological model of deprivation, focused on the non-fulfillment of basic material or biological needs, to a social model of deprivation model, focused on such elements as lack of autonomy, powerlessness, lack of self-respect/dignity, etc.

When analysing the root causes of poverty, a broader range of causal issues is considered, such as social, political, cultural, coercive and environmental capital. As compared to a decade ago, movements in and out of poverty are considered, rather than the more static enumeration of poverty. Finally, in place of 'poverty reduction' are strategies for social protection. Shaffer discusses the policy implications of these paradigm shifts in the context of globalisation.

2.3 Group formation and cooperation among chronically poor people

- Bebbington, A. (2006). 'Social Movements and the Politicisation of Chronic Poverty Policy'. Working Paper No. 63. Institute of Development Policy and Management, Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre. Retrieved 12 June 2009.

Type of resource:

This is a working paper for the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, which highlights some interesting limitations on the efficacy of social movements in adequately representing chronically poor people – who often lack the assets or networking opportunities to mobilise.

Abstract:



Bebbington reviews the roles of social movements in addressing chronic poverty and focuses on three domains in which such movements might have influence. Largely drawing upon examples from rural Latin America, Bebbington underlines the importance of social movements as a route from poverty among chronically poor people, but notes that movements of this group are rare, due to asset (including time) poverty. Further, movements are rarely formed in response to poverty *per se*, but instead in response to experiences of discrimination, rights abuses, and a collective sense of injustice.

The paper discusses the role of social movements in challenging the institutions, social structures and political economy dynamics that underlie chronic poverty. Movements can play potential roles in changing the conditions under which accumulation occurs and in attacking relationships of adverse incorporation. They can change the relationships that underlie processes of social exclusion. Second, movements have played important roles in challenging the cultural politics surrounding chronic poverty. They have helped change dominant meanings associated with poverty, and influenced the ways in which poor people are thought of in society. However the contentious nature of movements complicates the extent to which policy might work directly with them. Finally, in some instances, movements, and in particular social movement organisations, have direct impacts on the assets that poor people own and control.

Bebbington argues that much chronic poverty literature tends to invoke social movement activity as essential to alleviating chronic poverty and yet seldom really defines what they actually involve or how they are mobilised. He highlights the need to look at 'networks, organisations and actions'. Examples of social movements impacting upon chronic poverty are drawn largely from Latin America and refer in particular to rural experiences. The most frequently cited movements challenge patterns of accumulation which movement actors consider to have contributed to poverty (e.g. those related to extractive industries and trade liberalisation); movements that have emerged from and impacted on political debates on existing patterns of asset distribution (e.g. rural land); and movements that have renegotiated the relationships dominated by ethnic prejudice and racism that underlie poverty.

Bebbington asserts that social movements rarely emerge around poverty *per se*, and social movements of the chronically poor are even rarer. Chronically poor people are so asset deprived that engaging in organisation, mobilisation or political action would demand time, social networks and material resources that they do not have, and incur risks they are unlikely to tolerate.

Social movements do, however, emerge in response to forms of social relationship and dynamics of capital accumulation that are implicated in the creation and reproduction of poverty, chronic and otherwise. Other limitations are that many movements themselves suffer internal weaknesses that can limit their contributions to changing conditions of chronic poverty in a society. Furthermore, at times elite groups and others aim to aggravate these



weaknesses in efforts to dissipate the effects that these movements might have on existing relationships of power and patterns of accumulation.

- Cleaver, F. (2005, June). 'The Inequality of Social Capital and the Reproduction of Chronic Poverty'. *World Development*, 33(6), 893-906. Retrieved June 24, 2009

Type of resource:

This 2005 article draws upon ethnographic material from Tanzania to form a critique of the potential of 'social capital' to lift the chronically poor from poverty.

Abstract:

This paper challenges the mainstream view of social capital in development policy as a central route towards the greater wellbeing and prosperity of the chronically poor. Cleaver argues that 'the poor experience clusters of interlocking disadvantage that make it highly unlikely that they can draw upon social capital to ameliorate their poverty, or that increased association and participation at a community level is necessarily beneficial to them,' (p.893). Cleaver posits that social capital of the chronically poor cannot be 'readily created, used or substituted for other missing assets, and thereby overcoming poverty,' (p.893).

Cleaver begins with a brief review of the contemporary literature which emphasises the importance of social capital in policy circles in a post-Washington Consensus era. Social capital is widely held to underpin growth and prosperity, enable people to collectively participate in effective local decision making and lobby for improved services, access informal insurance in difficult times, and promote the interests of the poor with people of influence (e.g. government, banks). Cleaver argues that contemporary analyses of social capital is underpinned by a modified version of rational action theory, where the poor are seen as social entrepreneurs, consciously investing in trust-based relationships. Great faith, Cleaver posits, is placed in institutions in revealing shared values, sanctioning antisocial behaviour and channelling individual action into collectively desirable ends.

Cleaver first outlines selected critiques of social capital. One line of argument is that social capital can be used to sidestep issues of inequality. 'the possibilities of association leading to exclusion of people of particular identities, or of building trust and capacity amongst networks of people with inherently antisocial norms and activities,' (p.894). Further, other critiques highlight that constraints on the agency of the chronically poor channels their social and institutional engagement along paths which reproduce inequality and dependency. Cleaver terms this the 'the essentially constraining nature of institutions for the chronically poor'(p.895). When the very poor do engage with institutions these systemic constraints mean that they are likely to engage in ways which reinforce and reproduce their own inequitable positions.



In the paper, Cleaver describes three issues which severely constrain the ability of the poorest people to actively construct or benefit from social capital, which are summarised as follows:

(1) The very poor are highly dependent on their own able-bodiedness. Their inability to sustain this means that maintaining household livelihoods is a daily struggle which often precludes them from playing a role within the community. For the very poor, 'investing in collective action and social relationships with immediate and very real costs and diffuse, long-term benefits, is an inaccessible livelihood strategy,' (p.897).

(2) Contrary to common assertions, the poor do not reliably have ready supplies of social capital to use as a form of social security. Family relationships are constantly being renegotiated and it cannot be assumed that they involve mutual support. The poorest find little room to manoeuvre within their kin and wider social relationships due to fragile families, unstable marital arrangements and wider derogatory perceptions of the poor. Even when close social ties do occur, these can be constraining as well as enabling.

(3) The poorest are infrequently able to articulate successfully in public fora. The poorest are more dependent on their ability to exercise agency than others, yet less able to do so effectively. Even when the voices of the poor are heard, their opinions are given little weight and are able to exert negligible force.

Ultimately, Cleaver argues that collective action for the poorest is risky and that social relationships constrain as often as they enable. Further, the engrained nature of institutions in social life and cultural norms reproduces relations of inequality and marginalization. Cleaver's final statement powerfully calls for a critical re-examination of the limitations of social capital as a poverty alleviation tool for the very poor:

'rather than spending effort reiterating oversimplified mantras about the beneficial effects of participation and association on the generation of social capital, we need to pay far more attention to the effects of the lack of material and physical assets of the poor, and to the sociostructural constraints that impede their exercise of agency,' (p. 904).

- Chen, M., Jhabvala, R, Kanbur, R. and Richards, C. (2007). 'Membership based organizations of the poor: concepts, experience and policy'. In Chen, M., Jhabvala, R., Kanbur, R. and Richards, C. (eds.) (2007), *MBOP: Membership Based Organizations of the Poor* (pp. 3-20). London: Routledge.

Type of resource:

This chapter forms the introduction to the book by the same authors, in their edited volume (2007), *MBOP: Membership Based Organizations of the Poor*. The authors summarise the chapters and the themes which appear this volume.



Abstract:

Membership-based organisations of the poor are organisations whose governance structures respond to the needs and aspirations of poor people because they are accountable to their members. Chen *et al.* assert that these organisations are central to achieving equitable growth and poverty reduction.

Chen *et al.* divide this edited volume introduction into five sections: 1. Introduction; 2. Conceptualizing and defining MBOPs (distinguishing between NGOs, MBOs and MBOPs); 3. Successes and challenges (defining success, examining the determinants of success, and reviewing internal and external challenges); 4. Policy towards MBOPs; and 5. Conclusion.

The first portion of the chapter explores the definitions of membership-based organisations (MBOs), membership-based organisations of the poor (MBOPs), and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Membership-based Organisations (MBOs) are those in which the members elect their leaders and which operate on democratic principles that hold the elected officers accountable to the general membership. MBOPs are MBOs in which the vast majority of members are poor, although some non-poor persons may also be members. Vital to the definition of an MBOP is that it is responsive to the needs of its poor members.

Part 3 summarises the overall, key internal (to the MBOP) and external determinants of success or failure, as identified in the papers in the volume.

The internal factors are:

- (1) Democratic governance structures whose operation keeps leadership accountable to members.
- (2) Significant role of membership dues, in cash and kind.
- (3) Membership that is sufficiently homogeneous along key dimensions (poverty, occupation, gender, etc.).
- (4) Capacity to manage the running of the organisation.
- (5) The use of federated governance structures as the organisation expands.
- (6) A strongly internalised 'code of moral conduct' that guides actions of the organisation and of individuals in the organisation.

The external factors are:

- (1) Supportive community power structures.
- (2) A broadly enabling legal, political and policy environment.
- (3) Sympathetic individuals in government and bureaucracy.
- (4) External funding and support from NGOs and donors that does not subvert internal democratic procedures or the organisation's objectives.
- (5) Diversified sources of external finance.



Part 4 discusses MBOPs in the context of policy, and calls for greater recognition of MBOPs and their incorporation into policy planning and discourse.

Notable chapters in the edited volume include D'Cruz and Mitlin's study on Shack/Slum Dwellers International, which emphasises how networks between organisations can be enormously powerful – strengthening the voice of their members to a level that would not have been possible as a single organisation. Crowley *et al.* (2005) find echoes in Theron's emphasis on member contributions to the organisation to ensure financial self-sufficiency: 'there can be no true accountability in a MBO that is not sustained by the contributions of its members...External funding...is one of the drivers of a top down tradition of organization' (p. 12). Roever studies 12 street vending associations in Lima, Peru. She documents the negative effects of non-democratic governance structures on these associations, underscoring the emphasis other authors have placed on the importance of accountable leadership structure.

- Crowley, E., Baas, S., Termine, P., Rouse, J., Pozarny, P., and Dionne, G., (2005). *Organizations of the Poor: Conditions for Success. Rural Institutions and Participation Service (SDAR)*. Geneva: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Type of resource:

This paper was prepared for the January 2005 International Conference on Membership Organisations of the Poor, held in Ahmedabad, India. It offers a detailed insight into the many forms of organisations of the poor, and potential strategies for 'success'. While this account does not specifically deal with chronic poverty, the focus on the various organisation structures and strategies of these organisations remains a useful resource for the purposes of this review.

Abstract:

This paper argues that organisations are important for poor people, because, compared to poor individuals, organised groups of poor people have a better chance to improve their wellbeing, access information channels, organise for collective action, redress balances of power, and compel those who control the rules of the game 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 (p. 5).

The paper begins by defining membership-based organisations of the poor (MBOP). Many MBOPs are not composed exclusively of poor people, although the majority of their members are poor. MBOPs are defined as organisations controlled and *fully or partially financed* by these poor members, where participation is voluntary. Examples of MBOPs include: labour sharing and savings groups, street gangs, producer, religious and ethnic associations, small



and micro-enterprises, cooperatives, trade unions, federations, national apex bodies, networks, international alliances and social and political movements. However, only when these organisations are controlled and financed by poor members themselves are they considered to be MBOPs (p. 3). Crowley *et al.* note that large-scale MBOPs can take the form of social movements or unions.

The authors consider MBOPs to be successful when they achieve their members' objectives, retain or expand their membership, stimulate members to maintain or increase their equity stake, and bring about some improvement in their wellbeing. MBOPs appear to emerge in contexts where there is an absence of formal safety nets, and weak or non-existent government and private welfare programmes catering to the basic needs of poor people.

The paper then examines various types of organisations and discusses the factors that influence success and survival. MBOPs are characterised by differences in scale, autonomy-dependence dynamics, and focus. A range of MBOP types are distinguished along a continuum, ranging from self-organisations (entirely self-managed and self-sustained common-interest trust-based groups) to externally supported organisations of the poor (organisations of the poor that are conceived and supported almost entirely by external actors, whether charitable individuals, governments, non-governmental organisations or development agencies). An example of the externally supported organisations would be new micro-finance MBOPs created by international finance institutions which act as 'conduits for project resources' (p.11). Crowley discusses the characteristics and vulnerabilities exhibited by both extremes.

The authors note that the majority of MBOPs are found along the continuum within these two extremes (hybrid organisations), where they are internally organised, receiving some measure of external assistance. Examples include the *Movimento Sem Terra* (MST) in Brazil, which was founded in 1984 to promote agrarian reform for the benefit of four million landless rural farm families, and Self-Employed Women's Association, (SEWA), founded in 1972 as a trade union to support the self-employment and self-reliance of poor women workers in the informal sector in Ahmedabad in Gujarat, India. Both began as autonomous movements, but now receive large proportions of support and resources, including funding, from external sources. The authors consider these organisations to be the most interesting, as 'unlike externally supported

MBOPs that are rarely effective in bringing about fundamental social and economic changes...this combination of characteristics also enables the larger and more lasting of these hybrid organizations to have some impact on the policies and social and economic conditions that perpetuate poverty' (p. 18).

Crowley *et al.* discuss internal features of MBOPs which may contribute to success. The authors highlight the importance of the following:



- Being representative of their membership: 'to achieve the objectives of their membership and to bring some improvement to their wellbeing, MBOPs usually have to be representative of their constituencies, allowing for broad and equitable member participation in decision making' (p.21).
- Reciprocity between members and leaders, such that communication flows in both directions.
- Members investing some of their own resources in the organization, in order to retain and expand membership. Members should also see some return for this investment over time.

In terms of maintaining a focus on the voice of poor members and maintaining a pro-poor focus, the authors highlight the following issues:

- Ensuring objectives are defined and agreed upon by the organisation members themselves.
- Ensuring that a minimal percentage or a critical mass of members is poor appears to be important in order for MBOPs to remain centred on objectives and activities that benefit poor people.
- Ensuring poor members are adequately represented in management structures.

The paper concludes by recapitulating the conditions for successful MBOPs, which take the form of responses to three questions:

- What are the conditions that have given rise to organisations of the poor?
- What are the internal factors that make for successful MBOPs?
- What are some of the internal and external factors that affect the ability of MBOPs to influence others and to scale up?

- Hickey, S. and Bracking, S. (2005). 'Exploring the politics of chronic poverty: from representation to a politics of justice?' *World Development*, (33)6, 851-865.

Type of resource:

This journal article focuses on the voice and agency of chronically poor people. Section 4 ('Speaking for the poorest: moving from the social to the political') is particularly relevant.

Abstract:

Hickey and Bracking assert that chronic poverty is an inherently political problem. The different ways in which extreme forms of poverty and the poorest people are politically 'represented' contributes significantly to understanding the ways in which politics both reproduces and reduces poverty. However, gaining voice and material progress for the



poorest groups may require more than a politics of representation. Poverty reduction must be relocated within a broader political project of justice.

Hickey and Bracking suggest that social coordination amongst the poorest is extremely difficult because of time constraints and lack of networks. They argue that, for chronically poor people, the burden of maintaining social and family networks and participating in collective action is enormous, with few guarantees of steady, meaningful returns.

Echoing Thorp, Stewart and Heyer's (2005) research on group action for the poor across the developing world, Hickey and Bracking also argue that the poorest people are disadvantaged with regards to group membership, because of their: low levels of assets; isolation; low level of access to political institutions; and lack of recognition as citizens therein. Importantly, even groups that include poor people are likely to exclude the poorest, either at entry or over time.

Hickey and Bracking consider claims-based or advocacy organisations that adopt a rights-based approach to offer the most promising route for the poorest people to mobilise/find representation (e.g. trade unions, women's groups and associations of poor people, such as landless movements). However, rights-based approaches stem from a notion of citizenship. Do ultra-poor people see themselves as having the capacity to make claims on their rights, particularly over immediate basic needs?

Hickey and Bracking conclude by identifying the key factors for SMO success, which include a strong identity-based focus, and a shared project of 'justice' between membership groups and equitable relations with supporting external agencies.

- Mwangi, E. and Markelova, H. (2009, May). 'Collective action and property rights for poverty reduction: a review of methods and approaches'. *Development Policy Review*, 27(3), 307-331. Retrieved 24 June, 2009.

Type of resource:

Building on the conceptual framework developed by Di Gregorio *et al.* (2008)⁷, this article reviews the literature demonstrating the multi-faceted importance of collective action institutions in shaping abilities to manage risk vulnerability and increase political agency. The authors take the idea of 'collective action' beyond the arena of social political movements, to include various mechanisms through which poor people share and manage risk.

Abstract:

⁷ See Di Gregorio, M., Hagedorn, K., Kirk, M., Korf, B., McCarthy, N., Meinzen-Dick, R. and B. Swallow. (2008). Property rights, collective action, and poverty: The role of institutions for poverty reduction. CAPRI Working Paper 81, Washington, D.C.: International Food Policy Research Institute.



Mwangi and Markelova examine the literature which discusses the impact collective action and property rights institutions in developing countries can have on poverty reduction. The article suggests that there is great potential for improving the collective organisation of poor people and their allies as a route to enhancing the tangible and intangible assets held by poor people.

Organised into six sections, this paper expands on the conceptual framework developed by Di Gregorio *et al.* (2008), which argues that collective action is not only important in improving poor people's access to risk-reducing resources, but also in challenging societal power structures, and providing opportunities for poor people to participate in policy dialogue.

Section 1 provides an overview of the article, which is followed by a brief review of the Di Gregorio framework in Section 2. Section 3 discusses various definitions of poverty and methodological issues surrounding its measurement. Section 4 expands on the vulnerabilities that are experienced by rural poor people, quoting Bebbington (1999)⁸ in discussing the importance of assets in poverty: '(assets) are the basis of agents' power to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources.' However, the authors argue that vulnerability is not synonymous with impoverishment, drawing attention to the multiple co-operative 'risk-coping mechanisms' (mutual insurance, group borrowing, co-operation in technology adoption, etc.) which poor people employ to manage shocks. Finally, the authors explore the role of the institutional environment in influencing access to resources (laws, macroeconomic policy, infrastructure, political regime) and the relationship between power and poverty. Section 5 defines the role of social networks in securing property rights and discusses the various definitions and measurements of 'collective action' in poverty reduction. Section 6 discusses how poor people may conceptualise their own ability to change and challenge their environments. Section 7 comments on the shift from poverty measurement to evaluation.

Mwangi and Markelova conclude that institutions of collective action and property rights appear to be critical determinants of the diverse assets that people use to manage and improve their wellbeing.

⁸ See Bebbington, A. 1999. Capitals and Capabilities: A framework for analyzing peasant viability, rural livelihoods and poverty. *World Development* 27(12): 2021-2044.



- Raymond, L. (2006, February). 'Cooperation without trust: overcoming collective action barriers to endangered species protection'. *Policy Studies Journal*, 34(1), 37-57. Retrieved 10 August 2009.

Type of resource:

This journal article discusses the role of social capital in collective action.

Abstract:

Although this paper is concerned with barriers to collective action for endangered species protection, Raymond provides us with an interesting perspective on the factors which influence the formation of groups in the context of resource management, arguing that the role of social capital and trust in group formation in the context of resource management has been overrated in much contemporary literature on collective action.

The traditional stumbling block to collective action across societies has long been identified as the lack of social capital. Raymond cites Putnam's (1995) social capital definition as the 'combination of factors encouraging cooperation among groups with strong social networks, including the development of mutual trust' (Raymond 2006: 37).

However, Raymond, rather than placing emphasis on the individual, argues that political leadership can play a critical role beyond trying to build trust and social capital among the collaborating parties. Public agencies can create assurance mechanisms and other institutional arrangements which help to maintain collaboration. Raymond advocates for policymakers to spend less time on building direct trust between individuals and for more efforts to be put into incentives and institutional mechanisms to make cooperation the rational choice.

Raymond's study adds an untraditional response to Mancur Olson's (1965)⁹ much debated contention that self-interested individuals are unlikely to cooperate voluntarily to capture future joint benefits, due to the selective benefits of defection and high transfer costs, or 'free-riding'. As a form of collective action, social movements are also subject to similar scrutiny. Why should individuals get involved in a movement when they can simply share in the benefits of legislation change, for example, should the movement be successful? For some organisations (e.g. workers' unions, teachers' unions), legislation that requires union membership is a common way to deal with free-riders. Another important way to eliminate the free-rider is to create 'selective incentives' that individuals will want, but can only gain through membership. Selective incentives can be tangible gains, such as insurance plans, saving and credit schemes; or intangible gains, such as increased self-identity and purpose, empowerment and confidence.

⁹ Annotated below, see section 5 'Further reading on classic collective action theory.'



- Schady, N. (2001). 'Who Participates? The Supply of Volunteer Labor and the Distribution of Government Programs in Rural Peru'. Research Working Papers. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Type of resource:

This is a World Bank research paper on the efficacy of participatory and voluntary initiatives. The paper is a quantitative analysis of volunteering patterns and the demographics of volunteers, which seeks to understand the factors that promote or inhibit participation and empowerment.

Abstract:

Volunteering and participation in the community is said to be linked to positive economic and political outcomes. Volunteering is thought to have important benefits in building social capital and encouraging greater ownership of development projects. For example, many public programmes in rural Peru and elsewhere ask that the intended beneficiaries 'participate' as a means of building trust and social capital, increasing the sustainability of investments and helping self-target investments to the poor. The paper argues that women and chronically poor people are disadvantaged in terms of ability to participate.

Schady discusses the socioeconomic factors which influence participation in the community. By analysing volunteering patterns in rural Peru, Schady finds that volunteers in rural Peru typically have a high opportunity cost of time. They are more educated and more likely to hold a job. Schady also investigates the role of other household characteristics, such as gender, marital status, length of residence, and ethnicity, which are found to be significant predictors of the probability of volunteering. Controlling for household characteristics, communities differ widely in aggregate volunteer levels. Schady finds that these differences seem unrelated to differences in patterns of government expenditure.

For this reason, the paper argues that encouraging participation by potential beneficiaries is unlikely to be an effective form of self-targeting, since people with a higher opportunity cost of time volunteer more and as 'participatory social programs may have the unintended consequence of reinforcing existing social hierarchies'. Moreover, social programmes that require participation may have difficulty reaching some vulnerable groups, such as women and illiterate people.

Finally, the paper questions the ability of participatory programmes and social movements to represent those who are particularly vulnerable, women and chronically poor people, given that they constitute such a small percentage of those who are able to participate. The paper highlights neglected socio-economic factors for participating in participatory programmes and movements – like lacking social status; not having the education to see the potential impact of such efforts; not understanding the larger political and economic environment in which these movements can work. The paper also supports commonly expressed notions that time



poverty and household burdens prohibit the engagement of poor women in unpaid organisations and initiatives.

- Thorp, R., Stewart, F. and Heyer, A. (2005). 'How far is group formation a route out of chronic poverty?' *World Development*, (33)6. Retrieved 12 June 2009.

Type of resource:

Initially developed as a conference paper for a CPRC policy conference, this article examines the potential for chronically poor people to engage in economic and political groups for their collective advancement.

Abstract:

The paper argues that group formation has great potential for enabling members to access demands. However, chronically poor people are disadvantaged in group formation, and this paper suggests that this may form a significant part of the vicious circle and dynamics of chronic poverty. This paper defines the success or failure of groups in terms of two outcomes: increased income and empowerment.

In Part 1, the paper distinguishes various types of groups and analyses their potential for improving the position of the poor, using case studies.

In Part 2, the paper then explores how poor people, and especially the very poor, are or may be disadvantaged, both in forming groups and in making them work. Some of the most significant factors inhibiting successful group formation (particularly for very poor people) are identified as: a lack of assets; a lack of access to markets and networks; lack of rights; and dependence on external intervention. This section also demonstrates that successful groups formed among the poor may be very likely to exclude even poorer people.

Part 3 explores instances of success of groups in including the poorest people, and analyses what makes for success in inclusion – sometimes even in reaching the very poor. Policy recommendations include:

- *decentralisation accompanied by resources:* the encouragement of policies of decentralisation that are based on serious devolution of power and resources, with adequate support to create accountability and true understanding of development;
- *institutional commitment:* increasing support for departments or ministries with explicit briefs to include poor people;
- *credit systems which favour groups of poor people;*
- *the supply of resources:* legal, technical and financial support for groups formed to enhance the claims of poor people;



- *information dissemination*: work in the area of informal institutional design to identify ways of fostering information flows, trust and voice; and
- *training opportunities*: appropriate training for people to initiate and development group formation and so forth.

- Upton, C. (2008, April). 'Social capital, collective action and group formation: developmental trajectories in post-socialist Mongolia'. *Human Ecology: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 36(2), 175-188. Retrieved 24 June 2009.

Type of resource:

Post-socialist Mongolia provides the backdrop for this longitudinal study on group formation and cooperation.

Abstract:

Upton explores the issue of building trust within collective action in resource management among herders in the *Gobi* region of post-Soviet Mongolia. Upton's case study revealed an erosion of trust and growing individualism among herders, due to the apparent failure of collectives. Interpersonal mistrust was found to be compounded by the presence of a weak state, which led to little evidence of group formation, even in the presence of stated desire among the herders for such collaboration.

Upton concludes that the intervention of third parties (importantly, as 'trust brokers', rather than rule monitors or enforcers) has an important catalytic role to play in this region to facilitate the growth of interpersonal cooperation, and thus a renewed capacity for collective action. This article explores the role of social capital in influencing collective action, in terms of sharing access to common property and natural resources.

- Willis, K. (2000). 'No es fácil, pero es posible: the maintenance of middle-class women-headed households in Mexico'. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, (69), 29-45.

Type of resource:

This paper examines the use of social capital among female-headed households, between socioeconomic groups in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Abstract:

Willis's study highlights the heterogeneous nature of female-headed households, challenging the commonly held view that network mobilisation for the exchange of goods and services only takes place between low-income groups. This paper highlights that network mobilisation



requires the ability to reciprocate, and can exclude those who do not have the time or resources to engage in such exchange.

Willis also argues that female household heads do not necessarily conform to the stereotype of isolated individuals. Willis found that the majority of female-headed households are found among the middle class. Very few households were found in the lower or upper classes.

It has been argued that women who are heads of household are often the most isolated from the operation of social networks, through not having access to one set of relatives, high levels of labour-force participation and the burden of reproductive activities. However, Willis finds that class is an important variable in this. Firstly, domestic servants reduce the domestic burden, which allows women to socialise. Secondly, many women are employed outside the home alongside other employees, so providing a chance for social interaction. Finally, as most middle-class households have a car and telephone, keeping in contact with both friends and relatives is facilitated.

Among Oaxaca City's female-headed middle-class households, the mobilisation of networks is of crucial importance to household maintenance. Willis's study refutes the prevailing stereotype that female-headed households are the poorest of the poor. By combining economic resources with social and human capital, households headed by women can maintain a middle-class lifestyle and status. Household extension was also shown to be a crucial strategy in the maintenance of female-headed middle-class households. Willis finds that, even within the middle-class group, female-headed households differ greatly, with varying strategies adopted in order to maintain a particular standard of living. Willis also finds further differences between the women's perceptions and experiences

Female headship has been demonstrated to be strongly correlated with women's labour force participation, not just because of the need for income, but because of the freedom that a household without a male partner confers. For middle-class women, participating in the labour force is facilitated by their ability to afford to employ a domestic servant to assist the women heads in completing their domestic responsibilities. Willis notes that the gender division of labour in Mexican households means that women are often wholly responsible for the completion of domestic tasks. For women who have waged work, this means they must juggle domestic and paid work. In contrast, for low-income households, this weight of responsibility involves a massive expenditure of time and effort, and can result in calling upon other household members or non-residents to assist.

Willis concludes by questioning of the usefulness of the category female-headed households needs to be addressed. She highlights the diversity of experiences within the category in the middle class in Oaxaca alone, which suggests that there is little empirical basis or analytical utility in identifying them as a separate group.



- Willis, K., (2010). 'Gender, poverty and social capital: the case of Oaxaca City, Mexico'. In S. Chant (ed.) (2010), *The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy* (pp. 385-390). Cheltenham: Elgar.

Type of resource:

This work discusses fieldwork in Oaxaca, Mexico, to explore the support women receive to meet the demands of their paid and unpaid work. Willis questions popular assumptions surrounding 'social capital': who has it, who does not, when and how it is used. This chapter appears in the 2010 volume, *The International Handbook of Gender and Poverty*.

Abstract:

Willis begins by drawing on Moser's (1998: 4) definition of social capital, which is 'reprocity within communities and between households based on trust deriving from social ties'. Willis considers social capital to be an asset which can be held by individuals, households or communities, used to meet needs or indeed mobilised as part of development programmes. In her chapter, Willis tackles the widely held essentialist assumption that women are 'good' social networkers, with a well-developed set of contacts. These contacts are considered to be sources of support in times of need, or channels through which community development programmes can be mobilised.

Willis discussed the how females across socio-economic levels negotiated between paid domestic assistance, taking on extra income-generating opportunities and calling on social contacts for help to maintain their households. Willis found that social capital as an asset to support women in their reproductive duties was therefore very unequally mobilised; reflecting socio-economic status, household type, migrant status and employment.

A key conclusion for the purposes of this review was that some of the women most in need of support were unable to receive it, either because of limited overall social capital, or because friends and relatives were in equally difficult circumstances. Further, some women of lower economic status were unwilling to ask for assistance, as their own lack of resources prevented them from reciprocating.



2.4 Factors which influence the emergence of social movements

- Bebbington, A. and Mitlin, D. (2006). 'Social Movements and Chronic Poverty across the Urban-rural Divide: Concepts and Experiences'. Working Paper No. 65. Institute of Development Policy and Management, Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

Type of resource:

A working paper for the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, which develops upon the CPRC's previous working papers on social movements (Nos. 63 and 64). It provides some interesting notions concerning the development of social movements.

Abstract:

This short, analytically oriented paper is divided into three sections, addressing: the relevance of social movements to the chronically poor; social movements and the representation of the chronically poor; and the interaction between the state and movements of the poor, with a special focus on the influence of social movements on policy and politics.

The paper suggests that the power of social movements to influence the specifics of policies and programmes is weak. However, the importance and impact of social movements lie 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. While Bebbington and Mitlin argue that movements are essential actors in a chronic poverty agenda, the combined effects of neo-liberalism and the internal constraints on movements, requires that we remain cautious about the capacities of social movements to shift systemic processes of exploitation, most notably those related to the underlying processes of contemporary capitalism. Social movements seem able to achieve limited political gains in these contexts and bring about changes which at best modify, but do not significantly change, the fundamental processes that determine the creation of poverty and, in some cases, social exclusion.

The paper argues that social movements emerge in response to specific difficulties, challenges and grievances, rather than in response to poverty itself. It sees three main links between the emergence of movements and systemic pressures (via asset distribution and governance). These are:

- **'accumulation by exploitation'** - This workplace-centred process has historically generated labour movements, trade unions, and related political organisations.
- **'accumulation by dispossession'** - Resistance to accumulation by dispossession (as with the 'privatisation' of land and water) has tended to take the form of 'new' social movements, around issues such as land and minority rights (also see Hickey and Bracking, 2005).



- **'accumulation by systematic exclusion'** - This is the sustained denial of assets (and thus accumulation possibilities) to particular groups – a clear example here is the persistent lack of secure tenure and basic services.

To the extent that these distinct types of accumulation can elicit resistance, the important general point is that, in addition to challenging particular institutions and structures, movements do emerge to challenge the dynamics of the political economy.

- Bebbington, A., Scurrah, M., and Bielich, C., (2008). 'Mapeo de Movimientos Sociales en el Perú Actual.' Lima: Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales. Available at: http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/research/socialmovements/publications/conferences/Bebbingtonetal_Presentacion_MapeoTaller25Agos2008_000.pdf

Type of resource:

This PowerPoint presentation was delivered in Spanish in August 2008 as part of the 'Proyecto Movimientos Sociales y Pobreza,' (Social Movements and Poverty Project) covering Peru and South Africa. This project was a joint collaboration between the University of Manchester and the Centro Peruano de Estudios Sociales (CEPES).

This project sought to answer three main questions:

- (1) How important are social movements in the reduction of poverty?
- (2) What typological characteristics of social movements and political context affect the selection of strategies by the movement?
- (3) Which characteristics of social movements and political context determine the efficacy of these strategies?

The written presentation does not provide answers to these questions in any depth, but rather provides the broad structure of the project and findings.

Abstract

The objectives of this project were to:

- (1) Map the important and relevance of social movements for poverty reduction.
- (2) Document and analyse the strategies that social movements use
- (3) Identify the strategies that have led to the greatest inclusiveness, recognition, equitable distribution / generation or transferral of material benefits
- (4) Analyse the influence that the political regime has in the strategy selection and their level of success.
- (5) Evaluate the extent to which the strategies and activities of social movements include those of lower socioeconomic status with few resources.



The presentation describes the parameters of this study in Peru.

It begins by looking at the social geography of the social movement organisations found in Peru. It lists the ten forms of social movement organisation found there as the result of interviews with leaders, observers, experts and members of the movements themselves. It discusses how they evaluated their memberships to ascertain who was a member of each organisation, and which people belonged to more than one organisation. The project sought to map the movement's beneficiaries, distinguishing between 'altruistic' movements (e.g. human rights, environmental) and those for more personal gain (e.g. agrarian, syndicates, cocalero, syndicates). Distinctions were also made between 'inclusive' social movements (e.g. agrarian, human rights) versus 'restricted' social movements (e.g. indigenous). The project also looked at how decisions were made within the organisations.

Following this section, the presentation touches briefly on the historical evolution of social movements from the 1970s through to the 2000s. It notes the shifts in types of social movement organisations that emerged along this timelines and the main factors that contributed to their emergence. For example, it notes that in the 1990s, many social movements were in crisis, and focused solely on survival due to the repressive methods used by President Fujimori. Towards the end of the 1990s and into the 2000s, social movements began to reform and be revitalised in the struggle against Fujimori.

The third section of the presentation deals with how social movements formulate and effect their mission. The presentation highlights the generalised objectives that social movements present. The presentation highlights the gap between 'original objectives' and the 'actual objectives.' This is followed by a discussion of four observed forms of social movement strategy: confrontational, persuasive, mixed and 'democracy with violence.' Following implementation of these strategies, the presentation holds that there are four forms of social movement achievements: a.) survival until consolidation, b.) changes in legislative norms, c.) visibility and presence, alliances and d.) international action. Finally, this section describes three forms of social movement political ideology.

The fourth section outlines social movement organisation relationships. The presentation looks at the targets of social movement organisations. In Peru the main target was found to be the executive branch of the government. It describes the relationships of social movements with the state. It outlines the relationships with other national and international organisations.

The fifth section looks at the definition, causes and proposed solutions to poverty. Important to highlight in this section, is the view that empowering the poor is seen as a key solution, as is taking advantage of the wealth of resources generated by extractive activities(which would necessitate challenging existing power relations).

The sixth section looks at social movements and the media. Here two types of media are presented. The first are the large, capitalistic, mass media bases that are frequently held to dismiss social movements and attribute little importance to them. The second type are the smaller media bases that offer much more coverage of social movement activity. These are often run by NGOs or social movements themselves. The social movements who do appear in the media were seen to do so for two main reasons: firstly, popular social movements that



are successful in mobilizing large numbers of people and secondly, those that have a sufficient resource and organizational level to influence the agenda of media outlets. The presentation is concluded by a discussion section where eight possible areas of further thought are proposed.

- Calhoun, C. (1993). “‘New social movements’ of the early nineteenth century’. In K. Nash (ed.) (2000), *Readings in Contemporary Political Sociology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Type of resource:

This chapter in an edited collection on contemporary political sociology, focuses on social movements and the ‘politicisation of the social’, and examines the ideological development of concepts relating to *new social movements*.

Abstract:

In Calhoun’s historical evaluation of ‘new’ social movements, he juxtaposes movements such as the women’s movement with *the* social movement of modernity; the working-class labour movement. Calhoun argues that sociologists have been mistaken in differentiating between old and new when a close examination of movements in the early 19th and late 20th centuries exposes a number of common features – once thought to set ‘new’ movements apart.

Tracing the shifts in social movement theory, Calhoun identifies three academic periods. The functionalist sociologist approach occurred during a time in which social movements were viewed as a deviant, irrational response to the strains of modern life. Next, from the 1970s, was the emergence of the resource mobilisation theorists, who tried to conceive of social movements as rational, by applying theories of rational choice. Finally, the ‘new social movement’ theorists emerged, who prioritised the cultural and aesthetic aspects of social movements. Despite critiquing their historical differentiation between movements, Calhoun encourages sociologists to follow their example by putting culture at the centre of movement analyses.

- Diani, M. (1992). ‘The concept of social movements’. In K. Nash (ed.) (2000), *Readings in Contemporary Political Sociology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.



Type of resource:

In this chapter from an edited collection on contemporary political sociology, Diani attempts to synergise the divided schools of thought surrounding social movements; particularly since the disjuncture brought about with the advent of the term 'new social movements.'

Abstract:

- Unlike Calhoun (above) Diani identifies four main approaches to social movement analysis: collective behaviour, resource mobilisation theory; the 'political process' approach; and new social movement theory (NSM). In the case of NSM, Diani claims that NSM theorists tend to use the term 'social movement' only to refer to those movements that do not engage in politics at the level of the state, but which contest cultural conflicts in civil society. But, rather than differentiating between the four (which have in reality merged into two schools), Diani highlights their increasing convergence on a number of issues. First, social movements are based on networks of informal interaction; a single organisation is not a social movement, nor is a single protest event. Second, all approaches now see the construction of collective identity and shared understandings of the world as important to a movement's development. This has been extended and adopted in the US-based tradition by Goffman's concept of 'framing', which involves the simplification of the world by coding it into readily grasped situations and experiences.¹⁰ Social movements frame events in such a way as to construct a collective identity for their members. Third, both sets of theorists concede that social movements engage in collective action in social conflicts with other actors/institutions (even though resource mobilisation theorists continue to emphasise political conflicts at the state level). Lind, A. (1997). 'Gender, development and urban social change: women's community action in global cities'. *World Development*, (25)8, 1205-1223 (19).

Type of resource:

This article is derived from a study on women's volunteer action in global cities. It was featured in a CPRC special edition of *World Development*. It focuses on the emergence of women's social movements in an urban setting.

Abstract:

This article addresses the gender dimensions of women's community action in global cities. It focuses on two types of women's organisations (food provision and anti-violence), which Lind claims have emerged exponentially as a response to deindustrialisation, massive

¹⁰ See Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.



unemployment and struggles for decent living spaces. It draws out their implications for community and national development frameworks in the context of economic restructuring and urban poverty.

The article undertakes three tasks: first, it rethinks frameworks of development and urban social change from a gender perspective. Second, it analyses the ways in which local women's organisations have acted proactively – rather than merely reactively – to processes of urban restructuring. Third, it proposes an approach in which women's informal political and economic participation is better accounted for in national development frameworks and related community development initiatives.

Lind looks to the influence of women's participation in mixed-concern and gender-specific organisations in Santiago and social solidarity networks between middle-class and poor women's organisations, which had a vital impact upon the incorporation of gender issues into the Chilean state policies developed by the transition government of President Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994).

- McCarthy, J. and Zald, M. (1977). 'Resource mobilization and social movements: a partial theory'. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(6), 1212–1241.

Type of resource:

This seminal article introduces one of the major tributaries to the stream of revisionist thinking on social movements: 'resource mobilisation'. It touches upon the motivations behind social movement emergence and the action strategies that members use to access their demands. **Abstract:**

Resource mobilisation theory differs from traditional conceptions of social movement theory in a number of ways. In terms of strategies and tactics, traditional social movement theory holds that people use bargaining, lobbying, even violence – dependent on their past experiences with the authorities and the local organisational life. However, rather than assuming that social movements are founded upon aggrieved populations who provide the resources and labour, resource mobilisation theory argues that social movements may or may not be based upon the presumed beneficiaries. Conscience constituents, individual or organisational, may provide major sources of support.

Resource mobilisation theory is also concerned with the strategic tasks of SMOs (i.e. overarching social movement bodies like the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, which is a cornerstone of Zald and McCarthy's writings on social movements in particular). These include mobilising supporters, transforming mass and elite publics into sympathisers, etc. Interestingly, they claim that SMO tactics are influenced by inter-organisational competition and cooperation.



In their relationships with larger society, traditional theories relate movement behaviours to environment – especially in relation to goal change – and have ignored the means by which movements can use the environment for their own purposes. Resource mobilisation theory, however, claims that societies provide the infrastructure that social movements utilise, like media/expense/levels of affluence/access to institutional centres and pre-existing networks.



3 Strategies for SMOs: being inclusive of chronically poor women

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

3.1.1 *Confront power hierarchies within the organisation and support new leadership*

- Al-Ali, N. S. (2002). 'The Women's Movement in Egypt, with Selected References to Turkey, Civil Society and Social Movements Programme'. Paper No. 5. Geneva: UNRISD. Retrieved 24 June 2009.

Type of resource:

A study commissioned for the civil society and social movements five-year programme at UNRISD from 2000-05. This working paper seeks to examine the efficacy of women's social movements through the use of two Middle Eastern case studies.

Abstract:

This article explores women's movements in the Middle East, in terms of historical trajectories as well as current objectives. Al-Ali analyses women's movements in Egypt and Turkey; their historical context; and the development of local feminist thought. A central conclusion is that in both countries women's organisations have been co-opted in the general effort to achieve modernisation and development.

In both countries, women's movements reflect similar demographics – mainly urban middle class and upper middle class women – although in recent years these movements have to some extent broadened their bases, as the middle class have been impoverished by economic crises and structural adjustment policies. In Egypt, most 'women's organisations as well as activists are united by their middle-class background and their commitment to retain and expand their civic rights and equality before the law. They share a secular orientation and a concern about growing Islamist militancy but their actual position vis-à-vis the various Islamist tendencies and discourses are as varied as their specific understandings of interpretation of secularism' (p. 14).

There is also a geographical bias within Egyptian women's movements. Al-Ali found them to be mainly limited to cities like Cairo, Ankara and Istanbul, and although the resonance of movement messages may have reached smaller towns, etc., their ability to connect and communicate is limited.



The Egyptian women's movement is found to be particularly influenced by: the state's ambiguous role towards women's organisations; the growth of civil society and the severe restrictions on it; international pressures; and the influence of Islamist constituencies.

Turkish movements have, conversely, been able to work much more closely through existing state structures and institutions, particularly municipalities. Turkish movements have also been comparatively better at mobilising diverse social and spatial groups.

In both cases, the movements are found to have challenged prevailing notions of political culture and institutions, but are constrained by prevailing social and political structures, a lack of clear institutional targets and ambiguous state policies.

- Dannecker, P. (2000). 'Collective action, organisation building, and leadership: women workers in the garment sector in Bangladesh'. *Gender and Development*, 8(3), 31-39. November. Retrieved 24 June 2009.

Type of resource:

Study based on narrative interviews conducted with Bangladeshi garment sector workers, unions and NGO representatives, factory owners, and government officers in Dhaka, 1996.

Abstract:

Dannecker focuses on the evolution of collective action, organisation building and networking as strategies used by Bangladeshi women garment workers to cope with ongoing change and to challenge gender power relations.

With the growth of the garment production sector in Bangladesh since the early 1980s, has come a surge in opportunities for women who were previously largely excluded from paid employment. In consultation with women garment workers, Dannecker observed evidence of informal and some formal collective action within the factories. Social power hierarchies among the women workers were found to structure these instances of collective action. The atmosphere of sisterhood in the factories meant that the younger female workers felt that their interests were being looked after by the older senior operators. However, this power imbalance had the effect of disempowering younger women to leadership opportunities, which became an issue when the senior operators did not choose to act on their behalf. Dannecker cites Folbre (1994: 62),¹¹ who argued that: 'in order for a sense of collective identity and a common purpose to develop, people must perceive a link between their own interests and the interests of others.'

¹¹ See Folbre, N. (1994). *Who Takes Care of the Kids? Gender and the Structures of Constraint*. London and New York: Routledge.



Barriers to the engagement of garment workers with existing trade union organisations were: perceived irrelevance to their labour experiences and male-dominated membership.

Examination of the Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Union demonstrated the impact that an organisation based on non-hierarchical principles, solidarity and shared experiences can have in eliciting strong feelings of agency – providing the means for the women to become their own advocates in a variety of arenas. Members were successful in participating in international movement networks, challenging their own working conditions and confronting the rules which governed inter-generational power relationships among the women themselves.

- **Harcourt, W. (2006). 'The Global Women's Rights Movement: Power Politics around the United Nations and the World Social Forum'. Civil Society and Social Movements Programme, Paper No. 25. Geneva: UNRISD.**

Type of resource:

A paper developed for the Civil Society and Social Movements Programme, UNRISD. The paper is a contribution to the heated debates on: the role of global agencies; their effects on the autonomy, legitimacy and representative-ness of social movements; and their local impacts and actual benefits for women around the globe. This text examines issues of leadership in women's movements. It asks how representative of local women's struggles a movement can hope to be once it enters the global policy arena.

Abstract:

Harcourt examines the discourses, inputs and reorganisation of strategies that emanated from the lobbying of women's rights movements via global agencies like the United Nations, as well as the World Social Forum. It therefore looks at 15 years of global political work by women in the North and South who have 'banded together' as a global women's rights movement in response to the UN processes. Harcourt sets out the following strategic questions for consideration: How much have women's movements achieved by working in collaboration with the UN? Is there a recognisable global women's rights movement as it is perceived on the UN stage? Is there such an entity as a global women's movement, or is it just a skilfully played mirage? Are there discontinuities between the local and international arenas within social movements? Harcourt implicitly questions how local social movements which address chronic poverty can be successfully and accountably scaled up.

Key conclusions are that there are considerable tensions concerning how to bring in new or old marginal voices, 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 because there is little way to guarantee who is 'an ally and who is not'. It is therefore hard to assess how representative of local groups those conversing within the international area are in practice. 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.

Other considerable challenges are the contrasting political legacies of Northern and Southern women and the divergent political strategy trends that stem from these histories. Harcourt argues that Northern women are more cautious in global arenas because of the perception that they have won their rights; therefore, gender biases, violence and discrimination are rarely openly questioned. In contrast, Harcourt contests that Southern feminists tend to feel that their rights are a matter of life and death. As a result, they will speak up as a political act and demand to be heard. In the global arena, this can lead to different tactics and disagreements about how to tackle the UN arena and also on how best to interact with the men determining agendas in the global justice movements.

Finally, Harcourt highlights the generational differences that persist within the global women's movement. Younger women are attracted to the social justice movement as a result of anti-war, anti-globalisation and environmental protection campaigns.

- Pimbert, M. (2006). *Reclaiming Autonomous Food Systems: the Role of Local Organisations in Farming, Environment and People's Access to Food*. Report. London: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

Type of resource:

This paper was presented at the International Conference on Land, Poverty, Social Justice and Development, hosted by the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands, January 2006. It predominantly examines the impact of social movements upon farming practices, but is relevant to this review in its discussion of land movement organisational structures, and how inclusive they are of women and other marginalised groups.

Abstract:

Civil society and new social movements are the prime movers behind the development of a newly emerging food sovereignty policy framework. Food sovereignty is a transformative process that seeks to recreate the democratic political realm and regenerate a diversity of autonomous food systems based on equity, justice and ecological sustainability. Important in this is the role of local organisations that renew and sustain context-specific food systems; however, at present these are largely ignored or undermined by governments and corporations as global restructuring and 'radical monopolies' threaten 'autonomous spaces' (p. 2).

Local organisations and movements related to land exist across a range of scales, from individual to consortia at the national level. However, often these organisations are not welcoming spaces for women, nor are they inclusive of the weak and marginalised. More generally, Pimbert talks about differences in space: invited spaces and popular spaces. In



reference to popular spaces or social movements, Pimbert notes that these can reproduce subtle forms of exclusion in the absence of a conscious social commitment to a politics of freedom, equity and gender inclusion. Nevertheless, these local popular movements/initiatives are vital in the face of uncertainty, spatial variability and complex non-equilibrium and non-linear ecological dynamics, which require flexible local responses.

Pimbert draws on a range of local environmental management examples (from South America, India, Indonesia and West Africa). Examples include the success of women's organisations in the Peruvian Andes in running barter markets, which ensure that the poorest of the poor have some food and nutritional security.¹² His central conclusion is that, although autonomous local food systems and organisations are not always perfect, nor equitable, locally determined approaches play critical roles in sustaining farming, environment and people's access to food. Revitalising localised food systems entails shifts from uniformity, concentration, coercion and centralisation to support more diversity and dynamic adaptation. The emerging food sovereignty movement is faced with the huge challenge of recreating the democratic political realm, as well as autonomous food systems in a diversity of contexts.

- Rosas, A. M. and Wilson, S. (2003). 'The women's movement in the era of globalization: does it face extinction?' *Gender and Development*, (11)1, 19-26.

Type of resource:

This journal article is based on an inter-generational dialogue discussing the trajectory of women's movements in the future as they struggle to adapt to the globalised, modern environment. It focuses on the tensions that need to be addressed for inter-generational organising.

Abstract:

This article distils from the inter-generational panel at the AWID forum in 2003, three main questions:

- (1) Is the women's movement missing in action?
- (2) What are some of the tensions between different generations of women in the movement?
- (3) What strategies can be used for inter-generational organising?

The first question raises the key concern of the article, that the women's movement has entered a period of relative inaction since the mass mobilisations of feminists in the 1990s. Rosas and Wilson conclude, however, that despite a lack of coherent mass mobilisation in

¹² See Marti, N. (2005). 'La multidimensionalidad de los sistemas de alimentacion en los Andes peruanos: los chalayplasa del valle de Lares (Cusco)'. Doctoral thesis. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona.



contemporary times, feminist action has adapted to factor in globalised dynamics. What is important, therefore, is not that we differentiate, but that we acknowledge that all have the same feminist vision. It is important to bear in mind that the feminist approach is about respecting non-linear processes.

The second point raises concerns over generational difference. There is the necessity to acknowledge that stereotypes or prejudices based on an idea of youth and older age as dichotomous have both positive and negative aspects and the latter have to be marginalised, i.e. younger women should maintain the terminology 'feminist' in recognition of the struggles of past organisations/activists, and both groups must acknowledge that education is required for both old and young movement members.

In terms of strategies, the paper emphasises the need to unify the movement as relevant to women of all ages and generations; to intensify efforts to form and spread feminism; to acknowledge that younger women are not the 'only hope'; to confront competition between generations; to promote development of an agenda that can include the diversity of the movement, etc.

- Shekhar, P. M. (2008). 'Fijian grantee shares insight on intergenerational movement building'. Online blog entry. 11 September 2008. San Francisco: Global Fund for Women. Available online: <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/what-we-do/media-center/blog/2008/905-fijian-grantee-shares-insights-on-intergenerational-movement-building>

Type of resource:

An internet blog on the development of the Fijian Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) and the Pacific Women's Movement, taking the form of meeting minutes from a recent conference. It discusses power inequalities within women's movements, arguing that some movements favour the inclusion of educated elites.

Abstract:

This blog charts key issues raised at a meeting of the FWRM. Key concerns with the movement were the problem of mentoring between budding and experienced feminists and their target audience. One participant pointed out that one was generally introduced to the movement by having studied gender or feminism at university – thus favouring the inclusion of educated elites. Another concern was notions of territorialism and that some people were dissuaded from participating because they were worried about 'stepping on someone's toes'. A final point was the notion of power sharing, whereby the importance of concepts of power – power over, power to, power with – were emphasised so that the group did not replicate patriarchal power structures that they had worked so hard to overcome.



- Wilson, S., Sengupta, A. and Evans, K. (2005). *Defending Our Dreams: Global Feminist Voices for a New Generation*. London: Zed Books.

Type of resource:

This book discusses the generational issues that permeate the global women's movement.

Abstract:

Young women often feel alienated from the women's movement because it is not sensitive to their own concerns, and because they see many of those who have been involved with it for years as patronising and arrogant. This book highlights a range of issues and concerns facing young women today, asking, among other questions:

- (1) How are young women's issues different from those of their mothers and grandmothers?
- (2) How is young women's organising different from that of earlier generations?
- (3) What do young women bring to strengthen and re-energise women's movements?
- (4) Why it is important for the future of women's movements that the link between older feminist and young women's organisations be strengthened?

In an attempt to bring together a variety of young women's perspectives and experiences, the book reflects on issues such as new technologies, HIV/AIDS and sexuality; trafficking in women; difference and diversity; and poverty. The authors examine these issues from a personal perspective, recognising their own positions in relation to them, while bringing in the broader global context. The book recognises that discussion around gender issues, the way forward and the future of advocacy lies partly in intergenerational dialogue which draws on experience as well as fresh perspectives.

Also see:

Sever, C. (2005). *The Gender, Poverty, Governance Nexus: Key Issues and Current Debates*, BRIDGE. London: Institute of Development Studies.



3.1.2 *Build accountable leadership*

- Beard, V. and Dasgupta, A. (2006). 'Collective action and community-driven development in rural and urban Indonesia'. *Urban Studies*, (43), 1451-1468. August.

Type of resource:

This article deals with the issue of accountable leadership, by examining the influence of elites within case studies from rural and urban India.

Abstract:

Beard and Dasgupta provide a nuanced study of the influence of elites within grassroots-level development projects in Indonesia. The authors distinguish 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 efficiently deliver resources to poor beneficiaries. The decision-making and development of these projects were not participatory or democratic, but local elites were accountable to the community, contributing time and knowledge to reach the poorest members of the 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 do arise (p. 244).

- Franceschet S. and Macdonald, L. (2004). 'Hard times for citizenship: women's movements in Chile and Mexico'. *Citizenship Studies*, (8)1, 3-23(21).

Type of resource:

This article looks at how the state can co-opt movement goals. Franceschet and Macdonald comparatively analyse the cases of Mexico and Chile to understand how women's movements contest the meaning of citizenship in various national contexts. This text echoes similar findings of other studies from Latin America (e.g. see Houtzager 2008, below), with respect to the encroachment of the state on the ideological goals of the movements and the appropriation of language.

Abstract:

This paper assesses the consequences that different movement strategies, such as 'autonomy' versus 'double militancy', have for movements' citizenship goals. To explain the different outcomes in the two cases, it focuses on the nature of the democratic transition, the



internal coherence of women's movements, the nature of alliances with other civil society actors, the ideological orientation of the newly democratised state, the form of women's agency within the state, and the nature of the neoliberal economic reforms.

It is argued that a serious problem for women in both Chile and Mexico is the fact that governments themselves are deploying the concept of citizenship as a way of legitimating their social and economic policies. While women's movements seek to broaden the meaning of citizenship to include social rights, neoliberal governments employ the rhetoric of citizen activism to encourage society to provide its own solutions to economic hardship and poverty. While this trend is occurring in both Chile and Mexico, there are some features of the political opportunity structure in Chile that enable organised women to contest the state's more narrow vision of democratic citizenship. In Mexico, on the other hand, the neoliberal economic discourse of the current government is matched by a profoundly conservative ideological rhetoric, thereby reducing the political opportunities for women to put forward a gender equality agenda.

- Houtzager, P. P. (2008). 'The silent revolution in anti-poverty programmes: minimum income guarantees in Brazil'. *IDS Bulletin*, (38)6, 56-63.

Type of resource:

Houtzager's *IDS Bulletin* article examines an example of how government regulation of civil society can silence the voice of social movements. The article is based on research conducted on the city of São Paulo's *Renda Mínima*, the largest of the municipal minimum family income guarantee programmes, and the immediate precursor to the federal *Bolsa Família*.

Abstract:

Municipal and federal governments in Brazil have created substantial minimum income guarantee programmes that aim to tackle intergenerational poverty, within a rights framework. The São Paulo programme in Brazil is particularly significant, because it represents a rights-based strategy to poverty reduction, and is therefore distinct from the more common conditional cash transfers (CCTs).

This article addresses why the numerous organisations and movements representing the poor have remained silent during this revolution, and why they have exercised little or no social control over the new programmes. It also examines who, if not these organisations and movements, contributed to establishing the minimum income guarantee programmes. The answers to these questions are critical to understanding the ability of actors representing the poor to negotiate policy and engage in the social accountability of government programmes over the medium to long term.



Houzauger finds that the silence of civil society within the minimum income guarantee programme has been in large part because of government regulation. The Workers Party administration (2001-04) developed a modus operandi in the programme's foundational year that limited the role organisations representing the poor could play. This was carried over by the subsequent administration.

This paper raises the issue of government regulation of civil society as a barrier to the activity of social movements. Is this often the case for movements seeking to represent the chronically poor? The evidence from Brazil suggests that, in matters pertaining to housing and health, civil society interest groups had more voice, but in income-related provisions, they were excluded from negotiating the terms.

Also see:

Batliwala, S. (2008a). *Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements*. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). New Delhi: Brijbasi Art Press.

Hoare, J. and Gell, F. (eds.) (2008). *Programme Insights: Learning for Action on Women's Leadership and Participation*. Oxford: Oxfam Great Britain. Retrieved 24 June 2009.



3.2 Build and sustain an internally unified organisation

- Beckwith, K. (2001, June). Gender Frames and Collective Action: Configurations of Masculinity in the Pittston Coal Strike. *Politics & Society*, 29(2), 297. Retrieved June 24, 2009, from Academic Search Premier database.

Type of resource:

Article which looks at the role of gender in shaping the strategic shifts of the 1989-90 United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) coal miners labour rights strikes in the United States. Its importance to this paper is found in the emphasis that it places on gender identity in creating a cohesive and responsive social movement organisation. **Abstract:**

In contrast to the other articles, this paper looks at the role of masculinity in shaping collective action strategies. Using the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) strikes between 1989 – 1990 as case studies, Beckwith introduces the notion of ‘collective action repertoires,’ by which she means the agreed upon strategies of resistance and set of learned behaviours that the participants of a social movement collectively employ to achieve their objectives. In the context of the UMWA struggle, the paper notes the importance of the flexibility of these repertoires, and that movements are more likely to be successful when a group is capable of adapting and transforming these repertoires when necessary. Beckwith argues that repertoire transformations are made possible by successful shifts in ‘social movement framing’ – which puts the new collective action strategy in familiar terms which lie within the limits of what group members believe is possible and desirable. The paper goes on to describe the traditional (and unsuccessful) repertoire of the UMWA coal strike, and the importance of incorporating gender identities within membership training sessions to reframe the social movement and validate the new forms of resistance. This shift was reinforced by a number of measures including ‘costumes of revolt.’ Worn by strike participants and supporters alike, it unified the struggle, and made it less easy for individuals to be singled out for punishment by authorities. By successfully transforming the collective repertoire, the UMWA was able to garner support from their membership to firstly, act collectively; and secondly, relinquish unsuccessful violent modes of resistance, employing more successful non-violent civil disobedience strategies. Interestingly, Beckwith asserts that: ‘...gender frames may underlie political struggles and collective action choices even in movements where women have little if any political standing.’

- Barker, J. (2006). ‘Gender, sovereignty, and the discourse of rights in native women's activism’. *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, 7(1), 127-161. October. Retrieved 24 June 2009.



Type of resource:

This 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. It displays the complex interplay of gender and indigenous identities in the context of a social movement.

Abstract:

The Indian Act was initially amended in 1876, establishing patrilineality as the criterion for determining Indian status. The Act was contested by women's activist groups in 1983 and 1985. They 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 conflation of 'rights' and 'tradition', stating: '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,' (p. 149).

Echoing Neuhouser's (1998) analysis (see below), which posited that engagement in social movements increases as positive identity alternatives decreases, 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 case study demonstrates the importance of women's mobilisation as a path 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.

- Dugan, K. and Reger, J. (2006). 'Voice and agency in social movement outcomes'. *Qualitative Sociology*, 29(4), 467-484. Retrieved 24 June 2009.

Type of resource:



This article uses northern cases studies from three cities in the US (Cincinnati, Ohio; Cleveland, Ohio and New York City, New York) to explore the importance of respecting individual identities and perspectives in creating a cohesive social movement.

Abstract:

Adding to the literature on the importance of group identity in facilitating participation in social movements, Dugan and Reger find that *voice* and *agency* are key in the development of group cohesion. The paper uses the term 'groupness', rather than 'collective identity', to indicate that a social movement need not be entirely homogenous to be successful. While the authors describe the importance of the creation of a unified voice, they maintain that successful groups will draw upon and manage the agency of their individual members. Idiosyncratic differences within the group will direct the strategising and goal-setting processes that are key to the movement, capitalise on individual talents, and lead to an inclusive, unified purpose (or, strong 'voice'). 'Agency' in terms of feelings of purposefulness and efficacy was also highlighted as important to the success of a movement. Groups are less likely to develop a sustained sense of agency when only responding to crises, when members are shut out of decision-making processes, or when individual strengths and ideas are ignored.

- Jackson, C. (2003). 'Gender analysis of land: beyond land rights for women'. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 3(4), 453-480.

Type of resource:

This article is a response to Bina Agarwal's (2003) paper on 'Gender and land rights revisited'¹³, in which she argued that land rights for women are good efficiency, welfare, equity and empowerment. It also argues for the need for a more disaggregated gender analysis of the question of land rights for women.

This paper is useful for the purposes of this review as provides an excellent example of the diversity of women's experiences and the need to pay attention to the multiplicity of gender identities in constructing a unified movement.

Abstract:

This paper examines the problems of how women's voices are represented in research and asks whether land rights will transform the position of women. Ultimately, Jackson argues

¹³ Agarwal, B., (2003) 'Gender and Land Rights Revisited: Exploring New Prospects via the State, Family and Market'. In S. Razavi (ed.), *Agrarian Change, Gender and Land Rights*, London: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.



that land rights will not prove to be the single key that unlocks the subordination of women. It examines the complex and heterogeneous social, tenure and production relations that women experience in relation to land. Jackson argues for 'a renewed emphasis on reflexive ethnographic research with a focus on gender as social relations, on subject positions and subjectivities, on the meshing of shared and separate interests within households and on power residing in discourse as well as material assets' (p. 453).

The paper begins by highlighting that, as researchers, we need to maintain engagement with our own positionality, and remain conscious about how this may affect the research process, and so-called 'findings'. Jackson argues that, as researchers, we must avoid placing words in the mouths of poor women, or superimposing our own intellectual, emotional, social, political and economic investments on the analytical interpretations we make. Related to this point about misrepresentation, Jackson later comments that: 'where land rights for women appears on a political platform, it is not necessarily women who put it there, or women who are the principal beneficiaries' (p. 461).

Throughout the continuation of the paper, Jackson tackles Bina Agarwal's assertions that land rights for women are beneficial in terms of welfare, efficiency, equity and empowerment. A fundamental criticism of Agarwal's (2003) paper is that land ownership may indeed reduce the risk of rural poverty for households and for men as individuals, but this is not necessarily the case for women. Women experience poverty in very distinctive ways, and are differently placed as subjects in relation to property and livelihoods (and sometimes may have multiple positions as wives, daughters and mothers). While Jackson does not question that women's greater access to land can be positive, she notes that it is important to recognise that not all women are asking for this, and in certain circumstances, transferring land titles to women may in fact be damaging to household welfare (p. 458).

Jackson also critiques the idea that the argument for women's land rights can be made on efficiency grounds. She highlights that where women lack sufficient access to the other inputs necessary for effective agriculture, such as labour and fertilisers, land transfers to women within households will not result in a rise in household agricultural production.

For Jackson, independent land titles in themselves do not confer power. While the potential exists for women to have a strengthened social and economic position, perhaps more important is the extent to which they are able to secure a cultural interpretation of this ownership as legitimate and appropriate. Failing this, the women may be prevented from using this material asset. Jackson adds that social disapproval of land title acquisition may ultimately outweigh the potential gains of acquiring the land title.

Fundamentally, Jackson also highlights the multiplicity of gender identities, which result in conflicting interests between women in relation to land. 'Different identities are inhabited simultaneously, which creates cross cutting interests. As a daughter, a woman appears to have the obvious interests in claiming a share of parental property that Agarwal outlines, 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... For a daughter to make a claim for parental land is for her to risk alienating brothers, whose share of land would be diminished, by reducing their level of material wellbeing' (pp. 467- 469).

In conclusion, Jackson calls for thinking of gender in terms of social identities and relations, rather than focusing on women as a category. This value of this approach is described as: 'cast[ing] the gendering of land issues in a different light, and poses research questions around the diverse and overlapping subject positions of women and men in relation to land, the importance of subjectivities in relation to desires for land, the ways household structures, lineage ideologies and marriage practices are experienced by different kinds of women, and the need to understand how women as actors make and are made by patterns of social change' (p. 472). Relating to policy, Jackson supports initiatives that strengthen the ability of rural women to make land claims. These would include measures such as legal education, reform of the judiciary and governance, public awareness campaigns, equality of treatment in settlement schemes and land allocation processes, and equal access to agricultural credit and inputs.

- Kelly, C. and Breinlinger, S. (1995). 'Identity and injustice: exploring women's participation in collective action'. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 5(1), 41-57. February. Retrieved 24 June 2009.

Type of resource:

Theory-based socio-psychological study conducted in Britain on the factors associated with women's political participation. Kelly and Breinlinger's study focuses on the social beliefs of those who spend time working within collective community activism.

Abstract:

The authors begin with a discussion of social identity theory, followed by a discussion of their own data, which largely supports these ideas. Social identity theory says that individuals are more likely to participate in collective action to bring about social change if they identify strongly with the group – a theory which is empirically supported in the relevant sociological literature.¹⁴ Personal identification as an 'activist' was considered to be of great importance in evaluating the likelihood that an individual will continue to participate in collective action: a hypothesis was reinforced by Kelly and Breinlinger's data.

¹⁴ See: Verba, S., Nie, N. and Kim, J. (1971). *The Modes of Democratic Participation: A Cross National Analysis*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Professional Papers in Comparative Politics;

Verba, S. and Nie, N. (1972). *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. New York: Harper and Row; Granberg, D. and Holmberg, S. (1990). 'The intention-behaviour relationship among U.S. and Swedish voters'. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 53(1) 44-54.



- An important influencing factor in social identity theory is whether the individual perceives the societal status quo as illegitimate or whether the current regime is considered unstable. Sociological literature distinguishes between these two alternatives. Social theory predicts that, in the case of perceived illegitimacy, collective action may be explained by feelings of personal or collective deprivation. In the case of perceived instability in the current societal order, a more important factor is 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 it is believed that it may be secondary to group identification as a factor in collective action. However, Kelly and Breinlinger do note that participation in politics and feelings of efficacy can be seen to reinforce each other, and within the context of their study, feelings of powerlessness were associated with inaction. The authors conclude by underlining the importance of identity processes (group and individual) in influencing collective action. Marsiaj, J. (2008, March). 'Recognition vs. redistribution: social movements and the struggle for inclusion in Brazil'. Working Conference Paper for the 2008 Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA), San Francisco, CA.

Type of resource:

This 2008 study focuses largely on the gay, lesbian and *travesti* (GLT) post-1980s movement in Brazil. Marsiaj highlights importance of identity in constructing the experience of injustice within the context of social movement organising.

Abstract:

Marsiaj's Brazilian study begins with an acknowledgement of the important role of social movements in furthering democracy, economic and class equality for marginalised groups (afro-latino, women, indigenous, sexual minorities) throughout Latin America since the mid-1970s. Marsiaj notes that the 'newer' rights claims made by social movements in Latin America since the 1980s tend to mobilise against negative cultural valuations of marginalised groups.

The paper draws heavily upon an analysis of Nancy Fraser's 1997 framework¹⁵, which posits that injustices suffered by oppressed and marginalised groups involve economic issues of *redistribution* and cultural ones of *recognition*. This provides a lens through which the objectives of social movements can be examined more closely. Given these differences, Fraser suggests that the routes out of these forms of oppression will be different. Redistribution of resources will require forms of re-structuring or changes in the political-economic structure (e.g. land redistribution, changes in the division of labour, income redistribution); recognition claims require cultural and symbolic change (e.g. policies which

¹⁵ See Fraser, N., (1997) *Justice Interruptus: Critical reflections on the 'Postsocialist' Condition*. New York, NY: Routledge



protect diversity, revaluing disrespected identities, and investment in attitude-shifting education).

Focusing largely on the case study of the gay, lesbian and *travesti* (GLT) post-1980s movement in Brazil, Marsiaj extends this framework, arguing that social movements' objectives cannot be placed on a spectrum, as Fraser suggests, but are instead multidimensional and 'bivalent' in nature. Particularly in Latin America, grievances stemming from its long history of class inequalities (redistribution), dovetail with identity discrimination issues (recognition). Fraser touches upon the 'redistribution-recognition' dilemma, which denotes the difficulties incurred by the fact that redistribution claims undermine group differentiation, while recognition claims promote the value of difference. Marsiaj goes further, to highlight the difficulties that a one-dimensional approach to a redistribution-recognition continuum can present. The paper argues that a linear redistribution-recognition spectrum cannot explain the endogenous and exogenous factors which compound to form multidimensional injustices, and confound analysing the roots of social movements when using such a framework. Endogenously compounded injustices stem from the economic injustices suffered by a group which reinforced the cultural discrimination. Exogenously compounded injustices are the issues presented by dual membership to marginalised groups, e.g. indigenous women, who will suffer political-economic injustices as indigenous group members, cultural injustices as indigenous group members, and then political-economic injustices as women and cultural injustices as women.

Attention to the multidimensionality of compounded injustices is important, as it helps to explain why in many cases, policy and cultural changes centred on marginalised groups may succeed in bringing increased recognition/resources to a select group within the collective (e.g. middle-class women) and the continued marginalisation of another section of the collective (e.g. the poorest of the women).

The identification of the recognition, redistribution claims is consistent with the range of social movement literature. Marsiaj's analysis of why social movements may produce a 'two-tiered' result also has an empirical basis in a number of other studies (e.g. Dugan and Reger 2006; Dannecker 2000; both annotated here); which say that social movements may exclude the very poor, or at least discriminate against their full participation in SMOs. The importance of group cohesion and group identity has been well documented, but little attention has been given to accounting for the importance of identifying the specific positioning of movement participants within different combinations of lived injustices; how this can be addressed to ensure equal recognition within the organisation of the movement itself and in movement outcomes; and how this can be achieved in a way which does not fracture the unity of the collective. This 'management of difference' is touched upon by Dugan and Reger (2006), in their discussion of the roles of voice and agency in maintaining cohesive social movements in the face of differences within SMO membership.



Marsiaj concludes that it may be more instructive then to examine how the specific positioning of individual and groups fits within the redistribution and recognition-based claims to shape their grievances, their ability to garner support and to organise, the ways in which they interact with other actors, and the level of access they subsequently are able to win, in terms of protective policies and institutions.

- Neuhouser, K. (1998). "If I had abandoned my children": community mobilization and commitment to the identity of mother in Northeast Brazil'. *Social Forces*, 77(1), 331-358. Retrieved 22 June 2009.

Type of resource:

Rational choice theory analysis, drawing on the experience of mothers in Caranguejo, Brazil, to examine the intersection of cultural factors (norms, values, roles) and structural factors (resources, interests, opportunities) in influencing participation in social movements. **Abstract:**

This article explores the idea of 'identity commitment' as the main motivating factor, in the context of extreme poverty, behind participation in gendered social movements. According to Neuhouser, commitment to an identity increases as the number of alternatives for positive sources of identity decreases. As such, women were highly committed to fighting barriers to motherhood in Caranguejo, Brazil. Following rational choice and resource mobilisation theories, collective action is thus worth the risk incurred, due to a lack of other sources of valuable identity and the inability to access the resources to be mothers when acting as individuals. Neuhouser cites Craig Calhoun's work (1991)¹⁶ to explain this:

'The risk may be borne not because of the likelihood of success in manifest goals, but because participation in a course of action has over time committed one to an identity that would be irretrievably violated by pulling back from risk.' (p. 51)

In contrast, men did not mobilise around the protection of fatherhood resources, due to the presence of other valued identities that were less costly to access. Neuhouser argues that the strength of the identity commitment increases the likelihood that participants will engage in risky action, also citing the example of the 'mothers of the disappeared' movement in Argentina, at a time when public demonstrations were brutally repressed.

- Padilla, B. (2004). 'Grassroots participation and feminist gender identities: a case study of women from the popular sector in Metropolitan Lima, Peru'. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, (6)1. November.

¹⁶ Calhoun, C. (1991). 'The problem of identity in collective action'. In Huber, J. (ed.), *Macro-Micro. Linkages in Sociology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.



Type of resource:

This paper examines women's gender identities in grassroots organisations in Metropolitan Peru.

Abstract:

Padilla suggests that social movements develop women's awareness of gendered inequalities (gender consciousness). Through activism, many of these women adopt 'feminist gender identities'; a term applied by Padilla 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. Whilst these identities are diverse in character, Padilla argued that 'feminist gender identities' then work to reinforce female solidarity, activism and consciousness in a positive feedback loop. The paper distinguishes between gender consciousness and gender identity, in that while a feminist identity included gender consciousness, a developed gender consciousness does not necessarily act against gender inequality. Asserting that even the poorest of women have agency, and that material poverty does not mean a poverty of attitudes to bring about change, Padilla emphasises that it is the development of the 'feminist gender identity' that influences political engagement among women.

- Rao, N. (2005). 'Questioning women's solidarity: the case of land rights, Santal Parganas, Jharkhand, India'. *Journal of Development Studies*, 41(3), 353-375. April. Retrieved 24 June 2009.

Type of resource:

The article downplays the role of gender identities in influencing women's claim to land, emphasising instead the interplay between ethnicity, education, kinship relations and marital status. This paper is based on fieldwork in Santal Parganas, Jharkhand, India.

Abstract:

Rao asserts that women have different sets of interests. One cannot assume that certain common interests will always be prioritised, simply by virtue of their gender. Rao argues that the presentation of the land claim issue as one of gender meets greater disinterest from women and resistance from men. Mobilisation around land as a gender issue is difficult, due to the mutuality and interdependence between men and women around land as a socially embedded resource. Struggles for land occur across gender, kinship and generational lines. To assert claims to land on a gender-rights basis, women must separate themselves and oppose both men and women.

Further, the paper questions the empirical basis for unity between women in land rights, noting that women may support projects of masculine land ownership to further the interests of their own household. Equally, it is often in the interests of 'gharjawae' men, who have only



secured rights to land through their wives, to support gendered claims to land, and those of other women in the community who seek to assert these same rights. Rao cites other examples of the contentious nature of female unity, citing another study which noted that women's collective farming initiatives gave rise to tensions over labour contributions.¹⁷

Finally, Rao also questions the utility of unity between women in land rights claims, arguing that these bids are more likely to be successful when they align with influential men, even when women do form collectives.

The paper maintains that collective action among women is most likely to be successful when the group members are relatively homogenous, and supported by a gender-progressive NGO. Rao concludes that the role of co-operation may then be to protect individual access to resources, or to support other activities, such as distribution. Land claims are also calls for other inputs, such as agricultural resources, technology and credit; and it is in securing the coordination and accessibility of these factors that collective action may have a role to play.

- Taylor, V. (1999). 'Gender and social movements: gender processes in women's self-help movements'. *Gender and Society*, (13)1.

Type of resource:

This theoretical paper discusses the conceptual links between gender and social movements.

Abstract:

In this paper, Taylor presents gender as an explanatory factor in the emergence, nature and outcomes of all social movements. She also points out that linking these two theories can enable us to identify the role that social movements play in the construction of gender. A theory that addresses the intersections of gender and social movements is needed, as gender hierarchy is created through organisation practices and because attention to gender

¹⁷ See Davison, J. (1995). 'Must women work together? Development agency assumptions versus changing relations of production in Southern Malawi households'. In D. F. Bryceson (ed.), *Women Wielding the Hoe: Lessons from Rural Africa for Feminist Theory and Development Practice* (pp.181–199). Oxford: Berg Publishers.



is necessary for a thorough and accurate explanation of collective action. Third, gender as a set of cultural beliefs and ways of interacting with others figures heavily in many of the identity movements that have swept the political landscape in recent years. Finally, examining gender and social movements also overcomes the prevailing emphasis in theories of gender that highlight gender inequality without paying attention to the 'countervailing processes of resistance, challenge, conflict and change'.¹⁸

Taylor adopts a multilevel framework (in her social constructionist perspective) to avoid universal generalisations that are impervious to the historicity and contextualised nature of perceived differences. She focuses on three levels; first, gender as organising social life at the interactional level; second, gender as the basis of socioeconomic arrangements at the structural level; and, third, gender effects at the cultural level. Her approach to social movements combines the insights of classical collective behaviour theory, resource mobilisation theory and new social movement theory.¹⁹ It is a broader approach than that adopted by political opportunity theorists,²⁰ by calling for more than the political arena to be the site of challenge for social movements.²¹ To the extent that gender is reproduced in political, economic, legal, religious and other institutions, the gender regime should be understood as part of the broader set of political constraints and opportunities that impinge on social movements. Taylor proposes that a gender analysis of political and cultural opportunity structures should focus on the way that shifts in gender *differentiation* and gender *stratification* contribute to the formation and mobilisation of collective identities.

In terms of gendered mobilising structures, Taylor highlights that there are two critical aspects of movement organisation:

- pre-existing mobilising structures, or the non-movement links and ties among individuals that exist prior to collective mobilisation, and
- the organisation of collective action, or the organisational form that a movement takes once it is underway.

Mobilising along gendered lines is also dependent on the creation of informal interpersonal networks that make it possible for women to fulfil their responsibilities for the care and nurturing of children and family members and for household survival.

¹⁸ See Thorne, B. (1995). *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

¹⁹ For more on these theories, see: Klandermans, B. (1997). *The Social Psychology of Protest*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell; McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. and Zald, M. (1996). *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Tarrow, S. (1998). *Power in a Movement*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

²⁰ Political opportunity theory: Tilly, C. (1978). *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

²¹ For example: Klandermans, B. (1997) (op cit.); Taylor (1999) (this annotated bibliography).



Taylor concludes that using gender as a framework for collective action 'has the potential to bolster the gendered institutions against which women take aim', and it reinforces the 'natural attitude' that the sexes are fundamentally different (p. 27). It is, however, both the pervasiveness of gender in social life and our critical lack of understanding of the historically and culturally specific ways in which the gender code operates that create the need for a more adequate social movement theory.

Also see:

Diani, M. (1992). *The Concept of Social Movements*. In K. Nash (ed.) (2000). *Readings in Contemporary Political Sociology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.



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

- Alvarez, S. (2009). 'Beyond NGO-ization? Reflections from Latin America'. *Development*, 52(2), 175-184.

Type of resource:

This article explores the notion of 'NGO-ization' in Latin America. It argues that the separation between movements and NGOs has been overstated, and highlights the important resources that NGOs have contributed, and continue to contribute, to women's movement building.

Abstract:

Alvarez reconsiders what she had earlier referred to as 'the Latin American feminist NGO boom' of the 1990s. The paper stresses the ambiguities and variations within and between feminist NGOs, asserting that the dichotomy of 'good NGOs versus bad NGOs' does not accurately describe the dual, hybrid role that NGOs play in the policy-making and movement fields alike. Alvarez clarifies her use of the term 'NGO-ization', considering it to describe three trends prevalent in the late 1990s:

- States and international agencies turning to NGOs, rather than citizen's groups, as gender experts, and the subsequent de-politicisation of feminist issues.
- NGOs being unilaterally considered as representative of civil society.
- The relationship between the neoliberal states and NGOs becoming increasingly intertwined, and as a result NGOs becoming less able to monitor or critique government policy or advocate for deeper feminist policy reforms.
- Many feminist NGOs in Latin America and elsewhere found themselves carrying out social programmes on behalf of the state, and organising themselves by corporate business principles. Movement building was displaced to some extent in favour of depoliticised gender policy work and project execution.

However, Alvarez maintains that, even at the height of the NGO boom of the 1990s, feminist NGOs were responsible for important movement building work. An important aspect of this work is producing feminist knowledge which has served as vital foundations for more effective feminist advocacy in a variety of local, national and international forums. They have disseminated this knowledge, and influenced actors in policy processes and movement actors alike. NGOs can often provide rich resources in terms of research, but also practical contributions such as permanent premises for organising and linkages to public spaces outside feminist circles. The constellation of networks that NGOs create, and are part of, means that feminist discourses can be disseminated into a variety of public spaces. Alvarez



argues that many critiques of NGOs during in the 1990s missed the interdependent nature of activist work and that of NGOs.

Nevertheless, a main argument of the paper is that this trend of NGO-isation, as Alvarez understands it, is in decline. An important contributor to this shift are changing sociopolitical realities, such as the new left-leaning governments in Venezuela, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, which have reconfigured the context in which feminist movements and NGOs are operating. Alvarez comments: 'these governments are seeking and rewarding different sorts of NGO partners, those with stronger links to and capabilities for serving as intermediaries with broader civil society, especially popular-class based, constituencies' (p. 180). Within Bolivia, for example, grassroots women's movements, such as the Bartolina Sisa National Federation of Bolivian Peasant Women, which are representative of large portions of society, have gained primacy over middle-class gender NGO professionals in government consultations about gender.

- Ambler, J., Pandolfelli, L., Kramer, A. and Meizen-Dick., R. (2007). *Strengthening Women's Assets and Status: Programs Improving Poor Women's Lives*. 2020 Focus Brief on the World's Poor and Hungry People. October. Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute. Retrieved 26 June 2009.

Type of resource:

This briefing paper was produced by the International Food Policy Research Institute on the gendered vulnerabilities faced by women. Ambler *et al.* draw on four country case studies showcasing instances of successful interventions to supply gendered resources and build the assets held by chronically poor women.

Abstract:

The authors begin by outlining the issues that make women particularly vulnerable to chronic poverty: 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 and elderly; social isolation; threats or acts of violence; widowhood; and fewer educational opportunities than men.

In response to this, the paper articulates the need for interventions which will improve women's lives by improving their societal status and access to assets in ways which empower women to become the primary agents of change in transforming their lives. The briefing paper illustrates this point with four case studies, taken from Mali, Bangladesh, Mozambique and El Salvador.



Of particular interest, in terms of collective action, was their account of Oxfam America's Saving for Change microfinance programme. This successful programme facilitated saving groups among rural women in Mali, which helped participants to guard against the risks experienced by the chronically poor. In addition, this initiative increased the visibility and representation of Malian women within the community, building social capital.

A second pertinent case study was found in El Salvador. Coalition groups united to launch '*Entre Vos y Yo, Una Vida Diferente*' ('Between You and Me, A Different Life') – an anti-domestic violence campaign involving more than 500 public officials and a series of debate circles. This campaign worked to challenge entrenched social ideas of *machismo* and to fight against ambivalence towards domestic violence by forming a united front of government officials, women's activists groups, university researchers, politicians, law enforcement agencies, and 'point-of-contact' actors, such as bus drivers. This coalition of interest groups worked to build a consensus in the anti-domestic violence movement by awareness-raising, and to reinforce the anti-domestic violence movement via persistent and varied messaging.

- Grewal, G. (2006). 'Feminism, poverty, and grassroots movements in India'. In M. F. Katzenstein R. and Ray (eds.) (2006), *Social Movements in India: Poverty, Power, and Politics* (Chapter 7, pp. 133-146). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Type of resource:

This study is a chapter in Katzenstein and Ray's volume on *Social Movements in India*, and touches upon the resources that may benefit chronically poor women's movement participants.

Abstract:

This paper considers the position of poor women in India, who are marginalised groups alongside Dalits (oppressed castes) and Adivasis (indigenous groups). This first section considers the position of women in relation to the national economy, the divisions in which are said to have originated in the splitting of the colonial economy along lines of gender and caste in the 1940s/50s. Arguing, like Sen, that the market economy should not have dominance over other institutions, Grewal examines three contemporary grassroots movements that owe their inspiration to Gandhi's ideas of equity and 'satyagraha' (the non-violent force of truth mobilised for social change). Each of these movements views *poverty as inequality*; this is particularly apparent in rural situations where women have a lot at stake in processes of environmental degradation/appropriation.

Grewal also introduces the literature of ecofeminism, which essentially argues that capitalist development is 'maldevelopment'.²² One particularly relevant movement studied is the Self-

²² See Shiva, V. (1989). *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (p. 5). London: Zed Books.



Employed Women's Association, which facilitates women's income generation and protection. The goal is not to impose governance, but to facilitate women's participation in their own empowerment. 'The work of SEWA... shows how transformative changes can be made in the lives of the poor by engaging their own agency' (p. 144).

- Hoare, J. and Gell, F. (eds.) (2008). *Programme Insights: Learning for Action on Women's Leadership and Participation*. Oxford: Oxfam Great Britain. Retrieved 24 June 2009.

Type of resource:

A programme insights paper which provides case studies of women's political participation in nine country contexts.

Abstract:

Poverty is not just experienced through material deprivation, but also through marginalisation. Those living in poverty have insufficient opportunity to influence the political, economic and social processes that affect their lives and can keep them trapped in poverty. For women, a lack of voice is critical in maintaining gender inequality. Women's political (and economic) engagement is fundamental to attempts to eliminate gender-based poverty. In South Africa, for example, women parliamentarians have brought in gender budgeting. What is essential, however, is a *critical mass* — over one-third — so that women-specific issues can come to the fore.

In economic institutions women are very poorly represented. Only 14 percent of finance ministers (28 in 193 countries) are female. At the World Bank and IMF, women comprise around 20 percent of leadership staff, and fewer than 10 percent of governors, whilst in business just 25 of the top 1,000 multinational corporations are run by women. Other startling statistics used to introduce this report are that, although women make up 40 percent of the global paid workforce, they earn only 26 percent of the world's income; and this discrepancy is compounded by the masculine character of most trade unions around the world. In terms of political institutions: globally just 17.4 percent of national political representatives are female; with just 3.5 percent of senior ministerial positions being held by women, giving them little opportunity to shape high-level policy. Nevertheless, since 1995 the average proportion of women in national assemblies has almost doubled, and the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in Liberia and Michelle Bachelet in Chile indicates growing acceptance of the legitimacy of women leaders. Where political opportunities have been missing, women have sought out leadership positions within civil society organisations (see the case study of Israeli-Arab women marginalised from their communities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) and Israel).

Other barriers to women's participation highlighted in the report are: lack of education; lack of financial resources; care responsibilities; restrictions on women's mobility; and the burden of



reproductive labour, i.e. collecting fuel and water, etc. Overall, the editors of this collection highlight three key areas that need to be tackled: structural barriers (though they point out we must question the achievements of quotas and look more at decentralisation/gender audits); encouraging women to take up and be effective in leadership roles (i.e. with targeted training); and supporting men and women to carry out leadership roles which challenge wealth and power inequalities, thus promoting women's rights.

The eight case studies in the paper are as follows:

- Chapter 2: Haitian women demand participation in public affairs
- Chapter 3: Women fishers in the Philippines
- Chapter 4: Lessons from Cambodia
- Chapter 5: Protest in Sierra Leone
- Chapter 6: Women in poverty in Great Britain
- Chapter 7: Women and economic change in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel
- Chapter 8: Representation in Honduras
- Chapter 9: Women workers in Chile

The annex of this paper, entitled 'Useful resources', provides some good examples of toolkit papers for women's political participation as well as a concise annotated bibliography of further academic reading.

Also see:

Dannecker, P. (2000, November). 'Collective action, organisation building, and leadership: women workers in the garment sector in Bangladesh'. *Gender & Development*, 8(3), 31-39. Retrieved 24 June, 2009, from Academic Search Premier database.

Mulikita, N. (2006). *Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) Zambia: Preliminary Report on Baseline Survey conducted by WiLDAF on Issues Related to Women's Participation in Electoral Processes*. October. Harare: WiLDAF. Available online: <http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0002189/WiLDAF_Zambia_Oct2006.pdf> Retrieved 22 June 2009.



4 Strategies for SMOs: promoting and representing the voice of chronically poor women

4.1 Reduce dependency on funding, and manage equitable external relations

- Batliwala, S. (2008b). 'Interview by Julieanne Porter'. *Gender and Development*, (16)1, 182-184.

Type of resource:

This interview focuses on Batliwala's career in feminist activism in India and her opinions on grassroots mobilisation. Batliwala is currently an India-based Civil Society Research Fellow at the Hauser Centre for Non-profit Organisations in Harvard University.

Abstract:

According to Batliwala, the two key elements in building effective grassroots organisation are: understanding the social and political context; and building organisations that are responsive to women's needs.

However, most organisations for women today are in micro-credit and this has not translated into real empowerment. Furthermore, empowerment has been depoliticised when it should be a very politically orientated issue, whereby women challenge patriarchy, change the distribution of resources and encourage engagement with social institutions such as the family. In order for chronically poor women to achieve political *empowerment*, 'we need to return to ideas of consciousness raising, awareness building and working together' (p. 183).

At present, efforts to do this are random. Batliwala critiques the heavy-handed approaches of NGOs within civil society, and the funding culture which has undermined awareness-raising and organic campaigns. Funding and relationships with donors have become a significant barrier to achieving the political empowerment of women through social movements. In the 1970s and 1980s, women's movements were more independent from finance and focused on violence, sex-selection, technology, family planning, etc. They touched women's nerves through creative media and with very little money. Today women's organisations do not act until they have a grant. We 'need to delink movement building from finance'.²³

²³ For more on the links between movements and financing, see: AWID (2006). *Where is the Money for Women's Rights?* The Association of Women's Rights in Development. New Delhi: Brijbasi Art Press. Available online: <<http://www.awid.org/eng/Issues-and-Analysis/Library/2006-First-Funder-report>> (accessed 3 November 2010).



Problems affecting external organisations campaigning for women are their conceptions of women's rights and their relationships with women's movements and feminists. They often only have weak links to the grassroots organisations, and when they do these are usually top-heavy, leaving women with little agency. Overall, the dominance of the donor and branding needs to be challenged.

- **Hassim, S. (2005).** 'Voices, hierarchies and spaces: Reconfiguring the women's movement in democratic South Africa'. *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, (32)2.

Type of resource:

This journal article explores the ways in which the contemporary women's movement in South Africa has been shaped by its own recent history, as well as by the changes in the political landscape since 1994. It discusses the delicate balance that social movements must strike between supporting the inclusion of women in formal political institutions and keeping women's movements sufficiently independent to incite transformative social change.

Abstract:

The article argues that the striking feature of the past decade is the manner in which the strategy of including women in formal political institutions of state and party has tended to displace the transformative goals of structural and social change. Both goals, of inclusion and transformation, were held to be mutually dependent by women's movement activists throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, the article shows that maintaining the strategic balance between these goals has been difficult to achieve, in large part because the women's movement has been relatively weak, apart from a brief moment in the early 1990s. The argument outlines the theoretical and strategic debates relating to definitions of the term 'women's movement' in South Africa, and then identifies and classifies different forms of organisations and strategies. Finally, the article argues that the realisation of gender equality rests on the extent to which a strong women's movement will develop, with a clear agenda for transformation, and relative autonomy from both state and other social movements.

- **Lind, A. and Farmelo, M. (1996).** *Gender and Urban Social Movements: Women's Community Responses to Restructuring and Urban Poverty*. Discussion Paper No. 76. Geneva: UNRISD. Available online: http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFrame?ReadForm&parentunid=C59D935EC5987D6180256B65004FF007&parentdoctype=paper&netitpath=http://www.unrisd.org/published/_dp_/dp76e/content.htm (accessed 3 November 2010).

Type of resource:

This paper joins other literature in this review which critiques the dependency of some social movements on state or NGO funding.



This discussion paper for UNRISD was commissioned to contribute to the debate surrounding the 1995 World Summit for Social Development and to the larger UNRISD/UNV project on 'Social Integration at the Grassroots: The Urban or "Pavement" Dimension'. Findings draw on 40 case studies from 17 cities in four continents. This study links to D. Westendorff and K. Deys (eds.) (1995), *Their Choice or Yours? Global Forces of Local Voices*. Geneva: UNRISD.

Abstract:

The main concerns of this paper are gender mainstreaming in development policy and strengthening local governance through support of community action and reform of local government. It claims that a global emergence of women's grassroots movements against the experience of poverty has not occurred, despite the massive participation of women in urban social movements and 'survival networks'. Other concerns are that much Western literature has tended to focus on middle-class women's movements.

In the discussion on women's organisations, Lind's key argument is that women's movements have become increasingly dependent on state or NGO funding, which has diminished their independence, and their ability to act in the interests of their membership. Further, in the case of Lima's soup kitchens, competition for scarce state resources means that the kitchens position themselves hierarchically, therefore alienating themselves from making strategic connections to other kitchens, organisations and movements.

Finally, Lind argues that women's motivations/capacity for participation in social movements depend not only upon their economic situation, but also on the relationships that they develop in social movements.

- Waldman, L. (2007). 'When social movements bypass the poor: asbestos pollution, international litigation and Griqua cultural identity'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, (33)3, 577-600 (24).

Type of resource:

A rights-based article, which examines two cases of health-related litigation to examine the potential that rural community-based social movements have to influence judicial procedure. It also highlights the empowering effect that the networking and mobilisation process can have on movement participants. This reinforces the ideas of social movements being based on networks of informal interaction (Diani 1992, listed above).

Abstract:

This article examines citizen mobilisation and activism in relation to asbestos disease and litigation. Although the litigation of Cape (plc) – a British company mining asbestos in South Africa – has been seen as a success story, in which local activists worked alongside



international lawyers and environmental campaigners to force Cape (plc) to pay compensation to 7,500 former employees with asbestos-related diseases, many claimants experienced this case as a bitter defeat.

The article explores two clearly divergent interpretations of the same litigation case. Waldman investigates the experiences of claimants from two neighbouring South African towns, namely Prieska and Griquatown, to explain the geographic divide in claimants' perspectives. Literature on social movements, political mobilisation, ethnic identity and millenarian movements is drawn upon in relation to the everyday economic and cultural experiences of people in these Northern Cape towns.

In March 2003, a small community group, The Concerned People Against Asbestos (CPAA), based at Prieska in the Northern Cape, won a court case in a foreign country which may change the way in which multinational corporations behave in the developing world. Until that point, the hidden costs of mining in Southern Africa have been paid for by the workers. The CPAA's victory helped to bring an end to that injustice. Although the Prieska community was commonly depicted as disempowered, racked with problems, and resource poor, the CPAA was able to synchronise an elaborate game of small and big politics. The group's victory suggests that such communities have levels of political and organisational skill which can be a viable route from oppression.

By contrast, whilst the Griquatown residents shared in the gains that the successful lawsuit conferred, the relative isolation experienced by Griquatown residents as compared with the networking and mobilisation process taking place in Prieska, undermined the citizens' ability to frame asbestos disease litigation as an international victory. Instead, claimants interpret their experiences in terms of local factors, including poverty, discrimination, the history of asbestos payment and religious beliefs.

This provides good evidence for the potential for social movements to bring about significant positive change in the lives of marginalised groups. It also illuminates the limitations of mobilising isolated communities, which implies the importance of communication, technology and innovative use of the media to overcome these geographical barriers.

- Vincent, R. (2008). *Social Movements: Motivating Change*. The Communication Initiative Network, The Drum Beat 436. Website. Available online: <http://www.comminet.com/en/node/268303/36> (retrieved 20 June 2009).

Type of resource:

An internet commentary published on The Drum Beat – a series of commentary and analysis pieces on the Communication Initiative Network website. This commentary examines how, in some case studies, NGO 'support' has divided social movements by their selective elevation of views and priorities. The commentary also looks at the role of communication in social movements.



Abstract:

In this article, social movements are defined as collective enterprises seeking to establish a new order of life. An interesting observation relating to their organisation is that NGO support to social movements from development agencies risks selectively elevating the views and priorities of some above others, which can split or weaken a movement. Vincent uses the gradual institutionalisation and professionalisation of the early response to AIDS in the US to illustrate this point: as new formal organisations proliferated, they undermined the engagement and ownership of the communities that originally organised the response. Dependence on funding meant that they became more preoccupied with sustaining funding and impressing influential constituencies, than with dealing with the real needs of people most affected by HIV and AIDS.

This commentary also looks at what can be learned from the communication processes of social movements, drawing on recent analyses and examples from HIV and other social movements. Social movements make use of distinct forms of communication which can facilitate social change and motivate social action, particularly for less powerful groups.

Finally, Vincent emphasises that it is important not to romanticise social movements. It is important to ask about the resources on which social movements depend, and the way they challenge or reproduce dominant social norms and relationships of power within their membership.

Also see:

Thorp, R., Stewart, F. and Heyer, A. (2005). 'How far is group formation a route out of chronic poverty?' *World Development*, (33)6. Retrieved 12 June 2009.

Batliwala, S. (2008a). *Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements*. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). New Delhi: Brijbasi Art Press.



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

- Green-Barber, L. (2008). 'Indigenous peoples, technological globalization, and social mobilization'. Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) Annual National Conference, Chicago, IL, 3 April. Available online: http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p267575_index.html Retrieved 20 June 2009.

Type of resource:

Article which uses case studies from Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, this paper aims to emphasise the role of technological change in building and sustaining social movements among indigenous groups.

Abstract:

This paper argues for the importance of technological change in explaining patterns of indigenous social movements in Latin America. Social movement literature suggests that politically motivated movements in the region arise in response to shifting citizenship regimes, whereby the state is unable to deliver adequate social support to indigenous communities. As such, the ability of indigenous groups to mobilise successfully has hinged upon the spread and appropriation of new information and communication technologies.

Green-Barber argues that, in the 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 dissemination of international norms and discourse surrounding indigenous rights. 'Technological globalization allows for indigenous people to overcome organisational obstacles to collective action, namely geographic, social, and informational isolation, thereby increasing *capacity* for mobilization' (p. 11).

Green-Barber makes an interesting point when she includes Brysk's (1996) observation that, while a number of indigenous social movements contest globalisation, the process of Indian rights activism depends on and deepens it (p.14).²⁴

The paper concludes that the use of technology has a utility outside its common role in economic development, and could be instructive in areas where political opportunities for mobilisation are limited.

²⁴ See Brysk, A. (1996, Spring). 'Turning weakness into strength: the internationalization of Indian rights'. *Latin American Perspectives*, 23(2).



Also see:

Ambler, J., Pandolfelli, L., Kramer, A. and Meizen-Dick, R. (2007). *Strengthening Women's Assets and Status: Programs Improving Poor Women's Lives*. 2020 Focus Brief on the World's Poor and Hungry People. October. Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute. Retrieved 26 June, 2009.

Bebbington, A. and Mitlin, D. (2006). *Social Movements and Chronic Poverty across the Urban-rural Divide: Concepts and Experiences*. Working Paper No. 65. Institute of Development Policy and Management, Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

Braunholtz-Speight, T. (2008). *Policy Responses to Discrimination and their Contribution to Tackling Chronic Poverty*. Background Paper. Institute of Development Policy and Management, Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre. Retrieved 19 July 2009.

4.3 Prioritise new, innovative forms of state engagement

- Bird, K., Pratt, N. and O'Neil, T. and Bolt, V. J. (2004). *Fracture Points in Social Policies for Chronic Poverty Reduction*. Institute of Development Policy and Management, Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre. Retrieved 20 June 2009.

Type of resource:

This CPRC report examines the areas of weakness and failure in social policy formation for chronically poor people, from agenda setting through to policy formation and its legitimisation.

Abstract:

Section five of this comprehensive report, which focuses on women's land rights in Uganda, was particularly relevant. The authors highlight the gendered dynamics affecting access and ownership of productive assets, concluding that whilst women are frequently given user rights to land, 'they lack rights to ownership or control'. Relating such concerns to the policy environment, Bird *et al.* conclude that having women's representatives at all levels of government in Uganda appears to be having a limited impact in terms of getting women's issues onto the political agenda, in large part because of entrenched patriarchy and paternalism. Bird *et al.* argue that there is a 'politics of presence', rather than a politics of influence' (p. 23), because of five key factors:



- the nature of positive discrimination, i.e. filling reserved seats undermines their representative legitimacy;
- women's issues are hived off for separate discussion;
- women councillors rarely attend public meetings;
- women tend to be reluctant to defend unpopular or controversial positions; and
- women ministers are marginalised from key decision-making processes.

The authors also point out that much of the problem for women's political representation, even in new decentralised tribunals, relates to capacity. Women lack the resources, training and salaries.

Despite all of these limitations, it is acknowledged that Museveni's Uganda has provided an enabling environment for women's equality, through such efforts as setting up a Ministry of Gender, a Directorate of Gender and Community Development, implementing a National Gender Policy and Action Plan (1997) and the provision for gender equality in the 1995 Constitution. Women now constitute 19 percent of MPs at the national level and 30 percent at the local government level. A good example of successful women's political campaigning took place around the introduction of a co-ownership amendment. This initially faced strong opposition from vested interests within government (interestingly including the majority of women MPs), but was eventually accepted by parliament following a widespread media campaign by the Uganda women's movement.

The authors conclude that improving women's political voice and agency requires challenging the prevailing social norms and power relations. Legislative change should parallel education and information, and the first effort at education must be with the men who are the keepers of custom and traditional values in Ugandan society. Additional measures need to include education and awareness raising/capacity building/incentives/positive discrimination.

- **Braunholtz-Speight, T. (2008). *Policy Responses to Discrimination and their Contribution to Tackling Chronic Poverty*. Background Paper. Institute of Development Policy and Management, Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre. Retrieved 19 July 2009.**

Type of resource:

A background paper for the *Chronic Poverty Report 2008-09*, this paper is part of a larger stream of work for the *Report* on social change, policy and chronic poverty. It is effectively a literature review that seeks to draw lessons on how anti-discrimination policies can help to alleviate chronic poverty. It deals with how far social movements have been able to engage with governments and influence social policy.



- Jones, N., Bhatta, B., Gill, G., Pantuliano, S., Singh, H. B., Timsina, D., Uppadhaya, S. and Walker, D. (2009). *Governance and Citizenship from Below: Views of Poor and Excluded Groups and their Vision for a New Nepal*. Working Paper 301. London: Overseas Development Institute. Available online: <<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/3289.pdf>> Accessed 30 July 2009.

Type of resource:

This participatory governance assessment paper, conducted in post-conflict Nepal, focuses on grassroots citizen experiences and the key priorities for excluded group participation in the reconstruction of the state. It aims to provide policy makers, donors and non-government actors with a better understanding of local power relations, and how these facilitate or constrain the ability of poor and excluded people to exit poverty.

Abstract:

The study focuses on how poor and excluded Nepalese communities (women, Janajatis, Dalits, Madeshis, religious minorities) understand and practice citizenship. It outlines supply- and demand-sided barriers to political engagement by the poor and communicates the views of groups on how these may best be overcome in the context of the early post-conflict period. The paper concludes with a detailed discussion of the study's policy implications. Key barriers to political engagement were found to be: insufficient access to information about political processes, resources and entitlements; insufficient access to formal justice from government officials; linguistic barriers; and the persistence of traditional gender discrimination practices.

The study reveals the strong desire of poor Nepalese groups to become politically engaged. The prospect of consultations between government and citizens were met with enthusiasm, with many participants expressing dissatisfaction with how they felt their views had been ignored or disregarded in the past. A significant barrier to this was reported to be a lack of information and the absence of awareness-raising initiatives at the village level, particularly among the Dalit communities and women. Poor access to many forms of information was a recurring finding within the study, including information on citizen entitlements, services, resources, channels through which change could be demanded, legal rights, and political reforms. Participants frequently referred to a strongly held belief that elites controlled information flows to stay in power. In response to this, improved communication channels were highlighted as a vital primary step in improving poor people's access to information about democratic processes and citizenship entitlements. More effective communication channels, such as community radio in local languages, were recommended. The paper asserted that all awareness-raising and civic education efforts should be targeted to those who face discrimination, as well as the wealthier 'upper castes'. Further, greater decentralisation was seen to be an important step towards greater political participation of traditionally excluded Nepalese groups, balanced by a strong and accountable central government.



Insufficient access to formal justice, including harassment and intimidation at the hands of police/government officials, was seen to have a significantly negative impact on the willingness of citizens to seek political change. Reports of poor treatment – ranging from discourteous interactions to physical violence – discouraged political participation and reduced citizen confidence that legal redress was accessible to them.

Other findings included the fact that there were linguistic barriers to collective action. The illiterate, or those whose mother tongue was not Nepali, were seen to be disadvantaged in terms of networking opportunities. It was also noted that, ideologically speaking, the language of citizens' rights could also be difficult for some to engage with.

The study found that, although gender discrimination was well known and widespread, this was matched by a strong recognition among participants that this was not natural or acceptable (thus, leaving no room for cultural relativism). These discriminatory practices were seen as important to address, in order to tackle household and community poverty and the poor representation of women in decision-making processes.

A final point worth noting is the attention Jones *et al.* drew to exclusion felt by poor members of the upper castes. Poor *Bahun*, *Chhetri* and *Yadav* middle castes perceived that they were being overlooked for development projects, which were generally focused on the Dalits and the Janajati lower castes. This could imply that that upper caste membership does not necessarily operate as a social protection mechanism for those who fall into poverty. The authors asserted that income poverty should be addressed, irrespective of caste.

- Goetz, A. M., (2002). 'No shortcuts to power: constraints on women's political effectiveness in Uganda'. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, (40)4, 549-575.

Type of resource:

An article on political representation in Uganda and the relationship between the women's political movement and National Resistance Movement (NRM). This article was also featured in Goetz, A. and Hassim, S. (2003), *No Shortcuts to Power: African Women in Politics and Policy Making*. London: Zed Books.

This article offers an assessment of the impact of gendered affirmative action measures on women's political effectiveness, examining how far women in Parliament have been able to advance gender equity concerns in key new gender equity legislation.

Abstract:

Despite gendered affirmative action electoral policies, Goetz finds that women's positions in Uganda have not improved.



Through a system of reserved seats for women in Parliament and local government, the number of women in public representative office has increased dramatically in Uganda since the introduction of the National Resistance Movement's 'no party' system.

However, the political value of these specially created new seats has been eroded by their exploitation as currency for the NRM's patronage system, undermining women's effectiveness as representatives of women's interests once in office. This is because NRM elites remain the gate-keepers of access to these reserved political spaces.

The women's movement in Uganda, though a beneficiary of the NRM's patronage, is challenging this system, and is a loud critic of the deepening authoritarianism of the NRM. They attribute the NRM's failure to follow constitutional commitments to gender equity to its lack of internal democracy.

- Molyneux, M. and Razavi, S. (2003). 'Gender Justice, Development and Rights, Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Programme'. Paper No. 10. Geneva: UNRISD.

Type of resource:

This paper is one of 12 theoretical and empirical studies carried out under the Gender, Justice, Development project at UNRISD from 2000-2005. The project seeks to examine the ways in which liberal rights, and ideas of democracy and justice, have been absorbed into the agendas of women's movements and states in different regions.

Abstract:

This paper engages with broader issues, which in turn impact on social movements, gender and chronic poverty, i.e. neoliberal policies, democracy and multiculturalism. In doing so, the authors invite debate on the nature of liberalism itself in an era that has seen its global ascendancy. Primarily, the paper (as with all the studies in this collection) applies a gender lens to the analysis of political and policy processes, in order to illustrate the ways in which liberal rights, and ideas of democracy and justice, have been absorbed into the political agendas of women's movements and states. Secondly, the paper contributes a cross-cultural dimension to the analysis of modern forms of rule by examining the ways in which liberalism – the dominant value system in the modern world – both exists in, and is resisted in, diverse cultural settings.

Molyneux and Razavi point out that the central instrument for the protection of rights has been, and must remain, the state. Whether states advance or curtail women's rights cannot be explained in terms of any single variable, although democratic institutions and procedures generally allow greater voice and presence to social forces pressing for reform. This said,



while many countries now identify themselves as democracies, and have established institutions of representative government, the degree to which democracy has been consolidated and institutionalised is highly variable.

As women's movements turned their attention in the 1990s to rights issues, they were drawn into engagement with the state as rights activists and as participants in government. Women have become a visible political force, both as individuals and as a social group, even under conditions that deny them full, or indeed, at times, any political voice and representation. Where the latter occurs, however, there is a danger that women's movements may be co-opted by states and thereby lose their ability to represent their constituency and to advance programmes of radical reform.

As the case studies from Iran, Peru, Uganda and South Africa show, the incorporation of women into political leadership has been partial and has sometimes resulted in the co-option of women's movements by authoritarian regimes. Their paper asks: under what circumstances can women's access to political office and the promotion of policies for gender equity become institutionalised?

- **Mulikita, N. (2006). *Preliminary Report on Baseline Survey conducted by WiLDAF on Issues Related to Women's Participation in Electoral Processes*. October. Harare: WiLDAF. Available online: <http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0002189/WiLDAF_Zambia_Oct2006.pdf> Retrieved 22 June 2009.**

Type of resource:

This article examines the political opportunities for women in Zambia. It investigates why men dominate the political scene despite a female majority in the population, providing an analysis of the activities aimed at increasing citizen support of women in office. It also indicates the resources necessary to facilitate women's political participation.

Abstract:

Mulikita depicts five main barriers to women's political participation: scarcity of resources (e.g. financial, logistical and training); educational inadequacy; social/family responsibilities; negative public perceptions of women seeking leadership positions/lack of confidence within women themselves; and party reluctance to adopt aspiring female candidates. The article tasks political parties with having the greatest role in combating these factors in terms of candidate selection, and preparation for election; and in leadership and governance support. Political parties have been reluctant to provide the financial and moral support to women, considering that the female electorate in Zambia has demonstrated a tendency to give their votes to men.



- Legislation ensuring the comprehensive and effective participation of women was found to be inadequate. A proportional representation electoral system was recommended, along with fixed quotas obliging political parties to provide at least 30 percent women candidates, the appointment of a cabinet comprising of 30 percent women and 30 percent of nominated members of parliament to be women. This legislation should be combined with awareness-raising campaigns and community support efforts for the reforms, which address the five main barriers outlined above. Mumtaz, K. (2005). Advocacy for an end to poverty, inequality and insecurity: feminist social movements in Pakistan. *Gender and Development*, 13(3).

Type of resource:

This paper expands upon a presentation given to the Women in Development Europe (WIDE) Conference 2005, which discussed the position of women's rights and the successes of rights-based movements in Pakistan.

Abstract:

Mumtaz examines the political situation in Pakistan, within the general context of South Asia as a whole, focusing on the history of the women's movement and the questions that confront feminists today. The discussion covers the activities of feminists who are engaging in advocacy for gender equality in Pakistan. The barriers to gender equality are many, but Mumtaz argues that achievements have been made. A key achievement has been Pakistani women's success in bringing women's rights to the attention of both policy makers and the general public, particularly through the activities of the Women's Action Forum. However, there are still considerable limitations on women's political participation, because of cultural-sexual biases, rising inequality and the lack of democratic governance in the South Asian region as a whole. Other challenges are the different approaches amongst women's movements, and coordination issues when working in social partnerships. Movements across Pakistan vary considerably on how to go about tackling patriarchal norms, how to stem the incoming tide of religious fundamentalism, and how to keep the issue of women's rights uppermost at global events like the World Social Forum. Mumtaz argues that the women's movement has created a unique space for advocacy, but that it has been difficult to create unity across other social movements.

Mumtaz acknowledges that feminist movements are frequently criticised for being filled with middle-class, urban Pakistani women who have adopted Western norms. The overrepresentation of the upper classes in social movements is explained by the fact that: 'it is urbanized, middle-class women who are in a position to take the risks associated with challenging gender-norms, protected as they are by their class and by their comparatively greater knowledge of social institutions and systems, and how to access resources. Women living in poverty, even those desiring changes in gender relations, can frequently neither spare the time from their burdened daily existence nor risks the consequences of taking public action to advance their collective interests' (p. 67).



This article reinforces the notion of women's movements being unrepresentative; dominated by urban, educated middle-class women. Women's movements need to be revitalised.

- Sever, C. (2005). *The Gender, Poverty, Governance Nexus: Key Issues and Current Debates*. BRIDGE. London: Institute of Development Studies.

Type of resource:

A short commentary on the changing debates in concepts of governance. The discussion is approached according to academic themes: human rights; macro-economic frameworks; democratisation; institutions; decentralisation; and legal rights and governance.

Abstract:

This article initially proposes that, in order for governance to successfully address poverty, it must address the experiences of both poor women and poor men – particularly since a greater proportion of women live in situations of poverty (or are more vulnerable to it). The paper sets out current thinking on the relationship between pro-poor governance and gender. Sever argues that women's movements have been integral in holding governments to account for commitments they have signed up to under international frameworks like the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

However, the paper also acknowledges that civil society does not necessarily promote gender equity, due to institutional or movement replication of unequal power relations and/or the erosion of the movement's political role in the event that it begins to prioritise the delivery of services to its interest group above mobilisation.

- Sen, S. (2000). *Towards a Feminist Politics? The Indian Women's Movement in Historical Perspective*. Policy Research Report on Gender and Development, Working Paper Series No. 9. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Type of resource:

This is an historical analysis of the high-level political shifts that have facilitated and blocked the development of the Indian women's movement, in a study developed for the World Bank Development Research Group. Sen asks whether social movements can provide the means of challenging the high-level patriarchy of Indian politics for women.

Abstract:



This paper traces the historical development of the women's movement within India, through a number of defining political moments. Using two recent political controversies (debates over the Uniform Civil Code and over the proposed reservation for women of seats in legislative bodies), Sen highlights the fissures and cleavages in the movement today and the difficulties faced by women seeking to engage in high-level politics in India because of persistent and entrenched patriarchy. Despite the achievements of a few notable female politicians, Sen concludes that patriarchy remains deeply entrenched in India: '...women in Indian politics have always negotiated these two extreme poles: as the unsexed equal or the highly feminized goddess or queen. Such negotiation has allowed a small but significant group of women to aspire for high offices within the political establishment. But women on the whole have attained little democratic representation' (p. 57).

Beyond deep-seated male patriarchy, barriers to the success of women's political participation have been caste and class disunities originating after the second wave of feminism in the 1970s and early 1980s. During this period, a panoply of organisations represented women from all classes, castes, communities, etc. and a common language and commitment to the movement grew out of mobilisation against gender-based violence. Since this time, however, the feminist movement has splintered, and has become marginalised in the face of growing fundamentalism and ethnic conflict. Sen argues that women no longer exist as a constituency. Solutions may not lie in a revitalised national women's movement, particularly in the context of economic fragility and political instability, but Sen calls for recognition of the importance of women's associations at the local and regional levels.

While the paper only addresses women advocating for political representation and empowerment, and does not therefore look at women mobilising around social issues, Sen does advocate that local women's organisations might be a more constructive method of engaging in high-level policy, until patriarchic traditions are overturned and political priorities shift once again towards gendered issues.

- Sinha, K. (2003). 'Citizenship degraded: Indian women in a modern state and a pre-modern society'. *Gender and Development*, (11)3, 135-141.

Type of resource:

This journal article discusses the role of social movements and legislation in tackling the barriers for women to access full citizenship and reinforce their human rights. The article draws on experiences from India.

Abstract:



Cultural beliefs and practices can be serious hindrances to women's empowerment and emancipation. Sinha argues that this is more prominent than ever, as 'these are times of heightened sensitivities about cultural identities and practices'. The development sector needs to respond, without falling into the trap of cultural relativism, by advocating for human rights. Sinha suggests that the most effective role of a social movement organisation (SMO) is to bring about cultural change. This paper does not discuss the extent to which SMOs should provide their membership with tangible and intangible resources.

The patriarchal state continues to be a live issue in the women's movement – today the Indian state still does not recognise rape in marriage. There are provisions to enact a Uniform Civil Code, but successive governments have not enforced it. Sinha asks what prevents many of the formal rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution from becoming real and substantive. Three cases of women's human rights violations across India are then examined, with the conclusion that challenging the cultural practices of a community, let alone a 'civilisation' is a formidable and complex task. Nevertheless, changes do occur and social movements are the best vehicle for cultural change. Sinha therefore advocates for a partnership between the global development sector and local social movements, in order to bring about equal citizenship.

- Webster, N. (2004). 'Understanding the Evolving Diversities and Originalities in Rural Social Movements in the Age of Globalization'. *Civil Society and Social Movements Programme, Paper No.7. Geneva: UNRISD.*

Type of resource:

This is an UNRISD investigatory paper with a regional focus on the South Asian sub-continent, particularly India. It uses a rights-based and citizenship lens for discussion of voice and agency among in the poor in influencing national and international poverty policies. It argues that globalisation has provided access to resources that the poor can use to challenge their poverty through social movements.

Abstract:

'Social movements' are considered to be strategic in nature, with a degree of coherence with regards to aims etc., and as a means through which to change development processes and outcomes to the greater benefit of poor people. This paper seeks to locate the potential social movements have for development in the age of globalisation, and to trace how the politics of collective action at the local level develop as rural social movements to change and shape national/international agendas.

The paper has a major focus on the impact of globalisation upon the constitution of the political spaces in which poor people find themselves. It is suggested that globalisation provides access to resources for use in the political strategies of cooperation, negotiation and contestation, through which rural groups challenge their poverty.



The concept of *organising practices* is introduced, to capture both the diversity of forms that collection action can take and the argument that poverty is being contested in many ways. Studying *organising practices* highlights the flow of action through which the rural poor seek to secure their livelihoods through negotiation, co-operation and contestation in local, less visible ways. It appreciates both the agency of the poor and the socio-political context. In terms of economics, it argues that economies are constantly confronted and changed by the rural poor in their roles as marginal landowners, tenants and artisans, who contest economic control via different forms of their livelihood activities, such as various forms of credit, wages and market prices.

Whilst the paper does not argue that successful poverty reduction lies in the hands of the poor alone, it does argue that the agency of the poor is central to achieving changes in politics and policies. The ability of poor people to assert voice and agency is analysed through the concept of citizenship and in discussion of a rights-based approach to development.

Also see:

Bebbington, A. and Mitlin, D. (2006). *Social Movements and Chronic Poverty across the Urban-rural Divide: Concepts and Experiences*. Working Paper No. 65. Institute of Development Policy and Management, Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

Hoare, J. and Gell, F. (eds.) (2008). *Programme Insights: Learning for Action on Women's Leadership and Participation*. Oxford: Oxfam Great Britain. Retrieved 24 June 2009.

Molyneux, M. and Razavi, S. (2003). *Gender Justice, Development and Rights, Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Programme*. Paper No. 10. Geneva: UNRISD.

Mulikita, N. (2006). *Preliminary Report on Baseline Survey Conducted by WiLDAF on Issues Related to Women's Participation in Electoral Processes*. October. Harare: WiLDAF.

Available online:

<http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0002189/WiLDAF_Zambia_Oct2006.pdf> Retrieved 22 June 2009.

Mwangi, E. and Markelova, H. (2009, May). 'Collective action and property rights for poverty reduction: a review of methods and approaches'. *Development Policy Review*, 27(3), 307-331. Retrieved 24 June 2009.

Vincent, R. (2008). *Social Movements: Motivating Change*. The Communication Initiative Network, The Drum Beat 436. Website. Available online:

<http://www.comminit.com/en/node/268303/36> (retrieved 20 June 2009).



5 Further reading on classic collective action theory

- **Olson, M. (1965).** *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

This seminal work argues that collective action between rational, self-interested individuals is untenable if the group is working to provide 'public goods'. Public goods are goods from which one person cannot reasonably prevent another from consuming the good once it is available, and that one person's consumption of the good is not negatively affected by another's consumption of the good. Olson argued that, unless the group is working to provide benefits only to active participants, there will be strong incentives for individuals within a group to free-ride on the efforts of others, thereby forestalling the formation of a viable group. Olson also contested that large collective action groups faced higher costs when attempting to organise, as compared to small groups. Considering that Olson believed that collective action could only occur when each member stood to gain a fully excludable personal benefit; he deduced that individuals in successful large groups would stand to again proportionately less per capita than those in successful smaller groups. He therefore added that the incentive for group action diminishes as group size increases.

- **Hardin, G. (1968).** 'The tragedy of the Commons'. *Zygon*, 17(2), 163-186.

This paper reinforces the importance of individualistic self-interest at the expense of the collective good. Hardin describes a dilemma in which multiple individuals sharing a common resource will act in accordance with their own self-interest; even when this will ultimately destroy a shared limited resource, and even when it is clear that it is not in the long-term interest of anyone for this to happen. This paper followed Olson (1965) in critiquing the viability of collective action.

- **Ostrom, E. (1990).** *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ostrom investigated conditions under which common pool resource problems have been satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily solved. In contrast to Hardin (1968), Ostrom discusses how certain measures taken by the members of the resource-using group may make collective action possible and effective. Ostrom notes the need for clearly defined boundaries, graduated sanctions, monitors – who are either resource users or accountable to them – and agreement-seeking mechanisms that are operated by the members themselves to resolve conflict or to modify the rules. For Ostrom, self-commitment must be fostered among the group members via these internal mechanisms.



6 References

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