



Chronic Poverty
Research Centre

Working Paper

May 2010

No. 151

The government of chronic poverty: from exclusion to citizenship?

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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.

The Government of Chronic Poverty: from the politics of exclusion to the politics of citizenship?

The papers in this series have been undertaken as part of the 'Government of Chronic Poverty' project within the 'Adverse Incorporation and Social Exclusion' theme within the Chronic Poverty Research Centre. Amongst other things, this theme is concerned with the politics of efforts to tackle structural forms of chronic poverty.¹ Although each of the papers in this series engages with a different country context and policy issue, they all frame contemporary efforts to reduce chronic poverty as essentially *political* efforts to (re)govern the relationships between the trustees of development and poor citizens caught within processes of adverse incorporation and social exclusion. From this perspective they ask whether contemporary development interventions and actors, within what critics have termed the era of 'inclusive liberalism', necessarily depoliticise the task of reducing structural forms of poverty, or whether they are capable of empowering chronically poor people as rights-bearing citizens. While each paper makes clear that the answers to this question are highly contextualised, the synthesis paper seeks to draw out the comparative and broader implications of these studies for efforts to understand and challenge chronic poverty.

Abstract

Development trustees have increasingly sought to challenge chronic poverty by promoting citizenship amongst poor people, a move that frames citizenship formation as central to overcoming the exclusions and inequalities associated with uneven development. For sceptics, this move within inclusive liberalism is inevitably depoliticising and disempowering, and our cases suggest that citizenship-based strategies rarely alter the underlying basis of poverty. However, our evidence also offers some support to those optimists who suggest that progressive moves towards poverty reduction and citizenship formation have become more rather than less likely at the current juncture. The promotion of citizenship emerges here as a significant but incomplete effort to challenge poverty that persists over time.

Keywords: Inclusive liberalism, citizenship, government, relational poverty

¹ See Hickey and du Toit (2007), 'Adverse incorporation, social exclusion and chronic poverty', CPRC working paper 81.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Tony Bebbington, Stuart Corbridge, Andries du Toit and Maia Green for their very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. The main ideas elaborated in this paper were discussed at the 'Government of Chronic Poverty' workshop in Manchester November 2008, and the insightful contributions of the discussants (Tony Bebbington, Dan Brockington, Tom d'Herdt, Caroline Harper and Diana Mitlin) and other participants are gratefully acknowledged here. Particular thanks to Debra Whitehead for organising the workshop and to Briony Jones for acting as rapporteur. The workshop and all of the research presented here apart from that in Bebbington *et al.* (2010) and Masaki (2010) benefited from the UK Department for International Development's funding of the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (www.chronicpoverty.org), which is also gratefully acknowledged here. Finally, I owe a significant debt to Andries du Toit, who provided the original inspiration for this research project.

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1 The (anti?)politics of poverty reduction under inclusive liberalism

'...there may be some surprising, and perhaps promising, sorts of politics springing up in the current moment that are obscured by the received opposition between the progressive and the neoliberal' (Ferguson, 2007: 79).

The politics of poverty reduction seems to have shifted. Whereas the struggle between 'progressives' and 'neoliberals' over what Development should seek to offer poor people and places, and how, seemed once to make sense, this has become less clear in the era of 'inclusive liberalism' (Craig and Porter, 2006) or 'postneoliberalism' (Bebbington and Bebbington, 2010). Here, the shift towards a new Post Washington consensus in the wake of serious financial crises during the 1990s seemed to herald a shift whereby the Development mainstream recognised the need to protect people from the vagaries of unfettered open-market capitalism (World Bank, 2000). Development got human (via poverty reduction), it got social (via social capital), and it even got political (via the rubrics of empowerment, good governance and even 'equity', World Bank, 2006). And where progressives could once safely critique Development as the 'anti-politics machine' (Ferguson, 1994), Development now claimed to change its modus operandi in favour of strategies that were to be participatory, territorialised and locally owned.

For sceptics this inclusive shift is mere window-dressing, offering only a moralising cloak for the extension of governmental modes that are depoliticising and disempowering for poor people (e.g. Green, 2006; Harriss, 2001; Li, 2007). In this view, both the discursive framing of poverty and consequent responses remain informed by an enduringly neoliberal sensibility, whereby the poor are to be transformed into morally responsible, community-oriented and market-friendly citizens, while the underlying causes of poverty (most notably capitalism) remain unaddressed.

However, this critique has been increasingly challenged by more optimistic thinkers from within the broadly 'progressive' school of development studies. Ferguson (2007) points out that it is very difficult to distinguish social democratic from neoliberal arguments for poverty reduction in South Africa, while others show how even the most apparently technocratic of development interventions under the agenda of 'Good Governance and Poverty Reduction' can have empowering effects (Corbridge *et al.*, 2005; Chhotray, 2007). A progressive politics of poverty reduction, built around processes of citizenship formation, remains possible here in part because of the very character of development under inclusive liberalism which, in its

decentred reach for more marginal populations, necessarily opens up spaces for progressive debates and praxis at multiple levels of Development.²

This special edition on the 'Government of Chronic Poverty' seeks to illuminate this debate through careful analyses of what actually happens where Development under inclusive liberalism hits the ground. Drawn from sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America, and with reference to the promotion of citizenship-based approaches to poverty reduction by not only governments and international development agencies, and also self-help groups and social movements, our cases represent a vertical transect through the key trustees of development. Each case acts as a 'theoretical exemplar' (Yin, 2000) that sheds light on the politics of poverty reduction in terms of efforts to 'conduct the conduct' of those caught in persistent poverty. Our seven cases are underpinned by David Mosse's paper on the 'relational' character of persistent poverty, which offers the politicised frame of reference required for the debates we engage in here.

The following section elaborates what we mean here by inclusive liberalism and governmentality before the remaining sections weave our key findings together with some broader reflections. Section Three focuses on the ways in which poverty is framed in discursive terms in our cases, while Section Four examines the strategies that flow from these forms of analysis in terms of poverty reduction and citizenship formation. Section Five draws together the key threads before the Conclusion offers some tentative thoughts on the possibilities for a progressive politics of poverty reduction at the current juncture.

² This paper follows Hart (2001) in using Development to distinguish the field of deliberate interventions from development as historical processes of social change.

2 The government of poor citizens under inclusive liberalism

Most observers trace the emergence of inclusive liberalism to certain industrialised nations during the 1990s, where ‘third way’ tendencies emerged as a means of resolving the tensions between state/welfarist and market/growth-led versions of development, and often where political parties with social democratic tendencies had returned to power (Humpage, 2006; Mahon, 2008). Distinguishing features of inclusive liberalism as compared to neoliberalism include an explicit focus on the poor and a recognition of the important role to be played by the state: ‘here the vulnerable and at risk were not to be merely cut adrift to fend in the market, but invested in and wrapped around with inclusive support’ (Craig and Porter, 2006: 91), including ‘...an important ‘social investment’ role for social policy’ (Mahon, 2008: 343). What emerges ‘is certainly not traditional ‘welfare’, but it doesn’t look much like ‘the market’, either’ (Ferguson, 2007: 75). For Chris Colvin and Steven Robins (2010), what pertains in South Africa is neither a fully neoliberal nor a fully developmental state, but rather a hybrid between the two forms. However, it is not only the state that must re-shape itself into a more responsive form under inclusive liberalism but also citizens who must become more actively engaged in shaping their own futures. The poor are to be empowered via their own agency, whereby they transform themselves into entrepreneurial agents of the market economy whilst also mobilising themselves as community-based citizens (Amin, 2005). And, if the poor are incapable and/or unwilling to fulfil this particular model of citizenship, they can be encouraged to do so through conditions attached to various interventions, particularly welfare benefits and other forms of cash transfer.

This general approach to questions of how society, economy and politics should be organised has shaped development theory and policy for more than a decade now (Craig and Porter, 2006; Mahon and McBride, 2009). Through powerful development agencies and other (related) hegemonic networks of policy learning and ‘exchange’, inclusive liberalism seems to have travelled remarkably well, with its key rhetorical tropes – inclusion, opportunity, empowerment, participation – now ubiquitous across a wide range of policy discourses in the global south. Enabled by the close involvement of external actors in poor countries, this represents the latest phase of the global unfolding of the Liberal project of modernity, a process that encompasses colonialism (Craig and Porter, 2006) and still earlier efforts to exert trusteeship over populations fractured by often violent processes of immanent development (Cowen and Shenton, 1996).

However, the apparent globalisation of inclusive liberalism should not distract from the influence of political dynamics and imperatives within developing countries. Although Uganda is widely seen as the poster child of neoliberal and then inclusive liberal reforms, these reforms also flowed clearly from the political priorities of the regime, often but not always in line with the thrust of conditional lending (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 2010). An emphasis on poverty reduction and participatory citizenship formed elements of state-building projects

at critical moments in many postcolonial contexts (e.g. Cooper and Packard, 1997). Maia Green (2010) shows in the case of Tanzania, the enduring commitment to participation there derives in part from a solidaristic rather than imposed encounter between civil servants, intellectuals and Paulo Freire there in the early years of independence.

The growing concern with citizenship and rights within Development signals a definitive shift between neo- and inclusive forms of liberalism albeit it with a sting in the tail (Green, 2008; Hickey and Mitlin, 2009). So, inclusive liberalism accords 'individuals a *right* to be included in a way that market-focused neo-liberalism does not, but this right is burdened with moral and social obligations' (Humpage, 2006: 225). Under current ideological conditions, sceptics would argue, citizenship has become limited to participation in projects, not politics, and the right to have targeted subsidies, not the 'right to have rights' (Dagnino, 2007, following Arendt). Others, however, point out that even the most apparently technocratic of development interventions, such as the supply of a photocopier to help people gain insights into the budgetary and expenditure practices of the local state, can help underpin long-term processes of citizenship formation (Corbridge *et al.*, (2005). Even some strong critics of third-wayism argue that a focus on rights holds the promise of a genuine convergence with progressive forms of popular politics on the ground (Gledhill, 2009). For the optimists, then, a progressive politics of poverty reduction remains a firm possibility at the current juncture.

Both sceptics and optimists have found it useful to examine such shifts from a governmentality perspective (Hart, 2004). Following Foucault, Development can easily be understood as a series of intentional efforts to shape human conduct by calculated means, particularly via strategies such as social policy and community-driven forms of development. Many of the most influential studies of governmentality have focused on social policy interventions.³ As the paper by Hossain (2010) in this volume shows, '... the expansionary thrust of social policy since the 1990s has meant the Bangladesh state does more now to shape its citizens through health, education and other social services than in the past...'. Development's preference for community-driven development has been described as 'unabashedly governmental', in that 'It sets conditions to reform desires and act on actions' (Li, 2007: 253), with the explicit aim of changing passive subjects into active citizens.

Our contributors use a broad governmentality perspective to focus both on the discursive ways in which development trustees frame and also seek to transform the poor as citizens via particular modes of government, and the links between these moves. Importantly, they adopt an approach that is not simply genealogical but also sociological (Hart, 2004: 93; cf. Rose, 1999), and which also examines the *outcomes* that flow from such efforts to govern poverty as well as the *intentionalities* that underpin them.⁴ This means going beyond seeing

³ See, for example, Rose's (1999) on social insurance in the United Kingdom and Cruickshank (1964) on the 'war on poverty' in the United States.

⁴ I am grateful to Tony Bebbington for articulating this latter point during the November 2008 workshop.

project documentation or 'texts of rule' as being directly representative of the proposed intervention as a form of reality (e.g. Li, 2007), and towards an assessment of what actually occurs when such interventions are rolled out. Following Corbridge *et al.*, (2005), this is important if we are to capture the sense in which 'Notions of authority, rights, obligations, rule and government inform encounters between officials and citizens in sometimes unexpected ways' (Painter, 2007: 606). It is not clear that poor people are moulded as easily into the forms of subjectivity that development trustees intend them to fulfil.

3 The analytics of government: framing the poor

The ways in which poverty and the poor are rendered legible for government (Scott, 1998) plays a critical role in shaping the forms of poverty reduction that emerge in particular contexts. Despite a number of advances in the conceptualisation and measurement of poverty in Development in recent decades, sceptics such as Mosse (2010) argue strongly that a focus on causality and the relational character of poverty remains absent, particularly in terms of the adverse incorporation of poor people into processes of uneven development (du Toit, 2004). This approach reflects a tendency within inclusive liberalism to sidestep the significant ways in which contemporary capitalism produces particular forms of inequality and poverty and also leads to ‘...a strongly normalising and moralising set of proposals’ that effectively blames the poor for their predicament’ (Gledhill, 2001: 1). Sceptics argue that such tendencies help trustees to distinguish between the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor and to legitimate the responsabilisation of poor people to effect their own recoveries (Mosse, 2010). Our aim here is to examine whether these tendencies actually play themselves out in practice before suggesting what this means for future framings of poverty and the poor.

3.1 Being framed?

An immediate challenge to the sceptics from our evidence is that the process of labelling the poor and rendering them legible for government is not (or not always) a one way process. Hossain (2010) shows how the new tools of identification used by the state in Bangladesh to measure the impact of social policies are often popular with poor people. Here as elsewhere there is a clamour to ‘get on the list’ because of the access that this offers to official forms of welfare and the recognition this offers to their holders as citizens (Chatterjee, 2004). Vom Hau and Wilde (2010) show how community groups in Argentina go to great lengths to prepare maps, produce legal documents, kinship trees and even to project ‘collective spatial memories onto satellite images and GPS-generated maps’ when making territorial claims. And, as we explore below, social movements regularly challenge dominant approaches to how poverty should be defined and explained.

3.2 Which poverties deserve assistance?

The ways in which poor people are seen by development trustees as being deserving or not has been a long-standing concern within poverty studies: as Schild (2000: 275-6) argues , ‘Citizenship...is encrusted in a series of notions of deservedness’ and ‘Nowhere is this more evident than in the arena of social welfare’.⁵ The most obvious recent attempt within Development to conduct human conduct has come via conditional cash transfer programmes

⁵ This dates back (at least) to the United Kingdom’s New Poor Law of 1834, which distinguished between those poor who could and would contribute their labour from those incapacitated or ‘feckless’ paupers who were to be removed from society into the workhouses.

which explicitly seek to inculcate particular forms of developmental behaviour amongst recipients. Our example here comes from the Primary Education Stipends programme in Bangladesh, a conditional cash transfer where programme beneficiaries are to be selected by school management committees according to at least one pre-defined poverty attribute (Hossain, 2010). However, many committees have re-interpreted 'the poor' to include 'insolvent professionals' recently pushed into destitution, a move that broadens the target group in line with a middle-class fear of vulnerability. As a result of this and other factors nearly half of the programme's funding is captured by non-poor groups who are considered to be more deserving while also rendering the programme less pro-poor than intended. A similarly nuanced perspective is offered by Colvin and Robins (2010), who reveal how the state in South Africa frames people living with HIV-AIDs (PLWHA) as a particular category of 'deserving citizens', and then tries to re-frame them through a package of health and welfare interventions.

3.3 The 'community' as chicken and egg

The third tendency our cases reflect on concerns the use of participatory research methods by development trustees to identify the characteristics of poverty. For Li (2007: 247), this tends to produce limited and overly-localised accounts that are typically used to justify a community-based approach to poverty reduction. This turn to participation and community is emblematic of inclusive liberalism and is linked to the residualist and moralising tendencies discussed above. We turn to the character of community-based interventions in Section 4 below. In terms of poverty analysis, Green (2010) looks at three national-level interventions in Tanzania that relied heavily on participatory research exercises. Each exhibits a tendency to frame poverty as a wholly localised phenomenon in terms that makes it amenable to specific (and arguably pre-conceived) acts of government, and where 'Issues of value, pricing... and how actual economies work are not brought into the frame'. This is mirrored in the community-needs assessment that underpins the Northern Ugandan Social Action Fund, which depicts poverty as an essentially internal problem rather than recognise the structural problems of underdevelopment that characterise this chronically poor and conflict-affected region (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 2010).

3.4 Leaving capitalism aside

The tendency in both these cases to overlook the role of (capitalist) development in creating the conditions for prolonged impoverishment is taken a step further in our Latin American cases, where particular forms of capitalist accumulation are cited as the only realistic route out of poverty. In Peru (Bebbington *et al.*, 2010), and elsewhere (Bebbington and Bebbington, 2010), the government's response to those social movements mobilising against the extractive mining industry has been to mobilise a notion of poverty reduction based on export-led growth via the activities of transnational companies in a move that seeks to cast such movements as somehow 'anti-poverty reduction'. In both Peru and also Argentina (vom

Hau and Wilde, 2010) social movements have tended to employ the language of rights and equity rather than poverty (perhaps because such a labelling is inevitably seen as disempowering for their members) while also seeking to challenge dominant understandings of poverty. Social movements here have stressed a more multi-dimensional approach to poverty, with particular reference to environmental sustainability and culture, and also draw attention to how current modes of 'capitalist accumulation by dispossession' tend to deepen inequalities and over-ride the rights of local citizens.

Our papers broadly follow this view of poverty, a view which is given further elaboration by Mosse's contribution which sets out what a genuinely multidimensional view of poverty looks like where political economy, culture and politics take centre-stage. Poverty here is seen as deriving from underlying patterns of uneven development, involving processes of capitalism and state formation that foster inequality-generating mechanisms and particularly disadvantaged social categories.⁶ In adopting this relational perspective, what emerges from the following papers in the collection is a series of sociologically and politically informed insights into of how structural forms of poverty emerge in different contexts. Rather than discuss 'the poor', the papers frame their investigations in terms of class, gender, race and ethnicity, and focus explicitly on the underlying causes of poverty, with reference to how lower-class children are excluded from education in Bangladesh, the adverse incorporation of the north in Uganda or the subordinate status of indigenous groups in Peru or Argentina. Such accounts enable an escape from the potential 'poverty trap' whereby relational forms of injustice become forced into a narrow depiction of poverty as a lack of assets (Jackson, 1996), and leave us with a more politically attuned understanding of persistent deprivation that has significant implications for both thinking and acting around poverty.

⁶ Here Mosse joins Tilly in drawing on both Marxian and Weberian accounts of deprivation as flowing from relations of both exploitation and exclusion; also see Hickey and du Toit (2007).

4 Governing poverty: citizenship and poverty reduction under inclusive liberalism

Can the Development interventions that flow from particular framings of the poor be progressive in terms of poverty reduction and citizenship formation? The strategies we focus on here are community-based responses and the extension of social policies to previously marginal groups, both of which seek to promote particular forms of citizenship. Both have also emerged as important modes of government within inclusive liberalism and been framed in similar terms by sceptics. One critic takes ‘...social policy and the programmes stemming from them to be one paradigmatic form of governing through which subjects and needs are produced’, and notes the shift towards ‘consumer’ rather than ‘citizen’ centred modes of service delivery (Schild, 2000: 277). The belief in community-based responses involves a further shift in the locus of citizenship formation, whereby ‘Populations that were once under the tutelage of the social state are to be set free to find their own destiny. Yet, at the same time, they are to be made responsible for their destiny and that of society as a whole’ (Rose, 2000: 1400). Other sceptics raise more specific concerns that the reliance on community-driven development tends to obscure important differences *within* communities (e.g. Mosse, 1994), and seldom work for the poorest who lack the agency to fully participate in such approaches (e.g. Cleaver, 2005; Mansuri and Rao, 2005). The critique that such localised responses tend to distract from more political forms of action (e.g. Harriss, 2001), has gained further support from postcolonial critics who dismiss liberal efforts to promote citizenship participation as failing to engage with the everyday politics of citizenship in post-colonial contexts (Chatterjee 2004, Robins *et al.* 2008). Each of these concerns is addressed here and Maia Green takes us further still by offering an innovative explanation for why participatory approaches to development remain popular despite their very mixed record in this regard. Importantly, we also draw insights from how citizenship might be promoted from beyond the mainstream of inclusive liberalism, particularly by social movements, the popular redoubt of progressive critics.

4.1 Questioning ‘responsibilisation’

‘In (this) distinctly neoliberal formulation of the World Bank, communities of poor people were encouraged to take responsibility for their own improvement by engaging with markets, learning how to conduct themselves in the competitive arena, and making appropriate choices’ (Li, 2006: 5-6).

Although sceptics are adamant about the vagaries of rendering communities responsible for both tackling their own poverty and becoming good citizens, our papers offer a more nuanced view. On the one hand, the case of a World Bank social action fund in northern Uganda seems to confirm their most critical judgements, in that the responsibilisation of communities to overcome structural form of underdevelopment not only ducks the key problem but may further exacerbate it (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 2010). Masaki (2010)

similarly shows how efforts to promote participation for marginal groups in Nepal ignore the extent to which such groups have been forced to contribute their labour as part of their broader subordination to dominant social groups in the area.

However, markedly different findings on the question of responsabilisation emerge elsewhere in the collection. For Colvin and Robins (2010), the members of self-help groups for men suffering from HIV-AIDs in South Africa are actively seeking to take on responsibility for their own recovery. Importantly,

this kind of 'personal responsibility' is not a privatised or atomised version of individual responsibility that leaves people to fend for themselves...[but is]...rooted in a collective notion of the imperative to provide for others... each other, their families, and the broader community (Colvin and Robins, 2010, forthcoming).

In Tanzania, Green (2010) shows how adults value and take seriously their participatory roles in processes of local government reform and poverty programming, understanding it as an important responsibility associated with not only their citizenship but also a sense of adulthood. Hossain (2010) largely concurs with this rebuttal of the sceptical position on 'responsibilisation. Although political elites in Bangladesh do see education as a means making poor citizens less unruly and more governable this does not tell the full story. The programme is also driven by a genuine belief amongst political elites in the benefits of education and the disciplinary aspect of the programme is rarely enforced (e.g. many stipend payments are made even when attendance and attainment criteria are not met).

4.2 Depoliticising development via community-based participation?

The concern that promoting the rights of participatory citizenship would inevitably individuate social energy and divert it into forms that could be more easily disciplined also gains a mixed press here. In support of the sceptics, Masaki argues that formal project-based interventions tend to promote a liberal model of citizenship that has little resonance with the realities of everyday politics. Here, the subordinate target group had already made many of the advances claimed by the NGO through their own direct political action, specifically a refusal to contribute unpaid labour. A related politics of distraction seems to stretch to social movements in Latin America, with vom Hau and Wilde noting that 'Governments (may) tolerate and sometimes even encourage ethnic mobilising efforts as a deliberate strategy to appease citizens and remove the state from its responsibilities to remedy inequalities and racism'. Social movements and popular forms of grassroots action certainly remain vibrant in Latin America, South Africa and beyond, suggesting that the potentially individuating advances of liberal democracy and rights-based constitutionalism have not displaced collective struggles, and may in some ways have inspired them (Vom Hau and Wilde, 2010; Bebbington *et al.*, 2010). However, vom Hau and Wilde also show how governments have sought to closely manage and contain the terms of citizenship: for example, the new

multicultural constitution in Argentina allows only for indigenous rights over land, not the ‘...more fundamental territorial rights that would challenge the dominant economic order by establishing indigenous governance over territory and its environmental resources’. The property rights that really matter here are those demanded by corporations rather than citizens.

4.3 Inside the homogenous community

A long-standing tendency within Development to treat ‘communities’ as homogenous in ways that overlook what are often very important internal differences appear to be alive and well in Nepal, where a binary distinction between oppressed and oppressors was reified in the project’s committee structures (Masaki, 2010). This obscured the important struggles within the ‘oppressed’ group and also the alliances that had been formed across the two ostensibly opposed groups through political party affiliation and female activism. Given that ‘Forms of governing are always gendered and gendering, and so are their effects’ (Schild, 2000: 277), this is unsurprising. However, and despite the more general truth that women have tended to suffer from the perpetual ‘myth of community’ (Guijt and Shah, 1998), our papers also suggest that certain strategies within inclusive liberalism have tended to re-order gender relations in ways that has created new kinds of problem for men and certain forms of masculinity. In South Africa, Colvin and Robins show how the male members of a self-help group have reacted against what they see as a feminised model of citizenship as ‘voluntary self-help’ in favour of re-asserting their previous subject-positions as the bread-winning males of the household. The point for these men is to gain employment for themselves rather than ‘handouts’ for the group. In Bangladesh, the gendered lens of government in the education sector has also tended to privilege girls rather than boys, with female enrolment now outstripping that of males by 11 and 13 percent at primary and secondary school levels respectively (Hossain, 2010).

4.4 Do citizenship-based approaches work for the poor?

Once again, both sceptics and optimists would seem to receive some support from the evidence presented here on whether citizenship-based approaches have been able to achieve real gains in terms of poverty reduction, in both a socio-economic and broader, more political sense. On the positive side even the most problematic interventions have made some identifiable material improvements in terms of challenging problems of poverty and under-development, as with some elements of infrastructure provision in Northern Uganda, improved school enrolment for girls in Bangladesh and financial reward for subordinate labourers in Nepal. Such gains seem closely related to the more inclusive reach of development under the participatory moment of Poverty Reduction (Craig and Porter, 2006), which has seen previously marginal groups brought into more mainstream forms of development.

However, it is perhaps more evident that the relational basis of poverty make it very difficult for the poor to meet the rigours of inclusion in poverty reduction, particularly in terms of the powerful politics of class tends to shape citizenship-based approaches. With regards self-help groups seeking financial support in South Africa, Colvin and Robins (2010) find that 'the middle class, educated, and professionalised members of the larger NGOs tend to have an advantage over the working class/underclass members of CBOs'. Where interventions seek to set conditions around what constitutes 'good citizenship, as with conditional cash transfers in Bangladesh, the poor are often excluded by local (and often 'middle-class') gatekeepers who fear that their potential for 'non-compliance' will undermine the programme and reduce the flow of resources (Hossain, 2010). In their comparative account of ethnic mobilisation across two different regions of Argentina, vom Hau and Wilde (2010) show that 'historical patterns of poverty and exclusion, impede the formation of a politicised and networked leadership'. As Bebbington *et al.* note, social movements are never only movements *of* the poor and only sometimes even identifiably *for* the poor. Lacking effective forms of representation, the poorest seem to remain stuck in the Faustian bargain outlined by Wood (2003) whereby the idealised dream of actively claiming equal citizenship rights and status is eschewed in favour of more informal and less high-risk strategies more associated with clientelism. In Argentina, better-off communities mock those destitute communities who, dependent on social assistance, 'tend to tolerate these blatant forms of clientelism in exchange for material benefits' (vom Hau and Wilde, 2010). However, the very poorest are unable to benefit from even the asymmetrical reciprocity of clientelism, as with the Bhil migrants in India who lack even the social standing accorded to the lowliest of clients (Mosse, 2010).

Poverty reduction under inclusive liberalism has perhaps been more successful in terms of supporting the more political dimensions of citizenship formation. An unintended effect of the Stipends Programme in Bangladesh has been to offer poor citizens new sightings of the state, with poor parents now more interested in school accountability than previously (Hossain, 2010). Our research in both Bangladesh and Uganda uncovered examples of what Corbridge (2007) refers to as 'citizenship as complaining', with citizens actively challenging power-holders in ways that they would previously have shied away from. These shifts appear to flow directly from interventions that have to varying extents increased the level of engagement between poor people and the state. We also find examples of where citizenship formation is being driven from the bottom-up, as in Argentina whereby indigenous social movements have activated multicultural rights and enabled 'disadvantaged groups to gain public visibility and extend their status as members of the political community', allowing a move towards 'substantive recognition and everyday exercise of those rights' (vom Hau and Wilde, 2010). Social movements in Peru and South Africa also seem to have achieved greater success in promoting the political and cultural rights of citizenship rather than the socio-economic aspects (Bebbington *et al.*, 2010).

However, there have been very few meaningful challenges to the processes and mechanisms that underpin relational forms of poverty in any of our cases. Most interventions by Development trustees have not even tried to engage with these causal mechanisms, and while some social movements have sought to challenge processes of capitalist accumulation in some instances no discernible headway has been made, as witnessed by the continuation of accumulation by dispossession through mining (Argentina and Peru) and tourism (Argentina).

Given the failure of participatory approaches to challenge the unequal power relations that underpin persistent poverty, it is important to consider the reasons behind their enduring popularity. Here, Green (2010) shows how participation acts as a 'boundary object' that enables Development to operate across the multiple dividing lines that it encounters. Development interventions involve fundamental divisions 'between those responsible for an intervention and those who are supposed to benefit from it...as well as that between representatives of a range of different agencies and organisations'. Participation offers a common and legitimating object that Development stakeholders can buy into. The fact that it 'can operate within statist top down or devolved neo-liberal programming, as well as within emancipatory discourses of liberation and learning, makes it especially durable in this regard', particularly at this ideological juncture.

4.5 The enduring contradictions of citizenship

Our findings on extent to which a progressive politics of development can emerge through the citizenship-based strategies of inclusive liberalism present a mixed picture. This is unsurprising given the variety of strategies and contexts examined here but it is also in keeping with the character of the moment. On the one hand it is clear that the trenchant concerns of sceptics are not unequivocally supported by the evidence and arguments presented here: things are just not so simple. On the other hand, none of their concerns have been proven entirely unfounded, particularly given the lack of evidence here that citizenship-based strategies have been able to resolve the persistent forms of poverty created and sustained by the problems of uneven development. After elaborating these broad findings in more depth, we argue that citizenship has come to be deployed within inclusive liberalism as a 'boundary object' in relation to these processes of underlying development, and is being asked to do the same kind of work here for development that participation has come to do for the more direct interventions of Development.

Engaging with development as historical social change

To investigate the politics of reducing chronic poverty necessarily involves an encounter with the underlying processes of development that give shape, form and duration to the most entrenched forms of deprivation (Mosse, 2010). Even 'inclusive liberalism' contains clear examples of old-school capitalist accumulation by dispossession and some fairly glaring instances of state neglect against which there appears to be little protection for citizens. The

structural differences of class have remained critical to the ways in which both poverty and poverty reduction operate, a feature we return to below. Although social movements have proved more likely to engage with the politics and political economy of poverty they have not been able to shift them and seem rarely to offer genuine alternatives, often ignoring capital and preferring to seek concessions from the state rather than seeking to transform it or change how it engages with capitalism (Bebbington *et al.*, 2010). This leaves the impression that social movements are more adept in navigating and transforming the politics of recognition and difference rather than of the material basis of social and economic justice. This is no mean contribution, but cannot constitute the level of response required to protect and empower chronically poor people.

Given the strong argument that only the state can provide the protection and regulatory bulwark required for this task (e.g. Harris-White, 2005), there is some evidence here that the contemporary state in the south is a good deal more developmental and democratic than its more neoliberalised predecessor had become over the 1980s (Sandbrook *et al.*, 2007), although generalisations are of course risky here. More ambitious social policies have (re)emerged and governments have adopted political reforms that allow citizens more regular sightings of their everyday practices of political rule. Where allowed to do so (cf. social action funds), some governments have often moved to take greater responsibility for delivering on the rights of citizenship and in the active management of social life more generally. Sceptics would argue that such responses are essentially ameliorative rather than transformative of the pressing problems of inequality and exclusion, from which they ultimately distract (e.g. Teichmann, 2008). And it is clear that many states remain in thrall of capital, adopting a discourse of poverty reduction that is used to legitimate and promote socially and environmentally damaging processes of capital accumulation. Indeed, anti-poverty responses are seen as the necessary cost to governments as an ameliorative for the problems encountered when pursuing extreme neoliberal policies, as in South Africa where 'The ANC government appears to realise how important social grants have been in holding together what might otherwise be an explosive situation' (Ferguson, 2007: 78). Whether such interventions are simply ameliorative or more genuinely redistributive remains up for debate, although the importance of the material gains they offer to the poorest people, even if not transformative, should not be belittled. However, what is also important here is the very fact that the state has re-entered the public terrain in this way, a move that opens up new possibilities for stronger forms of popular representation and citizenship to emerge within an enlarged public sphere (Tornquist *et al.*, 2009).

What emerges here is not simply a case of how states do or should protect their citizens and engage with capital, but more clearly a historical and political story of how pro-poor politics is shaped more by the politics of state formation and nation-building than the particular interventions that then flow from these (e.g. Skopcol, 1992). Indeed, it is the failure of the current regime in Uganda to include the north within its nation-building project that most clearly defines the problem with current approaches to poverty reduction in the region

(Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 2010). More positively, some states have sought to improve citizens in inclusive and politically committed ways, whether through expanding access to primary schools in Bangladesh or including citizens in decision-making processes in Tanzania, or more broadly by guaranteeing employment in India (Joshi, 2010) or rolling out social pensions in southern Africa, often for fairly progressive nation-building reasons (Hickey, 2009).

4.6 The contradictions of citizenship

Although the success of citizenship-based approaches to poverty reduction under inclusive liberalism remain very much in the balance, this should not distract from the enduring importance of citizenship formation both as an underlying historical process and as a political project within post-colonial contexts. In Latin America, for example, 'Citizenship has been a central preoccupation of projects of state formation and capitalist 'modernization' ... since independence' (Schild, 2000: 275). Much of the attraction here has been the extent to which the notion and practice of citizenship offers a way through the contradictions of the alternative and multiple identities around which political subjects might otherwise (and do) organise themselves in terms of class, race, ethnicity or gender. Its promise of equality extends beyond issues of political status to include social and economic concerns, and thus also become mobilised as a means of resolving the contradictions thrown up by uneven development. Within social movements, Tilly (1995) notes how citizenship emerged as a clarion call to help unite activists across class lines. Citizenship, then, can be seen as a 'boundary object' of inclusive liberalism that is intended to overcome the multiple contradictions of development as an underlying historical process.

The critical issue, then, is the extent to which intentional projects of promoting citizenship can address and perhaps resolve these underlying contradictions, or whether they tend more often to obscure them through offering a legitimating process that promotes a chimera of equality (e.g. Waters, 1989) that can never be attained through the subject-position of citizenship alone. Sceptics would argue that, under current ideological conditions, the forms of citizenship proffered by Development trustees are concerned only with its role in securing social stability and legitimating continued processes of capital accumulation and state formation. Under the guise of 'citizenship', as Masaki (2010) notes drawing on (Robins *et al.* 2008: 1084, 'people continue to be required to say and do what is expected of them, and 'tone down their demands, present these 'nicely' and responsibly, so that they benefit from the ... largesse'. The complex ways in which inclusion and exclusion are intertwined within everyday social relations problematise any simplistic promotion of citizenship as a straightforward antidote to social exclusion (Hickey and du Toit, 2007).

However, our findings also make it clear that such intentions do not necessarily secure the desired outcomes. The men in self-help groups in South Africa, adults participating in planning process in Tanzania and parents who sent their children to school in Bangladesh

were for the most part taking up these responsibilities willingly. Colvin and Robins (2010) show how “responsibilisation’ and entrepreneurial approaches to citizenship, participation and empowerment do not always conform to the seamless logic of liberal rationalities of government and governance-at-a-distance’. This suggests that ‘One should study power where it is exercised over individuals rather than legitimated at the centre’ and ‘explore the actual practices of subjugation rather than the intentions that guide attempts at domination’.⁷ This seems to require new modes of theorising the forms of citizenship that might offer the most potential to subordinate groups, which for some (e.g. Masaki, 2010) requires a closer engagement with both radical democratic theory and the postcolonial turn.

⁷ Foucault (1979: 92-102; 2003: 27-34), as cited in Jessop (2007: 36).

5 Conclusions

What would count as a politically progressive program for developing new modalities of government and participation focused on people who have been invisible or worse to most existing political paradigms? (Ferguson, 2007: 76-77).

The catch-all quality of inclusive liberalism's over-arching tropes – including participation, poverty reduction and now citizenship – have helped elide the contested boundaries of previous disagreements in development, in some cases enabling neoliberals and progressives to find common cause or at least use the same language (Ferguson, 2007; Noel, 2005). The evidence presented here suggests that such elisions obscure genuine and still deep-seated divisions and a subsequent need for progressives to consider more carefully the links between poverty, poverty reduction and underlying processes of politics and political economy. The discursive framing of poverty in Development under inclusive liberalism offers a particularly impoverished lens through which to understand this politics of development. Nonetheless, the rolling out of anti-poverty interventions and participatory development, however imperfect, have often allowed new and unplanned forms of agency to emerge on the part of poor people (Corbridge *et al.*, 2005). In these and other senses both optimists and sceptics are left with at least some ground beneath their feet, although the complex realities within which different strategies of inclusive liberalism play themselves out suggest that most of what happens will be in the messy middle-ground, and that these broader debates can only be worked out in specific circumstances. The travelling governmentalities of inclusive liberalism will take on different forms and achieve different effects in different contexts. As noted earlier, while Gledhill (2001) berates the spread of certain third-way approaches to inequality and social policy in Latin America, he finds a far happier convergence between other such approaches in the same context, most notably the deployment of human rights discourses and local struggles for rights (Gledhill, 2009).

To an extent, it might be that these debates are actually talking past each other, in that the citizenship-based strategies of inclusive liberalism may be capable of making progress in some directions but not in others, as where civil, political and sometimes cultural rights are advanced without significant changes to the material and structural basis of deprivation. Perhaps the welcome recognition within Development that *politics matters* for poverty reduction may in some ways have distracted from an equally important emphasis on the *political economy* of how poverty is produced or reduced. For example, class has (re)emerged here as being of critical importance, particularly to the politics of poverty reduction on the ground. In trying to work out '...how Poverty Reduction's highly formalist travelling rationalities for governing the poor work out in the potent contexts of political economy, history and territory', it is clear '... that (the) wider political economy still matters' (Craig and Porter, 2006: 120).

This is not a damning critique of the citizenship-based approaches discussed here, but it does suggest that moves at other levels are also required if the underlying basis of relational poverty is to be shifted. The problem remains one of how to link a politics of recognition with a politics of social justice and economic transformation in meaningful ways (Fraser, 2003). As Bebbington *et al.* (2010) note, social movements have tended to focus on making challenges within one of the following domains: processes of capitalist accumulation, the state's provision of public resources or the terms of recognition faced by marginal groups, whereas more integrated approaches across these domains are required to tackle the multiple roots of poverty (Mosse, 2010). For vom Hau and Wilde (2010), this may require 'the enforcement of a minimum standard of social and economic rights at the local, national and global levels', particularly where there is a need 'to counteract the overlap of cultural differences with material deprivation and economic privilege'. Although the case for citizenship and broader rights-based approaches to development currently hang in the balance (Hickey and Mitlin, 2009), they do seem to bring a political force and rigour to the analytics and strategies of Development in ways that are elided in fuzzier approaches to participation and empowerment, not least because of their close convergence with how popular politics are played out on the ground (Gledhill, 2009). As such, it is premature to reject the language and strategies of citizenship. Rather, the potential of such lodestars needs to be reclaimed and repoliticised rather than abandoned, and located within broader projects of social justice that can offer more rigorous routes to a progressive politics of development that challenges the relational basis of persistent poverty.

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