

The role of collective action and urban
social movements in reducing chronic
urban poverty

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the contribution of urban social movements in addressing urban poverty, particularly the poverty experienced by the chronic (or long-term) poor in Southern towns and cities.

After a Summary and Introduction, the substantive discussion begins in Section Two by reviewing the scale and characteristics of urban poverty, outlining the challenges which movements and their members face. Section Three contextualises social movement activity as one of several development strategies used by the poor; the section reviews both individual and collective alternatives to movement activity, elaborating on the difficulties faced in including and addressing the needs of the chronically poor. The Section ends with a categorisation of social movements in urban areas. This includes three types of movement related to labour and employment; protecting and acquiring land and other assets; and disadvantaged social identities seeking greater political inclusion. The discussion of the inclusion of the poorest, both within movements and their activities, and in respect of the outcomes being in the interests of those who have the lowest income and/or who are otherwise vulnerable, highlights the significance of the political context. Section Four elaborates the relationship between movements/movement activities and the “position” taken by states within a five-fold distinction. The paper explores movements and movement activities with the bureaucratic, clientelist, authoritarian, participatory democratic and co-productive state. The final Section reflects on the discussion in respect of the inter-relationships between movements, their membership, their activities and poverty reduction in urban areas. It also examines the potential contribution of development assistance agencies to supporting social movements that engage with those in chronic urban poverty.

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Summary

Without the market opportunities open to economic elites, the social status of the upper classes or the bureaucratic authority available to state agents, the poor have to find alternative sources of power if they are to be successful in challenging for resources and political inclusion. Particularly in a democratic state, social movements, or demonstrated mass actions, are one of the few legitimate sources of power that are open to the poor. This paper explores these collective politicised activities and organisations of the urban poor. The social movements considered are movements of the poor, that is, movements of the poor representing themselves and their perceived interests. This discussion does not consider more broad-based, or otherwise targeted movements that are not based around the agendas of the poor. The movements discussed here may be place-based both at a micro level, in that people realise their shelter within neighbourhoods; and at a meso-level as the poor have an essential struggle for political inclusion (citizenship) at the level of the city.

Section Two reviews the context and characteristics of urban poverty in Southern towns and cities. It is the combination of spatial characteristics (lack of services and unsafe physical environment) with an incapacity to prosper in the cash economy and the denial of legal and political rights that characterises the situation of the urban poor. These factors are important in the creation and maintenance of urban poverty and are of relevance to social movements, and the struggles they undertake.

Section Three categorises the poverty reduction strategies of the poor in order to analyse movement strategies within a broader set of development options open to the urban poor. Five strategies are considered: individualised (or household) market-based strategies; collective self-help strategies, in which residents of a neighbourhood, workers within a trade, or others facing a common need, come together to provide collective goods and services; dependency-based strategies, in which the poor broadly accept their structural situation and seek to improve their returns within the current institutional framework by using and extending patron-client relationships; exclusion strategies, in which the poor accept the impossibility of advancement through “socially acceptable” means and use means associated with criminality; and social movement strategies (defined as politicised mass action undertaken by collectives of the urban poor) which may be undertaken in any one of a number of areas. The first four strategies are very limited in their ability to assist the lowest-income and most excluded families, and the discussion elaborates on the reasons for this, highlighting the inability of those who are most disadvantaged to find successful strategies within competitive labour markets and the consequences of living within insecure settlements that have inadequate basic services.

Movement strategies themselves are sub-divided into a number of distinct categories related primarily to the source of the disadvantage, and hence the organising momentum. I consider movements that:

- engage around issues to do with the scale and security of incomes (related to both employment and entrepreneurship) and which are concerned with exploitation;
- engage around issues related to shelter and related services (particularly the consumption of public goods) and which are concerned with dispossession and denial of access to secure tenure and basic services; and
- engage around issues of social and/or political exclusion and inclusion (for example, those based on political interests and/or ethnic identity).

The discussion highlights the difficulties faced by those with the lowest incomes to participate in movements related to incomes and entrepreneurship. The lowest-income employees may not be found within formal sector companies (which are more likely to be unionised). There are some notable examples of trade unions being involved in more general campaigns for social justice and equity but these appear not to be representative of union activities with a

predominance of more self-interested campaigns. Whilst there are active social movements among some traders' associations (campaigning for better trading locations), these are often divided by size of business and returns, with inner city vendors being organised separately from more locally based micro-entrepreneurs.

There are many movements based on maintaining and improving access to shelter-related assets (land, services, housing) and the discussion explores and exemplifies their activities. In respect of inclusive participation, groups differ significantly. The poorest may hesitate to be active in anti-eviction struggles, having chosen to locate on the most precarious land that is least likely to be regularised. In some cases, low-income and excluded families are only tenants with little interest in squatter campaigns for legal tenure of the particular area in which they are living. Some households may be excluded because they face discrimination, for example on grounds of gender or ethnicity. Whilst some of the poorest may join larger scale land and housing movements, others may lack the resources, including time away from the search for basic survival, or may not be allowed to participate. Even when the poorest groups participate, many "successful" outcomes to land struggles involve the payment of service charges. The ability of these groups to secure solutions that are inclusive – i.e. that the poorest can afford – varies considerably. Hence even apparent successes (that include some of the lowest income households) may be followed by the involvement of the diminishing numbers of the lowest-income families as they realise that they cannot afford to remain in the neighbourhood.

Movements for political inclusion and in support of specific identities that experience discrimination have a complex relationship with the lowest-income and excluded groups. Generally speaking, and notwithstanding the discrimination faced by members of the group, decisions and decision makers appear to be dominated by higher income groups. There is little evidence to suggest that even when these groups are successful in their struggles, they necessarily manage to identify policy measures that address the needs of the poorest.

What is apparent is that the broader political structures within which movement activity takes place are a very significant influence on the nature and likelihood of movement success. Section Four explores these issues in more depth as it moves from the identification and description of different kinds of urban social movements and their activities, to the analysis of their strategies within different and distinct political positions taken by the state. The paper argues that when considering the effectiveness of social movements in respect to the poor (and by implication the chronically poor), it is helpful to distinguish a number of such state "positions". These "positions" are consistent responses that the state makes towards social movements, associated organisations and their approaches. They are not unchanging structures, but rather embedded practices which are applied with relative predictability in designing and enacting responses. The Section explores social movements' activities within different kinds of state positions, namely the bureaucratic, clientelist, authoritarian, participatory democratic and participatory co-productive state, as below:

Bureaucratic – the state assigns rights related to accessing state programmes and state agencies with specific responsibilities; rights are realised on the basis of explicit transparent criteria; formal rules and regulations establishing inclusion and exclusion.

Clientelist – the state seeks to be (partially) responsive through personalised relations that seek to diminish the collective power of movement members. Personal channels of communication and resource allocation are of primary importance.

Authoritarian – the state dictates what happens and who is involved, tending to use coercion rather than negotiation to manage pressures from movements.

Participatory democratic – the state seeks to work in predictable responsive ways to encourage the involvement of a diversity of local groups in decision-making and thereby augmenting existing state structures. Structures of participation generally lie somewhat uneasily alongside those of representative democracy.

Co-production – the state supports programmes with a high degree of decentralised decision-making and seeks to find, or agrees to, collaborative approaches to delivery, enabling local control over implementation of development programmes in low-income neighbourhoods to augment participatory strategies for consultation and decision-making.

The discussion highlights a number of findings that emerge from existing studies.

Movements that are successful in pressurising the government to introduce new programmes within a bureaucratic state may find that the movement loses control of the process once it is “projectised” within a state process. It may be particularly difficult to include the poorest, as formalised processes dominate, with the use of rules to secure entitlements that the poorest find difficult to meet. The general culture of the bureaucratic state may further deter movement members from being involved as they find it difficult to participate on an equal basis with officials. Finally, even successful programmes tend to be compartmentalised within defined areas, and bounded by more conventionally orientated programmes.

The clientelist and authoritarian state both seek to absorb movement pressure to resist significant redistribution. Unwilling to allocate scarce resources to movement demands and issues of social justice, the clientelist state uses personalised relations to manage protest, buying off, co-opting and absorbing pressure from the urban poor. The clientelist state seeks to pre-empt the potential of social movements by putting in place social relationships between leaders and the state that reduce the likelihood of substantive protest. The clientelist response seems to reinforce social relations that are at best hierarchical and patronising, and at worst patriarchal and violent. By establishing and reinforcing hierarchies within local communities, clientelist states seem to work against inclusive and collective action at the level of the settlement. The experiences reported in this overview suggest that it is a mistake to view authoritarian positions as impenetrable, although there is considerable resistance to pro-poor political change and redistribution. The government may rely on coercion and subsequent fear to reduce movement activities and presence. However, their need for greater legitimacy and grassroots support may lead them to accommodate opposition and address the needs of some groups. The poor may be able to negotiate although the gains may be very limited. External commentators who have to dissect politics, power and grassroots strategies in such a situation face particular difficulties in assessing success, as illustrated by Castells (1983: 193) who argues both that the squatters in Lima were “deeply realistic” and that they appear to have behaved as a “manipulated mob”.

Movements and other political influences may encourage the state to adopt positions that are more favourable to movement activities. Participatory governance seeks to provide an inclusive political space at a local level and recognises that representative democracy can usefully be augmented by other fora which enable the views and opinions of citizens to enter the political process. Whatever the specific characteristics of those who participate, there does seem to be agreement that the processes of participatory budgeting result in a significant transfer of resources to previously excluded areas and neighbourhoods. However, the benefits may not reach all of the poorest, most notably those who are street homeless or who live in very insecure settlements that are unlikely to be allocated infrastructure finance.

Relatively little attention has been paid to the co-productive state, a state that is both participatory in decision making and which allows local groups to be directly involved in the implementation of state policy; or, alternatively conceptualised, a state that is willing to give financial support to development strategies defined and undertaken by the poor themselves. However, some social movements appear to be keen to put forward ideas of co-production, viewing the greater involvement of the local communities as positive (self-management) and recognising that the informality of everyday life requires something more appropriate than highly formalised strategies for modern urban development. In at least some cases, their enthusiasm appears to come out of the experience of failed bureaucratic programmes.

However, once again, there are particularly vulnerable groups that may be excluded from the process.

Analysing the inclusion of the poorest in state-financed poverty reduction programmes highlights a number of themes. Inclusion of the poorest is limited in many cases, in part due to the inability of bureaucratic systems to act inclusively and/or the inability of the poorest to negotiate redistribution in clientelist and authoritarian contexts. As discussed in the paper, greater efforts are made by the participatory state (in either of the two forms above) to include those with low-incomes, or who are otherwise disadvantaged, in their processes. In any of these cases, the lowest-income groups may participate in the processes (i.e. movement activities) but have limited benefits in terms of outcomes (i.e. movement successes). As noted above, it is particularly difficult for the poorest to be involved if there is an element of the market within the solutions that emerge. The poorest may lack the income to make even small payments for services and the volatility of income flows may make requirements for regular payments particularly difficult. Hence, requirements for payments for land, services, housing, trading spaces, may all mean that even subsidised solutions cannot be relevant to the lowest-income groups. Language skills and/or literacy alongside de facto requirements related to social networks may further restrict the ability of the poorest to access benefits. The position used by the state is also associated with particular political cultures and the associated attitudes with respect to authority, leadership and entitlement; strong tendencies to hierarchy and rule compliance increase the difficulties faced by the poorest.

Why does the myriad of self-help collective activities taking place in Southern towns and cities not place the political system under coherent and systemic pressure to deliver more to their low-income citizens? Whilst much research (in the North) has considered why movements emerge, the circumstances in the South suggest that this other question is perhaps the first to be addressed – the question is not so much why they emerge, but why those that are active are not more successful.

Social movements gain power by building a critical mass of engaged participants who recognise their common interest in taking action. The underlying orientation is one of solidarity rather than divide and rule. Their legitimacy comes in part from their mass appeal, and their ability to draw together large numbers of people with a commonality of purpose regardless of diverse interests. Movements have been successful despite these difficulties and numerous achievements have been secured. This discussion suggests that, whilst movements generally push for large-scale redistribution within a non-discriminatory state process, multiple obstacles emerge to prevent a successful realisation to their campaigns. In addition, the problems of sustaining advances over time appear to be considerable. In part this is because there are real organisational difficulties for the poorest in terms of food security (if nothing else) and this enables more powerful interests that have been temporarily pushed back by movement organisation to regroup, renegotiate and reassert their power. There are many interests that organise against social movements of the poor. In addition there are interests that are not specifically opposed to the poorest, but who act in ways that reinforce the exclusion of the poorest. In this review, the most significant interests are those of the state, commercial companies, political parties and local neighbourhood elites.

In terms of donor activities, a key contribution is to assist movements to be more effective in their core organising activities (in addition to support for specific campaigns or particular outcomes). This involves investing in their capacity to act more strategically, with a more complex understanding of the obstacles that they face, and a greater ability to form effective alliances with other groups with overlapping interests. Some of the strongest movements appear to be those that are able to form city alliances and that are strong enough to resist attempts to divide their leadership or take short-term gains without an awareness of where longer-term advantage might lie. More explicitly, donors may usefully support city level exchanges and information programmes through small-scale grants to local organisations. It may involve encouraging movements to share their histories and reflect on their experiences

and evolution. It may involve encouraging groups to exchange their approaches and outcomes, at a national and international level, to build on the city level networks that are established.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore the contribution of urban social movements to addressing urban poverty, particularly the poverty experienced by the chronic (or long-term) poor. At a very general level, it is proposed that this involves an understanding of how the poor secure the redistribution of resources through generally explicit and necessarily collective political action. Given the complexities of political, economic and social change, and the multiple and diverse directions that change takes, our task requires this study to go beyond specific social movements to understand the milieu in which they emerge and the alternative strategies for advancement used by the poor. In particular, the complexity of relations between the urban poor and the political system means that we need also to consider relations that may not be explicit, in which interests and outcomes are less clearly visible and where outcomes, in particular, may take time to emerge. Nevertheless, the weight of the discussion in this paper is on explicit direct attempts by the urban poor to further their interests through social movement activities, defined as collective processes and activities aimed at changing political, economic and social systems to favour those participating in the movement.

Without the market opportunities open to economic elites, the social status of the upper classes or the bureaucratic authority available to state agents, the poor have to find alternative sources of power if they are to be successful in challenging for resources. Particularly in a democratic state, social movements, or demonstrated mass actions, are one of the few legitimate sources of power that are open to them. Moore argues (2003: 273) “[I]t is one of the ‘givens’ of political science that poor people in poor countries have few political resources and become politically effective only through collective action.” There is a presumption here that mass movements are required for political success; whilst specific needy groups may be assisted within a significant political challenge, addressing the needs of the urban poor requires redistribution on a substantive scale whether through urban development (land and services) and/or the market place.

Within a social system that is dominated by the market as a means to distribute resources, lack of income is the primary mechanism for exclusion from development opportunities. But lack of income is not the only means of exclusion nor is it necessarily the most significant in any specific case. A further significant area is exclusion from access to state institutions (socio-political exclusion) - both in respect of a lack of access to political leadership and the behaviour of staff within agency bureaucracies. In an urban context, such exclusion is particularly significant in respect of securing essential services such as water, and goods such as secure tenure. In this case, social class may be as important a determinant of exclusion as income; such class discrimination is related to factors such as a lack of personal contacts and an inability to conform to certain ways of behaving and interacting. Further grounds for exclusion from access to state or market resources are related to gender, age and race in addition to other factors. As elaborated below, all such factors need to be taken into account in understanding the inter-relationships between social movements and urban poverty reduction. Whilst recognising alternative motivations, the starting point for this discussion is that the most significant motivation amongst the urban poor to participate in social movements results from a desire for greater inclusion within the political system with the potential benefits that this can bring and/or greater compensation from the employment market. One major reason, but as the following pages will show, not the only one, is to secure redistribution.

The phenomenon of social movements extends beyond the interests and involvement of the poor; hence the commentaries on social movements focussing on gender (the needs and interests of women) and the environment (and the particular risks related to future options).¹

¹ In part, what is common about these social movements is that they involve groups who share, with the poor, their exclusion from alternative sources of influence. However, we should be cautious about

A recent volume by Mayo (2005) highlights the wide diversity of organisations that may call themselves, and/or be called by others, social movements; moreover it is evident from Mayo's examples that such diversity does not simply belong to the North. However, in this paper, the social movements considered are movements of the poor, that is, movements of the poor representing themselves and their perceived interests. We do not include more broadly based and otherwise targeted movements that are not based around the agendas of the poor but which consider themselves to be acting in the interests of the poor i.e. women's movements concerned with general incorporation of women into politics and economy, environmental movements campaigning around social justice.

As Batliwala (2002: 396-8) observes, the term social movements is used widely and, in a development context, may refer to many things which do not involve mass action, but professionalised lobbying such as NGO campaigning at international events. However, this is not the way the term is used here, as this paper is primarily concerned with the dimension of political power as realised by the poor, and with social movements as mass movements i.e. involving actions with large numbers of people and the potential threat of political instability alongside the opportunity of electoral success. Movements, in our discussion, are understood as politicised collective activities of *and for* the poor – and the concept of movement extends beyond specific organisational form to refer to a process of mobilisation. Thus, while formal organisations can be *part of* social movements, movements are more than formalised actors and also include the more nebulous, uncoordinated, and cyclical forms of collective action, popular protest and networks that serve to link both organised and dispersed actors in processes of social mobilisation (Mitlin and Bebbington, 2006). Movements are, thus, processes of collective action, dispersed but also sustained across space and time. In this context it is useful to distinguish three kinds of distinct social processes, which interact through movement activities and each of which is represented in the discussions within this paper. Movements, which are considered to be politicised processes of collective activity or mobilisation in which groups engage for their perceived self-interest; social movements organisations, which are somewhat more formalised (but still often informal) agencies of the poor themselves with some legitimate claim to be representative; and social movement support organisations, professional formal organisations (often but not exclusively NGOs) that seek to support the movement processes.²

The paper continues in Section Two with a summary of the situation of the chronically poor in urban areas (Mitlin, 2003). Notable amongst the characteristic experiences of urban poverty are the high dependence on markets to secure access to all basic necessities, the low pay experienced by some (in both formal and informal labour markets), lack of access to basic services to secure well-being (in addition to income) and the heterogeneity of many urban residential communities. Such characteristics highlight one of the most important factors in urban-poor social movements, that the orientation of struggle may be related to access for basic services (land, shelter, water) as well as for improved pay and working conditions. In this respect, the goals of urban social movements may be unambiguously in the sphere of government, even within the conception and practice of a neo-liberal state.

The urban poor use multiple strategies in addition to participation in social movements to address their poverty, including investment in human capital, entrepreneurship and the use of clientelist strategies to maximise the use of their voting power. Section Three considers

this conclusion as the poor have relatively few alternatives and many of those involved in issue-based social movements do. There are a few notably well-connected individuals (eg. Oliver Tickell, Zac Goldsmith), but many others in social movements, although less well-connected, are still able to pursue their political goals through other paths and they do.

² NGO programmes are not people-based social movements and should not be confused with people's movements. They have few mobilising powers, and are dependent for their influence on their intellectual and convening capacities, relatively weak forms of political intervention.

these strategies in order to locate collective activities within this broader array. Social organisation is widespread, facilitating collective activities to provide more effective access to essential goods and services. Whilst collective action related to the production and trading of most goods and services rarely extends beyond families, there are longstanding traditions for community activities in respect of public goods such as water, security and waste management. Such social organisation appear to be most common in a number of areas, including to improve labour markets (e.g. unions and campaigns to increase and extend the minimum wage), small scale vending (e.g. access to markets, freedom from repression), and to extend access to land, basic services and housing. When should such social organisation become a social movement? The discussion here begins with an understanding that there is some kind of permeable boundary. There is a continuum between explicit political challenges to state and market power and more clientelist bargaining, and between communal self-help and campaigns to secure state redistribution. By elaborating on the strategies that are used, such continua can be more easily understood.

The approach used in this paper is to focus on collective politicised activities and by implication that not all collective activity is social movement activity. Some collective activity is orientated to self-help and does not involve the substantive redistribution of resources towards the participants within the collective process. "Political" action, as discussed below, refers to actions related to political institutions within a particular society rather than affiliation to any particular political party or ideology. A further aspect is *scale*, as social movements able to have significant political relations work across districts and cities (or are active within the larger urban neighbourhoods with tens of thousands of households). Moreover, unlike Castells (quoted in Pickvance, 2003: 103) we include many kinds of collective politically orientated action and do not distinguish between their level of success in securing substantive changes in power. There are many reasons for this but a major one is the implication that such changes are easy to assess; the approach of this paper is that this may not be the case.

Section Four explores these issues in more depth, as it moves from the identification of different kinds of urban social movements to the analysis of their success within different and distinct political positions taken by the state. By practices, reference is made to the form of state operation as it engages with, or otherwise responds to, collective politicised movements. The Section explores social movements activities within different kinds of state practices, differentiating between the bureaucratic, clientelist, authoritarian, participatory democratic and participatory co-productive state.

In the context of the inclusion of the chronically poor, it has long been recognised that the nature of social processes is such that the equal inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable is rare (see, for example, Nelson, 2003). There are multiple reasons why such groups struggle to participate and the relevance of movements to the poorest is considered in both Section Three and Section Four. Generally speaking, little attention has been given to the inclusion and interests of the poorest. For example, in one recent volume on the politics of inclusion (Houtzager and Moore, 2003) there is very little detailed consideration of the extent of differential inclusion between groups within the poor (urban or rural), with the exclusion of the contribution by Nelson (2003). As Hickey and Bracking (2005: 857) note, neither the poor nor the poorest necessarily form a particular political constituency – nor may they be explicitly drawn into any political process, whilst those of their own may lack widespread appeal.

In the concluding Section, this paper argues that social movements' strategies face many difficulties. To anticipate the conclusion, it will be argued that their lack of success reflects, at least in part, the dominance of the interests and aspirations of the not-so-poor, and of the perceived ideas and solutions that influence policy discussions. This argument is that rather than build the autonomous capacity of the poor to organise; many social movements have been reliant on the state (and sometimes the market) for poverty reduction, thereby weakening the longer term potential for social agency in favour of redistribution. Such an

emphasis reflects the liberal democratic model of state and citizen relationships. The analysis suggests that this model for social movement vision and activity may be flawed in several respects. The model assumes too much benevolence on the part of the State for whom the poor is only one constituency. Claims are often absorbed into clientelist relations. It also assumes too great a willingness in the South to “play by the rules” in the process of turning claims into entitlements, and too great a reliance on bureaucratic efficiency and political will to maintain agreements that are made.

This paper draws on several sources of information in its analysis. The research programme that IIED conducted with the University of Birmingham on Urban Poverty and Governance between 1997 and 2000 has been one important source of information, as has IIED’s research project on urban poverty reduction strategies 1996-1999, several individual NGO evaluations and numerous papers published on urban social action in *Environment and Urbanization* including those in two special issues.³ A literature review of recent journal articles and books on urban social movements has enabled this paper to draw more widely on the experiences of others. Particularly significant has been the special issue of *World Development* entitled “Exploring the politics of poverty reduction: how are the poorest represented?” which draws on papers presented at the CPRC conference in 2003. Also important has been the author’s direct involvement with Shack/Slum Dwellers International, an alliance of grassroots organisations and support NGOs that now spans over 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.⁴ This involvement has helped to sensitise her to the depth and complexity of strategies used by urban poor groups to advance their cause.

2. The critical characteristics of chronic urban poverty

This section summarises the characteristics of the chronically poor who live in urban areas. It is essentially scene setting, outlining the aspects of poverty that the poor seek to address, in part through activities in social movements but also through other individual and/or collective strategies.⁵

Chronic poverty is a concept that takes into account the length of time that an individual or household experiences poverty, as well as the depth of poverty. Conceptually, it differentiates between those who are poor at any specific point in time and those who are poor over a long period of time, and hence between the long-term (chronically) poor and those for whom poverty is transitory. In the work of the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, the suggested period for “chronic poverty” is five years, however, such specificity is somewhat arbitrary, and other definitions have also been used, perhaps to reflect the periods for which data are available. For example, Kedir and McKay (2005) use three surveys (1994, 1995, 1997) in their analysis of urban Ethiopia, and define the chronically poor as those who are poor in all three surveys over a four-year period. While much of the analysis has been on the period of time without adequate income, the concept can also be applied to inadequate access to basic services such as water and education (Hulme *et al.*, 2001: 10).

The discussion of the duration of poverty brings a more differentiated picture of deprivation to the fore. Rather than treating “the poor” as a homogenous group, the concept of chronic poverty encourages sensitivity to particular situations of the poor, and the specific dynamics associated with such situations. As earlier and more detailed analyses have shown, but as has rarely been fully acknowledged on a wider scale, the poor are highly differentiated by factors such as age, gender, educational attainment and ethnicity, and these are all important correlates with different levels and intensities of poverty (*Environment and*

³ The outcomes of this first research programme are summarised in Devas (2004), whilst those from the research work at IIED are available in Mitlin and Satterthwaite (2004). Special issues of *Environment and Urbanization* include those on civil society in action (2001, 13(2)) and participatory governance (2004, 16(1)).

⁴ See <http://www.sdinet.org>

⁵ This section is a selective summary of Mitlin (2003).

Urbanization, 1995a and b). A differentiated understanding of urban poverty is particularly significant in assessing who benefits from interventions. The tendency for the benefits of poverty reduction programmes to be captured by those who are better off has long been recognised and the issue of inclusion is as relevant to the processes of social movements as it is to other development agents. Also important, and relevant in the context of “urban”, is that the chronically poor are also spatially differentiated with, for example, different problems associated with residency in inner cities, urban peripheries and smaller towns. However, we know very little about exactly where the chronically poor are located. As discussed in Mitlin (2003) there have been few studies of urban chronic poverty and none with sufficient detail to enable the significance of chronic poverty in particular settlements to be studied. However, studies of low-income settlements indicate very high levels of income/food poverty; 82 per cent are below food poverty lines in Khayelitsha and Nyanga, Cape Town and 73 per cent of residents are below expenditure poverty lines in “slum” areas in Nairobi (De Swardt *et al.*, 2005; World Bank Africa Region, 2006).

Of particular relevance for social movements are the groups that face social discrimination, with consequences for their ability to develop secure urban livelihoods and safe homes. Three groups that face widespread discrimination are women, migrants, and those discriminated against on grounds of race, caste or ethnicity. Such discrimination may affect participation in labour markets and/or access to homes and services. Whilst urban neighbourhoods are often diverse, particular groups may face difficulties related to their location, for example because the land is unsuitable for occupation or of potentially high value and sought after by others.

Over and above the problems faced by specific groups, the experience of poverty in urban areas is critically influenced by, and ultimately determined through, labour and commodity markets. To put it bluntly, the poor receive incomes that are too low to purchase what they need for long-term survival and advancement. This outcome reflects a lack of employment opportunities, low wages and/or low returns from informal vending or other forms of self-employment. It also reflects the extent to which, and the amount for which, urban dwellers have to pay for everything, with few opportunities to secure, outside of the market, such essential goods and services as access to water, sanitation, rent for housing, transport and health care. Finally it reflects the high costs of some public goods (e.g. piped water) due to a combination of economic and political factors. In the context of low incomes and few assets, households are vulnerable to crises. This vulnerability is increased because of the lack of safe and secure housing and adequate access to environmental services, notably water, sanitation and waste collection. High densities may mean that sanitation strategies used in rural areas are associated with major health problems. The health of the income earners is particularly critical for income security and several studies suggest that a primary reason for households’ deteriorating financial circumstances is the income earner becoming ill or incapacitated (22 per cent of responses) (Kabir *et al.*, 2000: 709; Begum and Sen, 2005). Improved services can only be accessed collectively and, as illustrated in Section Three, the issue of access to basic services is a major focus for social movement activities.

It is the combination of spatial characteristics (lack of services and unsafe physical environment) combined with an incapacity to flourish in the cash economy and the denial of legal and political rights that characterises the situation of the urban poor (Meikle, 2002: 48-9; *Environment and Urbanization* 1995a: 6-7). The following factors have been identified as being important in the creation and maintenance of urban poverty (Mitlin, 2003) and are of particular relevance to social movements:

- *Cash economy.* The urban poor enter the labour market because of the need for cash. Despite the widespread significance of urban agriculture, money is needed for basic services, land, “service” payments (to be allowed to farm, trade and squat), food and clothes.

- *Labour markets.* The labour market offers low pay to unskilled and skilled workers, no training opportunities, few credit opportunities for micro-entrepreneurs, much job insecurity, and long hours in poor working conditions. Low pay and little job security make it hard to invest in securing assets that may offer new opportunities and greater security. Poor working conditions increase the likelihood of poor health and injury.
- *Lack of basic services.* These are often associated with the residential location, meaning that the poor spend a considerable proportion of their income on basic needs such as water, transport and health services. Lack of services causes additional difficulties such as the time taken in securing water or simply in travel to work, leaving less time for alternative activities. This situation also increases the risk of ill health. The cost of services, especially health, creates additional demands on already overstretched incomes. Lack of effective policing leaves the poor vulnerable to violence and exploitation.
- *Discrimination.* Mostly in labour and commodity markets, as well as in residential settlements, increasing the problems faced by some groups. Such discrimination makes it even more difficult for individuals and/or households to secure their livelihoods.
- *Lack of appropriate legal and political safeguards and rights,* meaning that the urban poor are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Illegality is commonplace and may be associated with employment, trading, residence and access to services. Laws, norms and standards, even when prepared with good intentions, may result in considerable difficulties for the poor (for example, regulations on house construction).

This is the context that the poor have to struggle to overcome if they are to move away from poverty. Section Three looks in more details at the specific strategies used by the poor to address their poverty with a particular focus on social movements. A final comment on this analysis of the multiple causes of urban poverty is to highlight that multi-dimensionality is a characteristic of urban poverty with risks often being co-variant. However, as elaborated in the discussion below, social movements are rarely able to make multiple interventions, and rather they have tended to concentrate on single-issue campaigns.

3. The poverty reduction strategies followed by the urban poor with special consideration to the chronically poor

The poor use a number of strategies when seeking to address their poverty and find development opportunities. Analysis of experiences suggests that the strategies of the poor may be grouped into five broad categories:

- Individualised (or households) market-based strategies in which the poor use avenues of labour (and product) market advancement, particularly around income-generation, employment and education.
- Collective self-help strategies in which residents of a neighbourhood, workers within a trade or others facing a common need come together to provide collective goods and services.
- Dependency-based strategies, in which the poor broadly accept their structural situation and seek to improve their returns within the current institutional framework by using and extending their patron-client relationships. The poor seek more advantageous outcomes without challenging the structural constraints within these relations.
- Exclusion strategies in which the poor accept the impossibility of advancement through “socially acceptable” means and adopt methods associated with criminality.

- Social movement strategies (which are politicised mass action undertaken by collectives of the urban poor) in any one of a number of areas.

These strategies are explored and exemplified in the following paragraphs. What might be noted at this stage is that only one of the above strategies involves explicit political action (i.e. social movements' activities) and the rest are less visible challenges for inclusion into more rewarding and developmental social processes. The reason for the elaboration of the others is, it is argued, that the alternatives need to be understood in order to analyse the context within which explicit political action takes place. This is particularly relevant because the social and, by implication, the political systems in at least some Southern countries are not necessarily fully "modern" (Kabeer, 2002: 17) and it is recognised that social movements are a phenomena associated with the modern state (Crossley, 2002: 130). All but one of the strategies identified above involves some level of collective activities with individualised market-based strategies being the exception. Hence many of the collective activities undertaken by Southern residents are not politicised, and arguably there is something of a mismatch between state politics and the way in which social movements are being conceptualised.

Whilst the primary focus of this section is on the choices made by individuals, the strategies used by individuals can also be followed by collective entities. Hence, movements may adopt clientelist strategies to further their interests, or may place emphasis on self-help or even exclusion type strategies. These strategies are explored in the sub-section on movements below and are returned to in Section Four. Clientelism is the only theme that is discussed in both Sections Three and Four in that it is both a strategy that the poor use to advance, and, in some cases, a specific response made by the state to control movements. Section Three considers how the poor may use clientelist relationships, and Section Four considers the inter-relationship between specific movement activities, movements and the clientelist state.

In the discussion of each of these specific strategies, there is a particular focus on the needs of the poorest and the capacity of the strategy to include the poorest rather than just offering or replicating discriminatory and/or individualised activities. In terms of earlier, more general analyses, Nelson (2003) argues that shared interests between the poor and not so poor are important in advancing pro-poor policies and Blair (2005: 921) also suggests that there may be a greater likelihood of success if coalitions for change are developed. Nelson (2003: 129) also highlights the benefits of such groups being mixed, either geographically, or with complementary patterns of income generation and /or with overlapping ethnic and religious identities.

3.1 Market strategies

The urban poor use a number of specific strategies to increase their chances of progressing through the market. Those highlighted below are education, enterprise development, the informal sector and the diversification of income sources.

In respect of education, there are numerous examples of statistical studies asserting the correlation between investments in human capital and a lower incidence of poverty. See, for example, Grimm *et al.* (2002: 1082-5) and their discussion of urban poverty and education in Cote d'Ivoire; World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Sector Unit, Latin American and the Caribbean Region (2002: iv) and their analysis of the significance of education in reducing poverty incidence in larger cities of Bolivia; Maxwell *et al.* (2000: 37) for Accra; and Haddad and Ahmed (2002, 19) who, drawing on data from Egypt, suggest that the better educated are less likely to be poor with the highest "returns" to urban dwellers being to those with university education. However, there is also some evidence that the relationships between education and the avoidance of poverty is breaking down in some countries, perhaps because the labour market is saturated for certain categories of employee. De Swardt *et al.* (2005: 103-4) report on the significance of education for 624 households living in a low-income settlement in Cape Town and conclude that the level of

education does not make a difference to the likelihood of obtained paid employment, although it does affect the wage received. The Chronic Poverty Report (2004-5: 80) also notes that declining educational inequalities in Brazil have not been associated with declining income inequality.

Diversification of their income sources is considered to have reduced the risk of chronic poverty; see, for example, the discussions in Moser and McIlwaine (1997: 52) and Moser (1997: 58). Such diversification may follow any one of a number of strategies including migration, and the growing interest in remittances is indicative of the scale and significance of migration activities related to household livelihood choices. The importance of income diversification in maintaining households above poverty is emphasized by research in Kampala (Uganda) (Bigsten and Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 1992: 1436) and in Dhaka (Bangladesh), by Kabir *et al.* (2000: 716). House *et al.* (1993: 1207) highlight the importance of urban agriculture which reduces dependence on food markets for at least some element of nutritional consumption.

The growing number of micro-finance schemes provides evidence of the willingness of the urban poor to seek to consolidate entrepreneurial opportunities. Considerable effort has been placed on providing credit to assist small enterprise development, and this builds on existing local provision for loan finance. However, such strategies tend to assist the better off among the poor, rather than those who are very poor (Hulme, 2001; Wright, 1999), and hence might be thought to be less relevant to the poor. Zaidi (2006), in a detailed examination of one substantive micro-credit programme in Karachi, points to the complexity of findings. He found that the significance of micro-finance appears to be greater for the smaller enterprises that receive notable benefits from the loans; not being the case with larger enterprises. The lowest return micro-enterprises seem to be the simple vending of fruit and vegetables or essential household goods (such as sugar, tea and matches); this is often that chosen by low-income women who have limited investment capacity. In such activities, location is critical and the ability of groups to resist eviction from illegal trading sites and to persuade councils to permit small scale vending in busy areas is important. As elaborated below, one set of social movements is concerned with supporting such livelihood strategies.

In many circumstances, the poor cannot advance through market opportunities due to the low level of pay and profitability, hence their inability to secure assets to enable them to improve their livelihoods. Even when they are able to accumulate some assets through market activities, in many cases there is a health-related crisis, in part due to poor quality shelter with inadequate services and exacerbated by malnutrition, and income levels fall again. Recognising these difficulties, it appears that substantive improvement for the chronically poor in urban areas is only possible with political gains, for example through support provided through the state (e.g. social protection, basic services), and/or greater remuneration from employers (formal or informal) or higher returns from micro-enterprise activities. Whilst economic growth does take place with reduced levels of urban poverty, significant levels of poverty remain even in these contexts.

3.2 Collective self-help strategies

In addition to individualised market based development strategies, many households also participate in collective self-help strategies. Such self-help strategies are used by low-income communities to provide specific goods and services that neither the market nor the state is offering. They are used particularly in respect of public goods that are not supplied by government agencies (e.g. water lines, security) and services that the market will not provide to them (e.g. savings and insurance). The research programme on urban poverty and governance (University of Birmingham/IIED/LSE) found evidence of such self-help programmes throughout the cities that were studied (Mitlin, 2004c). For example, in Mombasa, increases in urban poverty have been associated with the creation of support groups with common interests; for example, hawkers work together to help pay bribes and

finances (Gatabaki-Kamau and Rakodi, 1999). In respect of basic services, examples of clean up activities undertaken by local residents' associations can be exemplified by groups in Cebu, and these neighbourhoods also organise the provision of public water through water committees (Etemadi, 2001). However, limitations are immediately apparent with the collected waste being dumped in areas immediately adjacent to the settlement and some groups struggling to maintain group-managed water services. This highlights the considerable constraints facing self-help service provision.

Production cooperatives have been encouraged, but they rarely offer a major source of employment for the urban poor and generally people have individualised income-generation strategies. However, financial cooperatives such as ROSCAs and credit unions are widely used by some urban residents to assist in enterprise investment and housing improvements, and to enable the purchase of major goods and services. Zaidi (2006) describes the significance savings (*bisee*) committees that exist through Karachi offering assistance to small-scale entrepreneurs for both investment and household expenditures. He suggests that the presence of such self-help financial institutions explains why some enterprises did not need to access microfinance agencies as all their financial needs were addressed.

The extent to which self-help groups are inclusive of the chronically poor varies depending on circumstance. As elaborated below, the incentives are greater for neighbourhood activities in which the inclusion of large numbers may help in the completion of tasks. However, as highlighted by Cleaver (2005) in a rural context, the poorest may struggle to take part. Self-help groups that are more market orientated (such as the *bisee* committees) may have little motivation to be inclusive in terms of principles and values. Hanchett *et al.* (2003: 48) highlight the difficulties that the poorest face in making the regular monthly payments to access community-managed water services in Dhaka and hence their low levels of participation in water committees. Many financial cooperatives (both credit unions and ROSCAs) have minimum monthly savings requirements effectively eliminating the participation of lower-income residents (for example, see Albee and Gamage, (1996: 9-26), and the discussion of Jos in Box 12). The same minimum contribution requirement is also true of funeral or burial societies. These examples point to the very real limitations of such self-help solutions in providing a substantive solution to the level of poverty experienced by the poorest urban dwellers. If participation is dependent on regular payment and/or regular contributions of labour, the poorest struggle to participate.

3.3 Dependency based strategies (clientelism)

The discussion now turns to ways in which the poorest urban citizens have sought to respond to the most ubiquitous political systems and elite structures to address their needs. Making use of clientelist relationships is very much a part of the strategies used by the urban poor. As Kabeer (2002) has argued, social relations in much of the South may be "pre-industrial". That is, the transition has not been made from familial, personalised ascribed social relations to explicit rule constrained bureaucratic social relations. This is true both for work (in the case of those working in the informal economy) and for shelter, with a wide range of renting and squatting strategies and with many privately provided services. The significance of informal networks in helping to address the adverse consequences of poverty emerges from several studies (Mitlin 2003). In many cases this is family assistance, for example, Maxwell *et al.* (2000: 42-43) find that in Accra, 83 per cent of households reported that they had given or received a financial transfer between family (88 per cent) and friends (12 per cent) in the past six months. However dependency based strategies go beyond the use of such horizontal networks involving people of relatively equal social status. In the absence of adequate land, services and employment, households develop strategies to secure patrons; building relationships with powerful individuals who help them secure access to needed goods and services. Wust *et al.* (2002, 216) highlight the significance of such relationships in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam):

In parallel to these horizontal relations, households enter into vertical protection networks operating according to Mafia-like (clientelist) logic. To find a job or obtain credit or an administrative favour, people look for backing by a protector, an influential person able to defend their interests and get them what they need. These are often small entrepreneurs or local political or administrative leaders. Generally, the various social relations that the households establish in their neighbourhood aim to ensure their integration in the urban environment. They are often of paramount importance for the survival of the poorest families.

The social relations summarised in this paragraph from Ho Chi Minh also emerge in a wide range of other studies (see, for example, Peattie, 1990; Pornchokchai, 1992; Scheper-Hughes, 1992; van der Linden 1997). Such relations are often referred to as clientelistic – emphasising an imagery of a powerful patron and supplicant client.

A significant component of dependency style relationships are concerned with the interface between the poor and the political system. Patrons help residents secure access to the goods and services that they need and a typical return gesture is that residents commit their votes to patrons or to those that the patrons represent. Patrons work within state structures that are broadly supportive of their role. Due to their significance as a counter point to more explicit engagement with political power and assumptions of equality that social movements encompass, such relations are particularly relevant to the subject matter of this paper.

There are two extreme perspectives on the contribution of dependency style relationships to poverty reduction, and a range of views that fall in between. At one extreme, Benjamin (2000) emphasizes the active engagement of the poor with the policy-making process and richer, more powerful, decision-makers through clientelism. Benjamin and Bhuvanewari (2001: 2 and 35) use the term “porous bureaucracy” to encapsulate the process of lobbying and response. They associate the potential of the poor to advance their interests to “vote bank politics” which opens the possibility for community leaders to play a complex political strategy with councillors and higher-level politicians (Benjamin, 2000: 44). Clientelism is presented as an active strategy that the poor can use to advance their interests and Amis (2002: 7) uses Benjamin and Bhuvanewari’s work together with related studies to argue that “... the processes of Decentralization and Democracy have allowed the poor more opportunities to lobby and make incremental collective gains...” Benjamin and Bhuvanewari (2001: 73-4) argue that such networks tend to be inclusive, rather than exclusive, as the power of the local community leader is in part related to their capacity to create an agreed position within the settlement. However, it is not certain that benefits have accrued to those in chronic poverty and Benjamin (personal communication) also acknowledges that such lobbying activities may not include the poorest members of the community.

Such an analysis of urban poor communities as active negotiators advancing their cause within dependent relations contrasts with the view of the urban poor in Bangladesh put forward by Wood (2003: 22-23) when he argues that “Poor urbanites, and especially new migrants, have no option but to gain membership of such networks and patronage. The price for such loyalty is not to challenge the structural conditions, which in turn deny them long-term autonomy and rights” (*ibid.*: 23). A similar view is provided by the work of the Orangi Pilot Programme who analysed the problems in Orangi (Karachi) in the early 1980s prior to setting up a sanitation programme. Project staff argued that the politicians provided partial and inadequate services and that the political action in the settlement was orientated towards securing such partial and inadequate services in return for votes and/or personal favours. The Orangi Pilot Project suggested that families would do better to install basic sewerage themselves, building their own organisational capacity through lane associations as well as improving their health and well-being. The Project’s analysis is that collective self-help offers a more effective developmental solution than clientelism; and through professional interventions, staff have sought to strengthen this alternative option. As described below, a political dimension later developed to the work of the lane associations. Van der Linden (1997: 83) argues, also in reference to Pakistan, that patrons stand in the way of a solution to

the problems faced by the urban poor, as their continued role requires a populace that is dependent on them. The poor, he suggests, understand their situation well and express it in a Pakistani proverb “if you live in the river, it is better to stay friends with the crocodile”.

The collective self-help strategies of the Orangi Pilot Project faced numerous challenges as it grew in significance, and not least those related to the dual need to both overcome and co-exist within clientelist political relations. The clientelist strategy is the only one that maps directly onto one of the types of state position considered in Section Four and hence it is returned to below.

3.4 Exclusion strategies

A further strategy is that of law breaking, chosen because of the level of exclusion from the norms and conventions of established society.⁶ Denied opportunities to advance through “acceptable” routes, the poor identify other avenues. In some cases this is a group (i.e. a gang) and in others a much more individualised activity. It should also be recognised that many aspects of the lives of the poor are illegal although not criminal. Maybe live in illegal shelters that contravene building and zoning regulations and/or work in informal enterprises without licenses in areas not designated for trading. These families have not chosen exclusion and generally seek to work within the boundaries of the law where possible.

The gang culture of young people, particularly men, has been presented for popular review in films such as *City of God*; and this may be indicative of the scale of such activities. Winton (2004: 85) with a specific country focus notes, “... there are no reliable data on the number of gangs operating in Guatemala... Yet this very ambiguity when coupled with the high visibility of this type of organised violence, has allowed the profile of gangs to be raised to such an extent that there seems little need for the perceived severity of the problem to be verified by actual data.” Clearly the opportunities and interest in such strategies vary considerably across towns and cities in the South; Central America is perceived to have a relatively significant scale of gang culture, whilst other countries are not. Another context with collective criminal activities is that of Manenberg (Cape Town, South Africa) where the emergence of gangs has been linked to the spatial displacement of communities under apartheid and, more recently, economic recession in the textile industry. Job losses in the textile factories and the garment industry have reduced employment opportunities particularly for women who also played an important role as a stabilising force in their families. The emergence of such gangs is linked to the breakdown of families who orientated young people to non-criminal development strategies, to the need for incomes and to the importance of an alternative source of social cohesion which is provided for by gang membership (see Khan and Thurman (2000), and Chipkin (2003), for discussions of Manenberg).

Once more, such strategies fall outside of explicit political action. In some cases, clientelist systems may also border on exclusion with the widespread use of crime and collusion between politicians and those benefiting from crime. Henry-Lee (2005) discusses the situation in urban areas of Jamaica whereby political parties secure a very high concentration of votes in certain low-income communities that experience high levels of gangsterism and crime. As she explains, residency in these areas makes it difficult for families to have the same opportunities as others in the city because, regardless of their actual attitudes, they are viewed as criminals. In many other cities, there are specific neighbourhoods that are also stigmatised in a similar way.

It should also be recognised that social movements and less sustained political protest may use violence and hence may be judged, at least in some periods and places, as illegal and criminal. However, they can be distinguished from the groups above as these social movements see themselves as only temporarily outside the law, and look forward to the day

⁶ Whilst recurring emphasis has been placed on the “culture of poverty,” less attention appears to have been given to other psychological and social responses such as cultures of resistance.

when the justice of their cause will be accepted and they will no longer have to undertake activities that fall into the criminal category; in this context, individuals may anticipate being pardoned for past acts. An illustration of such movements is the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. Recognising that the state was unwilling to accept an alternative non-discriminatory democratic political system, citizens organised both violent and non-violent protests, running the risks of banning orders, imprisonment and sometime death. These are explicit political movements, although they may be only partly party political, that continue despite their illegality.

Criminalised groups and individuals may also move into movement type activities to campaign for greater justice in the legal system, and/or better conditions during the period of their confinement in prison.⁷ In this case the movement is not the reason for criminal activity but rather it is a response to the penalty that society exacts from them.

3.5 Political strategies

Now the discussion turns to more explicitly political strategies that are used by the urban poor to further the attainment of their needs and to secure their interests. As is implied by the earlier discussion, there are also extensive links between the urban poor and the political system through more clientelist relations and political alliances may combine with dependency type strategies as the exchange of votes for goods and services takes place. As we see in the following Section, which focuses specifically on relations between the political state and the urban poor, what collective mass action by the poor can achieve is, in part, determined by the sustained positions taken by the state in their strategies towards the urban poor.

It is relevant to recognise that not all the political strategies of the urban poor are social movements. Local leaders may choose to affiliate with political parties rather than develop a local collective capacity within the poor. Equally important, movements may move between autonomy to dependency on party politics and/or clientelist relations, and back again in a context that is often fluid. Social movements are conscious of the significance of party political influence. Such a consciousness is exemplified by the policy of the National Slum Dwellers Federation in India (and other affiliates of Shack/Slum Dwellers International) that members with a role in political parties cannot also be leaders within the Federations (Box 1). The reason for this is that such associations and related allegiances tend to bind local groups to one specific party, preventing movement organisations from being free to negotiate and, as significantly, a single local affiliation can carry associations that restrict potential negotiations for other grassroots organisations. As further explored below, the interaction between the political system and the social movements is a critical influence on movements' capacity "to be" as well as "to act".

Box 1: Party politics and the National Slum Dwellers Federation (India)

A critical and controversial feature of the approach of the National Slum Dwellers Federation is its vision of politics without parties. The strategy of the Indian Alliance (a grouping of the Federation, support NGO (SPARC) and network of women's collectives (*Mahila Milan*) is that it will not deliver the poor as a vote bank to any political party or candidate. This is a tricky business in Mumbai, where most of the grassroots organisations, notably unions, have a long history of direct affiliation with major political parties. Moreover, in Mumbai, the Shiva Sena, with its violent, street-level control of urban politics, does not easily tolerate neutrality. The Alliance deals with these difficulties by partnering with whoever is in power at the federation and state level, within the municipality of Mumbai or even at the local level of particular wards (municipal sub-units). Thus, the Alliance has earned hostility from other activist groups in Mumbai for its willingness to work with the Shiva Sena, where this is deemed necessary. But it is resolute about making Shiva Sena

⁷ For a recent example, the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) or First Command of the Capital in São Paulo, began as a kind of prisoners' trade union campaigning for improvements in prison conditions. More recently it has been associated with a wave of criminal activity in the city (Financial Times, August 12 2006; Guardian 17 May 2006).

work for its ends and not vice versa. Indeed, because it has consistently maintained an image of non-affiliation with all political parties, the Alliance enjoys the double advantage of appearing non-political while retaining access to the potential political power of the poorer half of Mumbai's population.

Source: Appadurai (2001)

The remaining part of this sub-section considers in more detail three main orientations for urban poor groups that seek to engage the political system. Unlike political parties which tend to have a comprehensive programme, social movements generally engage with the political system through a particular objective, whether a need, asset or freedom. Our discussion of movements is divided between those:

- that engage around issues to do with the scale and security of incomes (as related to employment and entrepreneurship) and which are concerned with exploitation in labour markets;
- that engage around issues related to shelter and related services (particularly the consumption of public goods) and which are concerned with dispossession and denial, and the protection and extension of assets; and
- that engage around issues of social and/or political exclusion and inclusion (for example those based on political interests and/or ethnic identity).⁸

Like Hickey and Bracking (2005: 853) in this discussion I do not subscribe to a language of “new” (lifespace) and “old” (workplace) social movements. As evidenced by Castells (1983) and Pickvance (2003: 104), struggles for land and basic services are longstanding and remain important in the context of poverty reduction.

a. Orientated to income: employment and micro-enterprise markets

Within this grouping we will look at worker movements and traders' associations that have developed a political dimension.

Workers: Workers may combine into movements to campaign for improved pay and employment terms and conditions. Box 2 offers a brief description of the kinds of pressures and resultant activities that take place in some rapidly growing urban centres in the South. Trade unions have developed to assist in such struggles and to provide an organising framework. Their primary relevance is in formal sector workplaces as informal workplaces are unlikely to permit unionisation. Even formal workplaces may resist unionisation and in the continuing strength of the neo-liberal ideology is exemplified in the UK where Asda (a major supermarket chain bought by Wal-Mart) was recently fined for offering workers money to persuade them to leave a trade union (February 11 2006, The Guardian).

The significance of trade unions for the chronically poor is limited, as most do not have formal jobs.⁹ Moreover, increasing informalisation of labour markets suggests that their influence is declining. Sinha (2004: 130) quotes Mukhopadhyay who estimates that only 8 per cent of India's workforce works in a sector that is organised by trade unions. Isamah (1994: 123-152) discusses the contribution of trade unions in Nigeria and Zambia. Once more the low levels of union membership are highlighted, with the formal employment of 27 per cent of the workforce in Zambia and 10 per cent in Nigeria. Isamah (1994) highlights the

⁸ Whilst developed in the context of activities in the South, there is an interesting degree of overlap between this categorisation and that of Castells in his analysis of the United States; where he suggests that there are three structural issues underlying popular movements: the preservation and improvement of neighbourhoods (physical space and services); poverty and related goals of jobs, incomes and social benefits; and oppressed ethnic minorities and their desire to address the discrimination they face (Castells, 1983: 124).

⁹ The workers in Dubai all had to invest considerable amounts to secure access to these jobs and some are educated to degree standard (The Guardian, 29 March 2006).

reluctance of unions to do more than address the needs of their members both under colonial rule where they resisted being drawn into campaigns for independence (*ibid.*: 132-3), and later under structural adjustment where they concentrated once more on the specific needs of the formally employed workforce, arguing against food riots in Zambia (*ibid.*: 142-3).

The lack of organisation among informal workers is notable (Pearson, 2004: 137-9). Pearson (2004: 146) suggests that the trade union movement and others need to be more supportive of improving working conditions and remuneration in this sector but she also suggested that these home-workers (often women) should build their own organisations and identify their own preferred policy options. Although Sewa (see Box 4) is registered as a trade union, this is somewhat exceptional and, moreover, its initial focus was on strengthening member's informal economic activities. In the absence of formal union organising, other agencies have sought to support informal workers. In 2004, a *Development in Practice* special issue brought together a number of papers considering the inter-relationship between unions and NGOs. Despite many examples, the scale appears to be small and in many towns and cities in the South there is no support for such workers. Their vulnerability is in no doubt. One small company owner who ran a furniture workshop in Cape Town explained to me in 2000 that he employed four workers at R400 a month. If he could not get the work, then they had to find casual employment elsewhere as he could not afford to pay them. This amount was similar to an old person's pension in South Africa during that period whilst wages for unskilled workers in the formal sector at that time began at about R600 a month.

Box 2: Worker protest

A few miles out in the desert is the Dubai that the tourists never see: the labour camps that house the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers who build these skyscrapers. Labourers, most from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, trapped into working here by crippling debts, sleep eight to a room and work long shifts for paltry wages and with no job security. They spend hours on bus trips to the sites each day, frequently go for months without pay, and are left penniless when contractors go bankrupt. For the first time, years of accumulated frustration and resentment have now boiled over into a series of strikes and demonstrations. They began in September 2005 when 700 workers blocked a major road, complaining about poor salaries and bad conditions. At least eight other strikes and demonstrations followed at building sites across the Emirate, culminating last week in a rare and violent protest at Burj Dubai. In one evening rampage, 2,500 workers downed tools and attacked security staff, broke into offices and smashed computers and files. They ran through the building complex damaging more than a dozen cars and construction equipment, and caused several hundred thousand pounds' worth of damage. The next day, workers at the site and other labourers working on the international airport went out briefly on strike.

Technically, the labour laws in Dubai offer some protection to the workers: a day's shift should be only eight hours with overtime limited to two hours and paid at a higher rate; there should be medical care, proper housing, 30 days' annual holiday and employees should not be made to work during the midday heat in summer. But much of the labour law favours employers, and there are only a few dozen inspectors to monitor up to 800,000 construction workers. Few companies keep within the rules and workers who complain fear losing their jobs. Trade unions and workers' associations are banned, and the country has still not signed important conventions of the International Labour Organisation.

Source: The Guardian (Wednesday, 29 March 2006)

There are two international groups, HomeNet and WIEGO, that support these groups and they have worked to provide a supportive international regulatory process within the ILO (Batiwala, 2002). However, such international processes are rarely relevant to the exploited worker within their locality.

Whilst this evidence suggests that unions may not specifically address the needs of many of the urban poor, they may be important in determining a culture in which responsible organisations focus on the needs of the poor. As significantly, they may be important in creating an acceptability of diverse sources of political power and political pressure, thereby

creating and maintaining space for permissible movement activity. Southern Africa probably provides the best current examples with the contribution of the Movement for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe providing a weak but present political opposition to Mugabe in Zimbabwe and COSATU campaigning for the needs of the urban unemployed in South Africa. In the case of COSATU, they have been promoting ideas of campaigning and mobilisation among the urban poor in a context in which the ANC remains a predominant political party despite its concentration on economic growth objectives (at the expense of a poverty orientated political agenda). However, this exposes a tension within unions themselves over their roles as campaigners for labour justice, and as organisations serving a more narrowly defined set of interests, those of their members. Isamah (1994) concludes from an analysis of Zambia that trade unions are more comfortably pursuing a narrower set of interests.

Small-scale traders and vendors. Traders and vendors use collective political activities particularly in respect of trading spaces, a frequent point of interface with political authorities. Market trading is often zoned within the city with associated license fees, and informal traders face harassment from the local authorities that control streets and markets. Vendors who sell outside designated areas may face fines, be forcibly evicted, have their goods confiscated and/or be jailed. In some cases such payments are associated with the corrupt practices of officials; and the discussion of self-help activities above has already touched on how vendors collaborate to manage this situation. Box 3 describes the activities of one such movement in Cebu City, the Philippines in their efforts to ensure livelihood security and reduce harassment. Other experiences such as those that took place in Jos (Nigeria) and Mexico City also highlight the importance of access to trading space and the denial of access being a catalyst for movement activities (Adetula, 2005; Cross, 1998: 46-7).

Box 3: Cebu: Organisation of Street Vendors

The informal sector is important to the poor in Cebu. One of the most important areas of activity is informal trading on the streets. During the early to mid 1980s, the situation of street vendors in Cebu was very difficult. The administration of Mayor Duterte was hostile to their activities and stalls were regularly demolished. In 1984, one of the existing vendors' associations proposed that the existing groups work together, particularly to provide a united front against demolitions. The Cebu City United Vendors Association was formed from 13 existing traders' groups. In the following years, the Association became experienced in resisting demolitions of trading shacks (often unsuccessfully), and its leadership began to recognise the need to strategise and negotiate rather than simply resist. By the time that Mayor Osmeña took up office in 1988, the Association had already several years of proactive negotiation behind them.

Mayor Osmeña began his term proposing the complete phasing out of street vending in the city. The vendors responded by strengthening their lobbying of the administration. They made some progress and, in the early 1990s, the city authorities established a vendors' management study committee. The committee concluded that activities should be legalised in some areas of the city and the authorities shifted to an agreed policy that demolitions would only be considered following complaints from other road users. As a result, during the 1990s, street vending became more acceptable. However, some demolitions continued. As a result of the continuing difficulties and trade association lobbying (supported by an NGO in recent years), the city authorities agreed, in 2000, to establish a technical working committee to recommend new practices.

Source: Etemadi (2000 and 2001)

There are specific groups of vulnerable workers whose livelihood results in their exclusion, and collective political activity may be grounded in this excluded identity. Thorp *et al.* (2005: 913) discuss the organisations of prostitutes in Calcutta, suggesting that they have managed to successfully make claims on the state. Another example that is frequently used is that of scavengers (Thorp *et al.* 2005: 916). However, it should be emphasized that high levels of organisation are unusual and most such workers continue to be isolated with relatively little support. What support does exist may be more linked to self-help (e.g. micro-insurance, solidarity) than political action. For example, Gammiya, the association representing the Zabaleen garbage collectors has been active in establishing a credit programme,

encouraging income-generating activities connected to recycling and assisting with the mechanisation of the collection process (Fahmi, 2005: 158). However, the organisation has struggled to present an effective opposition to the current privatisation and relocation plans that threaten the livelihoods and social networks of their members (Salah Fahmi, 2005: 165-7).

In respect of the inclusion of the poorest, it is important to recognise that traders may be highly differentiated within trades. In terms of waste recyclers, this is evident on the road from the National Government Centre in Quezon City to a major dumpsite at Payatas (Metro Manila). The first units are yards with space for lorries to deposit loads on their way to the dump. The goods are sorted in the yards. These yards get progressively smaller, with less space, and goods being sorted on the side of the road. A further group of recyclers work on the dumpsite itself. Finally the poorest of recyclers are children living in half-made shelters, with one or more sides open to all the elements, collecting a few things to secure their livelihood. As explained to me by one of the community leaders in Payatas who is working within the Homeless People's Federation of the Philippines, movement up through this hierarchy is constrained with local bosses controlling entry, even if the poorest workers had capital they would not be allowed to invest this in a recycling business. In Cebu City, vendors' associations are differentiated by size of enterprise; Etemadi (2001: 42 and 52-60) discusses how the more politically successful organisations represent the higher income traders.

Few traders' associations develop a more comprehensive political engagement to augment the purely defensive action of protecting trading space. Most traders' associations have little interface with the political system and instead support their members' strategies to advance through collective self-help to make the most of market opportunities. Those that have more complex political strategies, for example, the tanker associations in Ghana, have a membership that is drawn from high and middle-income residents, and use their position to negotiate for political favours. Their income bracket means that they are not relevant to our study. Even if the leadership of the traders' associations that work with lower-income groups is politicised, it may not result in a politicised movement if members are unconvinced about a political direction to organisational activities. One reason why it appears to be rare that market-based informal workers pursue movement strategies is because the causes of livelihood difficulties do not appear to be related to state policies and actions.

However, there are some who have managed to extend their political action, perhaps because they have moved beyond livelihood support. SEWA is one of the most notable examples and this is elaborated in Box 4.

Box 4: Sewa

Over the last 30 years, the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has organised poor self-employed women using the dual strategy of struggle and development, thus enabling them to enter the mainstream of the economy. A group of self-employed women first formed their own organisation in 1972 when SEWA was registered as a trade union in Gujarat, with the main objective of "strengthening its members' bargaining power to improve income, employment and access to social security." SEWA's main goals are to organise women workers for full employment and self-reliance.

SEWA sees itself not merely as a workers' organisation, but as a movement. It might be considered to have emerged from three movements - the labour, co-operative and women's movement. By 2003, SEWA had an all India membership of over 300,000 members.

Improved housing and infrastructure is a pressing need for SEWA Bank clients, enabling them to improve their working conditions and living environment. For most, these two are very closely connected with many self-employed women using their home as their workplace and those who work outside the home, such as vendors and rag-pickers, using their home to store, sort and process their products. Recently, SEWA has agreed to participate in the Parivartan Programme to upgrade slums in and around Ahmedabad through the joint participation of government entities, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and low-income residents themselves. The Programme provides a water supply to every house, an underground sewerage connection, toilets in the home and an

efficient storm water drainage system. Further benefits are street lighting, paved roads and pathways and basic landscaping, together with solid waste management. Costs are divided between the residents and the municipality (respectively Rs. 2000 (US \$ 42) and Rs. 8000 (US \$ 170) and SEWA helps low-income residents meet their share of the costs by providing loans.

Source: Biswas and Cities Alliance (2002)

The initial work of the movement helped to secure its members' incomes through market-based mechanisms, i.e. the provision of savings opportunities and access to credit. More recently the organisation has moved into an alliance with the local authority to address members' need for improved access to basic services. This demonstrates one weakness of poverty reduction programmes that depend purely on income growth. Although the provision of credit helps micro-enterprises grow, small-scale loans cannot assist in the acquisition of public goods. Although the strategic response differs, a similar experience led the community members within a micro-finance initiative in Payatas (Metro Manila) to change direction in 1996. Frustrated by the inability of their efforts to address land issues, the leaders rebuilt their organisation around savings-led community organisations and affiliated to Shack/Slum Dwellers International to develop a more politically orientated approach able to negotiate for land tenure and basic services.

b. Orientated to assets (land, housing, water – physical and natural capital)

The orientation of social movements to improving access to assets, most notably land, shelter and basic services, has long been recognised. Land and access to basic services such as water, sanitation and waste management are strongly linked with one another as such services require, for the most part, physical investments. In part this orientation reflects the shift to urban settlement and associated higher residential density, meaning that basic services (notably water, sanitation and solid waste management) become essential for good health. However, there are many more reasons for an orientation towards social movements in addition to the health consequences of being without basic services. Also important is a strong sense that land and basic services are a social and communal (i.e. state) responsibility, unlike private incomes. This lends itself to a sense of entitlement, and a belief that it is legitimate to make claims on the state for support in this area. Land and basic services are not simply required for health reasons and insecure tenure has catastrophic consequences for families. Eviction results in loss of life, location (and livelihood options), loss of property, often loss of social networks and the associated trauma. Finally, there may be a sense of identity and "belonging" that lies behind such claims and a belief that citizenship and legality are inter-related. Hence, the strength of social movements, in the area that is broadly referred to as shelter, arises due to the scale of need, the fact that such goods can only be secured collectively, associated expectations of state involvement in provision, and an understanding of the meaning of urban citizenship.

The scale of movement activity in this area warrants a further sub-division into four distinct types of collective and politically orientated action: defensive (anti-eviction) struggles, land and housing movements, campaigns for water (and other public goods), and campaigns for more individualised services (e.g. ration cards).

Anti-eviction struggles. There is a long history of anti-eviction struggles; however we should be cautious about drawing general conclusions from the large number of examples of which only some have been documented. In some cases, evictions are large scale (involving tens of thousands of residents) although many are small. Especially in the larger cases, protest may also be at a significant scale. However, there are also many evictions that take place with little protest and much fear.¹⁰

¹⁰ For example, recently in Abuja (Nigeria) demolitions and forced evictions have affected over 4 million inhabitants, out of a total of 7 million residents (<http://www.habitants.org/article/articleview/1577/1/439>; accessed 2006-03-21). Discussions with one of the local NGOs, the Women's Environment Programme, and some of the community leaders in

In some circumstances, communities are strong enough to resist eviction. In the Philippines, strong protest movements protected squatters in the National Government Centre during the final years of the Marcos regime. Racelis (2003: 9) describes the struggles that they went through and the ways in which Sama-Sama (the local people's organisation) sought to secure benefits for all families, not just their own members (see Box 5). In most cases, street protests and resistance combine with legal measures to challenge the eviction through the courts. In terms of inclusion, it should be recognised that anti-eviction movements may include all of those living on the site although frequently there is differentiation between owners (those with a primary claim to a plot) and tenants.

However, even successful defensive actions to prevent evictions do not necessarily lead to the successful acquisition of tenure. The history elaborated in Box 5 shows the problems faced by the organisations in the National Government Centre as they sought to advance their claims, even within a favourable political context. By 2001, there were 60,000 households occupying the site and Sama-Sama was opposing further settlement as it prevented the implementation of the People's Plan that had been developed offering secure tenure to existing families within the available land space. When the government showed little interest in responding, they "suspected that the police and city officials were in cahoots with land syndicates interested in controlling the terrain" Racelis (2003: 10). This illustrates the complex mix of interests that are drawn to land development opportunities, political, commercial and people's interests compete to have access to and control a scarce resource.

Box 5: Resisting eviction in the National Government Centre (Philippines)

The National Government Centre (NGC) is an area of some 300 hectares to the north east of Quezon City. Originally a farming area with government plans for a central administrative district for Congress, Ministries and other important governmental offices, the first urban families began to settle in the area during the 1950s and 60s. In the 1970s, the population rapidly expanded. A secular people's organisation, Sama-Sama, was initiated as a result of NGO organising with the initial support of Christian communities established through the church's teaching of liberation theology. During 1983, human barricades and negotiations prevented eviction attempts. From that date onwards, Sama-Sama became more confident about its ability to successfully tackle the problem of land.

In the election campaign of 1987, Corazon Aquino promised the residents the right to purchase their land if she became president. At that time an estimated 15,000 households were spread over the east and west sides of the Centre. It was proposed that all residents should move to the west side, enabling the government to develop administration buildings on the east. When Aquino was elected, a joint committee was formed with representatives of Sama-Sama and the government to work out the details of land allocation. During the intervening years, many other households found plots within the site and by 1997 there were an estimated 43,000 households on both the east and west sides. A further complication identified in 1988 was that the government found that it did not own all the land on the west side and had to purchase about half of the site from private owners.

Source: Mitlin and Samol (1997)

However, many squatter communities remain relatively unorganised and do not resist evictions or prepare for alternative tenure solutions. The argument of groups such as *Mahila Milan*, a women's movement of pavement dwellers that works alongside SPARC, an Indian NGO, is that families in this situation have to recognise their vulnerabilities and join together to prepare for such evictions. The leadership of this movement argues that purely defensive measures are bound to fail and that squatters need to be organised to plan for their future if they are to be successful in ensuring that collective action results in secure tenure. That is, anti-eviction struggles require a pro-active movement to secure land and housing. This may be particularly true of the lowest-income groups such as pavement dwellers who are living in the most precarious accommodation and who have no expectation of being allowed to remain in their present location. There are many who locate in land vulnerable to land slides,

areas in which they are working highlight the difficulties of resistance and the fear of state violence (*Pers. Comm.*, February 2006). In this case, communities fear to protest and just hope that they would not be next in line.

low-lying land, river banks and beneath power lines because they are unable to afford alternative, more secure, and in all probability still illegal, settlements. They are likely to be among the poorest and most vulnerable residents, and they are more likely to face eviction because the locations are unsuitable for long-term residency.

Land and housing struggles. While closely aligned in their sectoral interests to anti-eviction struggles, there are more co-ordinated and strategic attempts to campaign for better access to land and housing. These movements go beyond the defensive position of anti-eviction movements and develop proposals to secure improved access to land and/or housing. The emphasis on housing is particularly strong among social movements of Latin America, Asia and South Africa, and relates in part to the social and regulatory unacceptability of land development without housing. In this context, housing movements are not struggles of those who have land and want help with housing investment; rather they are struggles for secure tenure, for an alternative to exploitative rental arrangements and for an end to the fear of eviction. As such these movements may include very low-income families.

Once more there are numerous examples but no overall analysis that we can draw on to understand the involvement of and implications for the chronically poor.¹¹ Hence this discussion elaborates from a number of specific examples. These movements may have a greater self-selection component to membership, with individuals and groups choosing to align to them, rather than movements that work with existing residential communities. Membership is likely to be squatters and tenants; although the poorest and most vulnerable may hesitate to participate because of their vulnerabilities and lack of time/income. In Goiânia, the participants in a series of support land invasions were low-income tenants drawn both to FEGIP and to copycat initiatives that used similar strategies to secure land (see Box 6).

Box 6: From tenants to *posseiros*, Brazil

The city of Goiânia was established in 1933 and grew rapidly. Housing difficulties were compounded by a lack of public housing policies and illegal settlements spread throughout the urban area. In the absence of affordable accommodation, tenants' movements came to explore the potential within *posseiro* rights; a free right over all land which has not been subject to sub-division. These lands are without formal owners or title deeds and *posseiro* is the name given to those claiming a right of use over these untitled lands. In 1984, an existing Federation renamed itself the union of *posseiros*, three years later to become FEGIP (the Goiânia Federation for Tenants and *Posseiros*). Since its creation, FEGIP has fought to secure citizenship rights for *posseiros* (the name given to those occupying common land). Organised land invasions resulting in the slogan "today's tenant is tomorrow's *posseiro*". The Federation helps groups of tenants to invade land and secure basic infrastructure once they secure rights to the land that they have invaded.

The change in name in 1987 simply recognised realities as tenants began the strategic occupation of these lands. Hundreds of tenant families would come to FEGIP seeking alternatives to oppressive tenancies. By 1991, 12.3 percent of the population of Goiânia was living in these *posseiro* areas. By 1997, the city of Goiânia had officially registered 193 *posse* areas, 75 of which had been established by FEGIP in the previous 17 years. Most of the others had been occupied in spontaneous replications. Two hundred thousand people were living in these areas, one half of whom have been mobilised by FEGIP.

¹¹ What remains very difficult to assess is the scale and influence of less formally organised land invasions. In some countries and contexts they happen at scale, in others, very few are allowed. In Chile, for example, it is accepted that land invasions are now very rare because the state will rapidly respond to protect private property. Groups that are wise are careful to pick their moments and build their connections. A land invasion in Kanana, south of Johannesburg, took place a couple of days after the first democratic elections in 1994. The community rightly judged that the authorities would be hesitant to move against them. When the authorities did visit, it was to express concern about the lack of water and consequent environmental health issues. Officials returned two days later only to see that the community had paid privately to be connected to the mains water supplies. The authorities enabled a permanent settlement to remain.

The government's attitudes and actions towards FEGIP have sought to undermine the organisation. Nevertheless the organisation believes that it has successfully resisted the cooption efforts made by state and municipal governments.

Source: Barbosa *et al.* (1997)

The literature suggests that there are relatively few movements that have the successes secured in Goiânia. Many movements struggle to develop a successful strategy and sustain their campaign. The experiences of the National Coalition for Housing Rights and Chhinnamul from India are summarised in Box 7 and are illustrative of the challenges that housing movements face (Mageli, 2004). The campaign in Goiânia gained a momentum from its grassroots action, delivering essential assets to the poor. The National Coalition in India struggled to develop similar momentum at a local level. Whilst community groups engaged with the campaign, their strategies did not include achieving land security and in this context it became difficult to maintain grassroots involvement. This experience highlights the dual challenge involved in meeting immediate material needs to sustain a mass base alongside political strategies for redistribution.

In the Indian campaigns, and others such as the campaigns to include the right to housing in the Colombian constitution and to introduce a National Fund for Popular Housing in Brazil, a range of civil society organisations have been involved with political associations and non-government organisations seeking to support the cause of the urban poor. Movements that seek to mount a significant political campaign require movement organisations and movement support organisations to engage in the process in addition to the less formal activities of the movements themselves. What is also evident in the example from India is that there are significant limits to the potential achievements of professional groupings that act without a mass base and the associated electoral threat or promise.

Box 7: National Housing Rights Campaign, India

Unnayan is an Indian NGO that, during the 1980s, was involved in two related organisational initiatives to improve the housing situation of the urban poor. Chhinnamul was an attempt to involve Calcutta's squatter population directly as political activists (through demonstrations and street protests), initiating a process of empowerment at the grassroots. The National Campaign for Housing Rights (NCHR) was a nationwide campaign. This was the first time that the issue of the right to housing for poor people had been taken up on a nationwide scale. The campaigners attempted to engage in law-making themselves. Professional lawyers, among them some of the country's most reputed jurists, took an active role. The campaign extended beyond technical experts to involve local grassroots organisations, social and political action groups, squatter movements, and others concerned with justice for society's marginalised groups.

One of the NCHR's aims was to draft a people's law – the People's Bill of Housing Rights – and have it passed in Parliament as a constitutional amendment. The bill would enforce curbs and regulations on existing property relationships, securing housing as a fundamental right for all. As the campaign developed, the formalist legal focus meant that the main activists were not squatters but middle-class intellectuals. The campaign lasted for several years and was a bold attempt to secure, for everybody, the right to a place to live. If the campaigners had succeeded in having a people's law passed in Parliament, it would probably have had an effect on poor people's living conditions in most Indian cities. For the community dwellers, however, the NCHR turned out to be of little relevance.

Despite initial optimism, neither initiative achieved its goals. The political authorities took little notice of Chhinnamul's protests, political interests struggle for influence and community leaders hoped for salaries. The establishment of the movement had created expectations among residents for improvements and, when these were not forthcoming, squatter communities lost interest. Moreover some members were frustrated about the concentration of resources on the Coalition as its goals seemed only loosely linked into their need for better living conditions. In 1993, without having achieved its goals, the NCHR secretariat moved to Mumbai and away from Unnayan. Both Unnayan and Chhinnamul splintered over resource conflicts and strategic direction.

Source: Mageli (2004)

These two examples from India and Brazil highlight the diversity of strategies used by movements to secure land and housing. At one end of the continuum are legal strategies to enforce existing rights and enact new rights; at the other are mass invasions of potential sites in an attempt to force a favourable response from the state or private landowner. Whatever the strategy, the scale of the movement is critical and is a major influence on the nature of the political response. The more significant the movement, the harder it is for political interests to ignore the issue that concerns the movement; scale provokes or instigates some response.¹² The interaction between social movements and political structures, systems and groupings is more fully explored in the following Section.

Land movements may also be connected with political and commercial interests due to the scale of potential financial rewards involved. What is important to recognise is the links between land struggles, and both the political process of electoral success and the commercial process of capital accumulation. Politicians may assist in organising land invasions because they wish to be associated with land redistribution. This process may be subtle, with hints about land availability being made through political connections. In some cases, there may be personal benefits that are secured by political leaders in return for their support. In other land acquisition, the process is purely commercial. Landowners and developers know that they are unlikely to secure a re-zoning that will permit agriculture land to be designated for high-value residential use through normal challenges. Hence they organise an invasion in the expectation that this is likely to result in a more favourable response from the state agencies responsible. When Castells (1983: 191) analyses the growth of Lima through squatter invasions he explains how the creation of squatter settlements is associated with particular political periods in which the state was relatively supportive of this process for a multiplicity of reasons. However, as he elaborates, this does not necessarily mean that it is pro-poor:

...the land invasion must be understood to have been the result, in part, of policies that originated from various dominant sectors. Very often landowners and private developers have manipulated the squatters into forcing portions of the land onto the real estate market, by obtaining from the authorities some urban infrastructure for the squatters, thus enhancing the land value and opening the way for profitable housing construction. In the second stage, the squatters are expelled from the land they have occupied and forced to start all over again on the frontier of the city, which has expanded as a result of their efforts.

Similar processes are discussed by van der Linden (1997) in the context of Hyderabad and by Hasan (1990) more generally for Pakistan. Hasan (1990: 77) describes how by the 1960s land invasions of state land became organised by traders who had made an informal arrangement with the authorities to illegally sub-divide and sell state land. The traders formed a welfare society that residents joined; this society would then lobby for services. Politicians and civil servants were also allocated plots within the settlement, so that they supported the regularisation process. Particular land acquisition processes involve a constellation of interests generally working without any formal agreement but within a set of social processes. Movement-type activity is a powerful way in which the authorities can secure a positive response, although the extent to which these movements are autonomous and genuine expressions of the urban poor cannot be taken for granted. However, even when they are orchestrated by self-interested non-poor parties, community activists use both their past experience and the potent threat of movement activities to advance their cause.

¹² Exactly what is significant varies from place to place, and may also be related to the proximity of elections. A recent rally (April 2006) in Mumbai attracted 20,000 (primarily women) members of *Mahila Milan*, a women's network that works closely with NSDF. One ex-government Indian official assessed this to be significant especially as they were clearly not "rent a crowd" participants. However, politicians may respond by trying to co-opt the movement rather than by offering a substantive response to participant demands.

To this extent, even such activities may be thought to belong to broad category of collective politicised actions.

To what extents do land movements include the poorest? The dynamic is different from anti-eviction and neighbourhood improvements, when, to a significant extent, the poor have to opt out if they are not to participate (apart from those residents who are tenants) because the movement is based around an existing spatial area with an established population. In land and housing struggles that are orientated to potential land acquisition, members opt in, choosing to affiliate to something that is perceived to offer something of value. A general comment on experience is that the rich and the very poor tend to be less involved: the rich because they do not need it and the poorest because they often have more immediate priorities, such as securing food. However, the lack of tenure alternatives for the poor and poorest encourages participation. When they do participate, the practices, attitudes and affordability may make it hard to secure the equal involvement of the poor. Cabanas Díaz *et al.* (2000: 87) highlight the nature of the discriminatory processes that are replicated within grassroots organisations when they discuss the staggered invasion by 1,500 households of El Mezquital, in Guatemala City:

The sites that were occupied and the form of their occupation reflect different economic situations and levels of organisation. The poorest households ended up on the steep slopes of the ravines and in the areas around the sewage and wastewater outlets, whilst some of the central areas of El Mezquital show relatively high levels of development and physical infrastructure. La Esperanza is the most remote area with the most dangerous topographical conditions....When members of the community of El Mezquital refer to the sub-division of La Esperanza, they usually call it “that place down there” - a phrase which refers not only to the geographical position of the area but also to its economic and social remoteness.

One reason why equal inclusion in the benefits secured by land movements is difficult is that movements' struggle for access to land and basic services is generally orientated to provision either through the market or government programmes. In this respect, FEGIP is somewhat unusual. In the longer term, i.e. beyond the initial momentum of occupation, the ability of the poorest groups to remain involved reflects the constraints of market mechanisms and/or the rules associated with state programmes. If state subsidies are being claimed the group may exclude those not entitled to subsidies; in the South African housing subsidy programme this group includes those without dependents and immigrants (non-citizens). The Community Mortgage Programme in the Philippines is a government-funded programme to enable those at risk of eviction to obtain low-interest loans to purchase the land. It has been actively defended by people's organisations in the Philippines whenever the government has sought to reduce the scale of the Programme as it is seen as essential to assist those faced with eviction threats. However, Porio *et al.* (2004) conclude that the lowest income groups are not likely to avail of long-term mortgage loans for housing because of the high transaction costs involved and more importantly, they have more immediate basic needs like food, health, and education. In some cases, the substitution of beneficiaries and/or selling of rights has occurred “...because of inability to pay the amortisation due to loss of income because of sickness, death or unemployment” (*ibid.*: 73). Another government programme in Thailand found that communities facing eviction that responded by purchasing land on the periphery of Bangkok struggled to maintain livelihoods (Boonyabanha, 2004). Although the movements had pressured the programme to offer very low interest loans, the land development process was unaffordable. The programme and community networks that support it concluded that the poorest should first have access to income generation support except if they were about to be evicted and tenure security needs were paramount. More interestingly for this discussion, they also concluded that a better option is for collective pressure to be put on the authorities to allow communities to remain in their existing locations or find alternative state land close to the city centre. This greater reliance on state resources supports pro-poor access.

One land and housing movement that is unusual because of its interest in targeting the poorest is Shack or Slum Dwellers International (see Box 8). This network seeks to use the practice of daily saving to draw people together and provide a means to encourage the inclusion of all within the locality including the poorest. Many development processes that use saving create an exclusionary process as they introduce a minimum savings requirement; within SDI groups these attitudes are reversed. Daily saving forms the basis of the local organisations. The emphasis is that it does not matter how much is saved, even a cent will do. The aim is to bring the community together through a constant flow of information as well as to facilitate the savings process for even the poorest households. The South African Homeless People's Federation explain that in this way they "are not collecting savings, they are collecting people." Higher income families are less interested in participating in these activities, finding the regularity of contact unnecessary and preferring to save on a monthly basis.

Box 8: SDI

Shack or Slum Dwellers International (SDI) is a formalised movement of the urban poor. It seeks to build local movements at a neighbourhood level, primarily around land and basic services. The network has grown from the seven founding members in 1996 (South Africa, India, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Cambodia, Nepal and Thailand) to 15 core affiliates in 2006 (Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Ghana, Zambia, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Brazil) with a further ten countries interested in participating.

The movement has significant characteristics in a number of respects. It places considerable emphasis on the lowest level of organisation and on the inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable (notably women). The methodology of SDI encourages local communities to design solutions to address their needs, refining these solutions through practice. It also seeks, in general, to be non-confrontational in its relations with local authorities with the understanding that agreement needs to be reached.

A core set of beliefs about pro-poor social change influences all four of these characteristics:

- Movements need to build a strong local network to ensure that they address the needs of members and not those of leaders.
- Professionally designed solutions to poverty fail in part because they are poorly designed but more essentially because local elites block change if there is not a mass movement to push for the realisation of any policy change. Hence, successful solutions need to be rooted in the lives of the poor, and acknowledged by the poor.
- The poor cannot successfully take on the state in direct confrontation. They have to build alliances based on common interests.
- There is also an acknowledgement that the poorest require a separate organising space. This acknowledgement is also tempered by the understanding that the poorest need to be allied with the not so poor. In practice, local groups have to build up their strategic capacity through practical experience.
- The central role of professionals is to expand space for the poor rather than provide an intellectual leadership. Their class background prevents them from understanding the realities of the poor (although they may contribute useful perspectives in developing specific interventions) – as significantly their presence takes away the essential element of confidence with urban poor movements to pressure for change.

SDI affiliates have achieved significant success with secure tenure in South Africa, India, Namibia, Thailand and the Philippines. In all five cases, they have been able to draw on state subsidies to assist the urban poor to secure land. Their experience highlights the importance of strong local politicised organisations if community solutions are to be allowed to prevail and if communities are going to have the capacities they need to take up new challenges once they move to permanent sites and new homes.

Slum upgrading; access to water and other public services. A third group of social movements activities in the field of shelter works around the provision of services and sometimes security of tenure for residents to remain *in situ* i.e. the various upgrading and regularisation options for squatters and those living in areas that are informal sub-divisions of

non-residential land.¹³ The most significant difference between such movements and those related to those seeking land and housing is that the organising base in this case is around existing neighbourhoods and the incentives for inclusion are therefore greater. These activities are differentiated from anti-eviction struggles, as they are longer-term less-crises driven sets of activities. A further potential characteristic is that they may be more embedded in political systems as they most clearly constitute a potential “vote banks”.

Activities may focus on a wide range of goods and services. Priority improvements often include water, sanitation and flood prevention. Health and education provision is also important. In many cases self-help activities play a role as well as negotiations with the state. Communities find themselves without even the most basic facilities and use a multitude of strategies to address these neighbourhood deficiencies. Barrig (1991: 66) describes the situation in Lima (Peru) thus:

The squatters, organised in self-help groups, build their own housing with extremely few resources, investing money and manual labour in developing road networks, constructing medical facilities and linking up with the city’s water and electrical systems. Such activities are significant in size, as more than 30 per cent of the population of Metropolitan Lima lives in shantytowns, which have followed this pattern of development.

Whilst individual community organisations working at the neighbourhood level may be astute and pro-active in dealing with the political system that rations access to basic services, most groups use a mixture of explicit pressure and the personalised networks and reward systems of clientelism to advance their interests. Significant movement activities seem to be dependent on links between groups working within a city or, in the case of larger cities, within a distinct settlement or area. In general, links between these neighbourhood-based groups appear to be relatively rare although in the larger settlements informal links between local associations within the settlement may be more common. In some cities such as Fortaleza (Brazil) there are three federations as well as independent groups active in low-income settlements in the late 1990s, in each case linked to a different political party and/or groups within the Catholic Church with its emphasis on liberation theology (Cabannes, 1997: 32). However, unless otherwise supported (for example by NGOs or political parties) it seems unusual for neighbourhood groups to get together and collaborate. Both types of support agencies have particular characteristics associated with their work; NGOs may have a partial sector-based approach (e.g. water, children) and political parties clearly have distinct affiliations. In some contexts, religious institutions may also facilitate linking and networking.

Movements may also be defensive, seeking to protect residents from adverse actions by more powerful groups, generally the state. Measures associated with the privatisation of services such as water (particularly price increases) have provoked social movement activity in some contexts (e.g. Cochabamba, Bolivia) but in many cases this has not been the case (e.g. Nespruit, South Africa). In another example, Tabata residents in Dar es Salaam came together to pressure the authorities into moving a garbage site that threatens their wellbeing and Box 9 highlights the different perspectives of residents on the success of this movement.

As highlighted by the example of Tabata, the interests of residents may differ and the unbalanced participation of local residents is reinforced by other studies of particular local initiatives. Phillips (2002: 127) draws on results of DFID’s work in India to suggest that the

¹³ An important question to consider is the extent to which these are different types of movements or different types of movement activities. I argue here that these movements are different, based on my own experiences of such processes. They attract different individuals and groups within the urban poor, they attract the affiliations of different kinds of external organisations, and they need to develop different kinds of skills and capacities. However, movement organisations that are sustained by external assistance may include these different kinds of movement activities within overlapping social processes. In particular, those movements that are successful in securing land need to develop into movements that can manage upgrading processes.

poorest households are the least likely to take part in neighbourhood groups. This conclusion is that of Hanchett, Akhter and Khan (2003: 48) in their evaluation of WaterAid's urban work in Bangladesh (see section 3.2). In particular, tenants may not benefit from improvements if the cost of increased services means that rents rise and they are forced to leave the settlement. The interest of tenants and those with a claim to land may differ considerably. Generally speaking, tenants perceive themselves to be different and are treated differently. The exceptions are notable because they are rare. SDI's Kenyan affiliate, the Pamoja Trust, worked with local savings schemes in one Nairobi settlement to regularise the settlement when the government agreed to secure tenure. A community enumeration had identified 2,309 households with a total population of 6,569 people; with 1,105 tenants and 1,002 structure owners (i.e. owners of the house but not legal owners of the land) (Weru, 2004). The residents of Huruma were unanimous in seeing security of their homes and land as their biggest need. Hence, agreement was reached about how the land should be divided, in a way that both included all, but offered sufficient recognition of the previous claims of the structure owners.

Box 9: Tabata (Dar es Salaam)

Tabata is a mixed income settlement first regularised in the mid 1970s. In the late 1970s the garbage dump for Dar es Salaam was placed close to the settlement and citizen groups organised to pressure the authorities to move the dump. After a court case organised by a formalised residents' association, the Tabata Development Fund, the dump was moved to the periphery of the city. One group within the community were waste recyclers; they tried to stop the removal of the dump and clashed with richer residents. When the conflict turned to physical violence, some were sent to jail. Some of the recyclers moved to the new location and continued collecting garbage; others found alternative livelihoods.

The community continued to organise activities within the settlement including water and road improvements, community contributions to security and school equipment and most recently a community building. The movement has consolidated into an association that is considered by many residents to be dominated by local business interests who benefit personally from the activities that they organise. Elections have not been held despite the stipulations in the constitution and many of the more vulnerable groups do not appear to participate, meanwhile many of the activities take place in a limited area of the settlement.

Source: Ngware (2006: 306 and author's discussions with community leaders in 1995)

Other consumption struggles. Another set of social movement activity is related to other services that are provided by the state but which offer individualised benefits, including transfer payments. Generally speaking there appears to be very few social movement organisations working in this area. This may be because it is difficult to bring together and organise the poor to follow activities to secure such benefits, or because such payments are rare in some Southern countries. As is the case for self-help trading activities that have switched to a more political orientation, the exceptions are notable for being exceptions. Organised social movements do appear to be able to address such needs and secure these benefits. Hence, for example, the *Mahila Milan* (a network of women's collectives working alongside the National Slum Dwellers Federation in India) has assisted members to secure ration cards from the authorities in Mumbai, building the confidence of their members to go to the appropriate government offices and work out what needs to be done. The Homeless People's Federation in the Philippines has recently started working with the families of migrant workers with employment outside the Philippines to ensure they also benefit from existing government services. But in both these cases this work is an extension of existing activities rather than being the sole reason for organisation. Barrig (1991: 66) when discussing the development of the communal kitchens and Glass of Milk campaign in Peru also locates this movement within earlier activities of neighbourhood groups (Box 10). This movement sought to respond to acute economic difficulties that were being faced by large numbers of Peruvians. Perhaps equally importantly, the movement became embedded within broader political struggles about redistribution and inclusion (Houtzager with Pattenden, 2003: 103-5).

These sustained campaigns by social movement organisations are also joined by sporadic outbursts of activities around the removal of benefits, such as food riots responding to subsidy reductions. Isamah (1994) discusses the street riots that took place in Lusaka as a result of structural adjustment measures.

Box 10: Glass of milk (Peru)

In 1989, there were 3,000 *comedores* (communal kitchens) in Lima with a further 100,000 women organised into “glass of milk committees” distributing a glass of milk each day to children in low-income districts of the city. Just two years later, in 1991, the numbers had increased to 5,112 *comedores* providing subsidised meals, with 200,000 women participants.

The *comedores* movement had links with two dominant parties and with a range of other (more professionalised and middle-class) institutions including NGOs, the church and women’s movements. The role of the church was particularly important in assisting to establish the first communal kitchens. As the movement grew, organisational and advisory roles were taken on by the state or local NGOs.

Source: Houtzager with Pattenden (2003); Barrig (1991)

Due to the relatively scarce nature of examples, it is difficult to conclude anything about the inclusion of the poorest and their significance in the particular places where they occur. Given that most such activities are concerned with securing individualised government benefits, the prior existence of such benefits appears to be critical to movement activity. If such programmes do not exist, there does not seem to be a momentum to establish them, rather the movement activities are seeking some level of inclusion, or maintenance of benefits. Given the rule bound nature of such programmes, in most cases movements are concerned with establishing eligibility according to the rules. Relatively little work appears to be done on reforming the rules themselves. Such programmes tend to have embedded within them ideas on the deserving and undeserving poor; for example, illegal migrants from the Philippines are not entitled to the benefits mentioned above and they are among the most vulnerable. In the case of the communal kitchens in Lima, what appears to be relatively unusual is the high degree of local decision making with the women who ran the kitchen being responsible for their management.

In respect of the *comedores*, Barrig (1991) highlights the gender dimensions of the communal kitchens, something that has been given little attention in the discussion so far despite the particular problems faced by some women and the gendered incidence of chronic poverty. One observation is that women are often more comfortable with the ongoing negotiations involved in access to basic services than the more confrontational and potentially violent anti-eviction struggles, or with food riots. And it is notable that both the other two examples above (India and the Philippines) have emerged from women’s led movements. Barrig (1991: 69) highlights that the growth of communal kitchens was driven by a survival need at a time of economic crisis and falling real incomes. However, the kitchens also provided women with their own roles and functions outside of the traditional community organisations and in an organising space that was their own. “Having greater access to food through collectivising its consumption is an option quickly seized upon by poor urban women. Nonetheless, starting from the resolution of a material need, the women have found that the organisation provided them with a space for communal integration, which was more expressive and symbolic than political. This explains their reluctance to join communal councils and to establish closer relationships with and within local governments” (Barrig, 1991: 69). The problems of the communal councils were their male leadership and their lack of interest in women’s priorities. As a consequence, the two organisations have operated independently. The experiences within SDI also suggest that women often value their own organising space. SDI affiliates are increasingly interested in developing a dual organisational structure with local organisations based around savings which attract primarily a women’s membership (generally 90 per cent of members are women in both Africa and Asia) and then a looser coalition drawing in a much wider range of different kinds of

grassroots organisations including those dominated by men. The objective is to build a powerful coalition but retain a strong grassroots activist base able to involve poor and sometimes vulnerable groups among the poor in decision making and strategising.

c. Orientated to participation and inclusion (political capital), often on the basis of identity

Our third category is the group of social movements concerned with issues directly related to changes in political systems and structures. These movements seek a changed political system that is more inclusive. The movements discussed above have their collectivism rooted in their struggles in livelihoods or in denial of assets; these movements have their collectivism rooted in a shared identity of exclusion.¹⁴ As such, they may not directly seek to influence the assets that can be secured by the poor but rather see this as a consequence of securing systemic political change. Secondary goals (and sometimes the major motivation for individual membership) may be the potential resources (incomes and/or services) that may result from such inclusion. There are at least three distinct types of groups that organise collectively to secure such inclusion: those with an ethnic or racial identity, those with a particular social identity (for example, women or the old) and those with particular political affiliations (which may be linked to the other types). This is not intended to be an exclusive list but the proposal is most social movements with an explicit agenda for systemic political inclusion fall into one of these three types. In an urban context, there does not appear to be an extensive literature on such social movements, unlike the discussions of indigenous movements based in rural areas. Hence our discussions are less systematic and somewhat more indicative than in the earlier sections.

Social identities: With respect to gender, as already noted above, women appear to be more strongly involved in movements related to access to water and other basic services together with support for upgrading. The difficulties that women often face in public activities, and the multiple demands on their time means that many of their activities are focussed on the micro-level, perhaps in the context of self-help approaches in the previous sub-section, and are not presented as an explicit generalised political demand. Such an orientation is also related to women's gender roles in many societies, with an emphasis on a private caring role rather than a public role. Whilst there is evidence of spontaneous protest around issues such as male violence and alcohol abuse, it does not appear to be sustained, nor does it develop its political dimensions. Despite this, it does appear to happen with regularity as illustrated in Box 11, as reinforced by a recent discussion with women-led community groups in Bhubaneswar, Orissa who illustrated similar experiences at a settlement level.

In the case of exclusion due to old age and disability, there is organisational activity but it is rarely sustained, being primarily focussed on particular incidents and events.

Ethnic identities: In some towns and cities ethnicity is an organising principle for demands related to political inclusion. Due to the overlap between ethnicity and residency in particular locations, this theme arises in anti-eviction struggles; it is also important in terms of political groups in countries in which different ethnic groups have different political parties. In larger scale service demands and work on land rights at a city level, ethnic issues are rarely pronounced, perhaps, due to the heterogeneity of the urban poor.

Ethnic and racial groups may be those affected by the urbanisation process as urban centres develop in previously rural areas and/or new migrants are drawn to the city. In the case of

¹⁴ At one level, this is a subtle difference, in part because movements that have been denied or been disposed of assets strengthen their activities by developing a sense of shared identity. However, whilst nuanced with overlapping characteristics, there is a distinction between movements that campaign for political inclusion and those that are concerned with securing assets and/or protection from a political process.

particular social identities the urban context may be important both in creating or influencing such identities and in providing a milieu in which adverse systems and structures can be challenged (in contrast, perhaps, to more conventional rural societies). Ethnic identities may merge with partisan politics as described below. Adetula (2005: 206-234) offers a detailed analysis of the situation in Jos (Nigeria) in respect of relations between ethnic movements and pro-poor social change. As he illustrates, and as is summarised in Box 12, the movements draw their membership from a range of income groups and their processes including political involvement are not necessarily pro-poor; “Usually these are local populations of people who belong to different social classes, but are bound together by common cultural, ethnic or language identity, which they emphasize and exaggerate” (*ibid.*: 207-8). Indeed, this example highlights the extent to which emerging priorities within such groups may reflect the needs of elites (or at least the better off) within the ethnic group.

Box 11: Anti-alcohol movements (India)

The women’s movement gave rise to the anti-alcohol agitation in various parts of the country in the seventies and eighties. Various women’s groups in Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Tehri Garhwal and Pithoragarh had waged a war against the liquor trade and alcohol abuse. The magazine *Baini* (younger sister) covers information on the anti-liquor agitation and confiscation of alcohol along with other development-oriented information. The anti-arrack movement in Andhra Pradesh grew out of the inspiration gained by women in adult literacy classes. In 1992, women of Dubagunta village in Nellore, one of the poor drought prone districts of Southern Andhra Pradesh, organised and agitated to force the closure of the arrack (liquor) shop in the village. Newspapers published this story, and women all over the state marched to arrack shops and sought to stop the auction of contracts to sell arrack. The press, in particular, *Eenadu*, the largest circulating Telugu daily, covered the anti-arrack movement that was spearheaded by the women for a year. In 1993, the state imposed a prohibition on arrack only to withdraw the prohibition the following year to secure additional revenue generated by taxes on liquor sales. The experience, however, gave the women’s groups in Andhra Pradesh new confidence and power to check the alcohol abuse by men in their families, and to prevent domestic violence by alcoholic husbands.

Women’s activities and women’s groups in several parts of the country continue to crusade against alcoholism and often bring pressure to close the liquor trade in their communities and villages. These successes are projected in the mass media. Women power through collective efforts has also been effective in protesting against “anti-women” policies of the government. For instance, women’s groups in Karnataka were able to achieve the closure of several online lottery shops such as “Playwin” outlets that have become gambling dens for many men who squandered away hard-earned family income.

Source: Women’s Movement and Media in India: Reshaping Notions of Power by Kiran Prasad.
<http://www.isiswomen.org/pub/wia/wia3-04/kiran.htm> (accessed: Tuesday, 21 March 2006)

Box 12: Jos (Nigeria)

Ethnic groups are common in urban Nigeria and may have become an increasing influence over political behaviour. Across Africa, ethnic groups unite individuals on the basis of an ascribed identity (e.g. ethnicity, kinship, culture) rather than professional or political interests. In an urban context, such associations offer practical assistance, helping migrants to find a place to stay, and perhaps helping to strengthen economic prosperity. The concentration of specific ethnic groups with particular trades has resulted in ethnic based trading networks; for example plastics (Yoruba), automobile spare parts (Igbo), petroleum products (Hausa). Women’s groups have been formed by many ethnic groups and provide savings and credit services. Such groups have a minimum monthly contribution to access a fund to help with the crisis of urban life (school fees, hospital bills) and credit for business investment. Welfare activities can help people who are sick and assist with the costs of burial. In some cases educational institutions have also been established. Ethnic groups also serve as agents of political mobilisation, acting as intermediaries between the citizen and state and seeking to advance their own group within the political class and administration. A number of ethnic groups mobilise in Jos including those who perceive themselves to be the original landowners, the Berom, Afizeri and Anuguta, and those who are newcomers such as the Hausa Fulani.

Despite deficiencies in public services and housing, there is no evidence that ethnic and cultural associations are putting pressure on the administration to improve the situation. Rather there is an active struggle for power and resources among political constituencies, and ethnic and cultural

associations are the main players. At different times the struggles have focused on access to land, creation and control of local government administration, and political appointments. The associations have largely sought accommodation within the structures of the state to advance narrow group interests. In recent years, ethnic patronage has appeared to be on the increase.

Source: Adetula (2005)

A similar perspective emerges from Mombasa (Rakodi *et al.*, 2000). In Mombasa, the largest single tribal group has about 30 per cent of the population, suggesting significant diversity. The authors suggest that both the national and local political systems use tribal loyalties and affiliations and that this has resulted in the poor perceiving tribal identities as an explanatory factor for their poverty. Despite this, “for the most part, residents originating from different parts of Kenya live in harmony and ill-feeling surfaces only occasionally” (*ibid.*: 158). Tribal identities, rather than being the basis for urban poor movements, become a way in which the elite seek to consolidate their business interests, and at times the poor are used to further such ambitions.

Political identities: There are many examples of politicised social movements that combine formal political action with informal protest and movement activities. Such movements emerge as being particularly strong during times of dictatorship and authoritarian government— in part because of the lack of alternative avenues encourages movement rather than party based activities. In these circumstances, as noted above, they may be illegal. The violent nature of such campaigns as well as their political challenge renders them illegitimate to the national state and this increases the likelihood of them being seen as contentious outside the country. Some of these movements begin with an ethnic dimension and then move beyond this.

Probably one of the most extensive and best-known urban social movements with activities encompassing political engagement, non-violent protests such as non-payment of rates, and violent street riots is the anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa. This was a political challenge to an exclusionary state that had created and maintained exclusion and poverty on racial grounds. There were multiple dimensions to the exclusionary processes, but one clear issue was the control of physical movement through the pass laws. In this context, access to urban space became itself directly linked to protest. In other cases, the struggle may reflect urban transition, such as in Karachi, Pakistan. For the last ten years, Karachi has been experiencing intense political conflict, sometimes escalating into urban warfare as MQM activists have sought to extend their political activities through violence and the state has resisted (Box 13). The conflict is the result of long-standing tensions between Mohajirs (migrants who came from India at the time of partition) and the ethnic (predominantly rural) Sindhi population. Frustrated by political outcomes, the migrants seek to challenge the feudal powers that control provincial politics. Indeed what is notable about both these examples is that they have an ethnic dimension, although these movements are more than ethnic movements.

Political movements also contest for power through the democratic process. Clearly having some chance of gaining political power through legitimate means is a critical component of such a strategy. At a local level, if city government is to be meaningful in terms of political choices, it requires the significant decentralisation of responsibilities; and a willingness amongst higher levels of government to tolerate a political opposition. The tactic of higher levels of government intervening when opposition political groupings win control of significant cities (particularly capital cities) is relatively well known (e.g. Nairobi City Council in Kenya, Harare in Zimbabwe).

The ability of such political movements to address the needs of the poorest appears weak; although clearly this debate goes to the heart of development policy and democratisation processes. There are a number of considerations behind such an assertion. First, the very issue of attaining political power implies some level of majority rule either nationally or through a decentralised political system. Whilst this might address the needs of large

numbers of the poor, it is unlikely to address the specific needs of the poorest who are likely to be in a minority. Whilst minority elites manage to influence political processes, it is much less likely that powerless minorities will have the same success. Second, the movement (if successful) may result in political inclusion but even where the poor are a majority it is not evident that there is a political commitment among elites to support redistribution. The situation in South Africa is illustrative of the dilemmas faced by governments who are encouraged to adopt a current capitalist model of development in which demands of economic growth are placed above the immediate needs of the poor (Peet 2002). Despite the new democratic government, the percentage of the population below the poverty income line did not change between 1996 and 2001. During the same period, South Africa's Gini coefficient rose from 0.69 in 1996 to 0.77 in 2001 (Human Sciences Research Council, 2004).

Box 13: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (Karachi, Pakistan)

The Muttahidda [Mothaidda] Quami Movement (MQM), formerly known as the Mohajir Quami Movement, is a political group, representing the Urdu-speaking immigrant urban Mohajir population who migrated from India at the time the creation of Pakistan in 1947. The Movement came into being on March 18, 1984 as the "All Pakistan Mohajir Students Organisation" (APMSO) and became politically activate in 1986. The Head Office of MQM is in Karachi reflecting the large numbers of Mohajir in the city. The dominance of the landed oligarchy in the Sindh over the rural population continued to be a main cause of inequality. MQM wants to rid the country of what it perceives to be a medieval feudal system. Pakistan's Mohajir migrants remain marginalised. Karachi, the only industrialised port city in Pakistan, has grown rapidly, and public services have broken down causing considerable frustration among local residents. The native Sindhi population is now in a minority although its members still hold key positions in the provincial bureaucracy through a quota system, whilst migrant groups are under-represented. Sindhi nationalists are vehemently opposed to those Mohajirs who came after the first wave of migration following Partition. The Sindhis feel that the Mohajirs who came after this should be deprived of their citizenship.

In response to chronic unrest in Sindh Province, in June 1992 the army was called in to assist police in restoring law and order. In November 1994, the army was withdrawn from law enforcement duties in Sindh, but the paramilitary Rangers were reinforced and specially trained police inducted. In 1995 and 1996, Rangers and police, including dozens of MQM members, killed hundreds of people. Sectarian violence, including bombings, experienced an upsurge in 1996 throughout Sindh, Punjab, and in the North-West Frontier Provinces, resulting in about 175 deaths. Although by the end of the year the government quelled much of the violence in Karachi, it has not produced a political settlement that would provide a lasting peace. Tensions in Karachi experienced a disturbing resurgence in 1998. Over 3,600 people killed as a result of political violence in Karachi over between 1996 and 1998.

Source: <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/mqm.htm> (accessed Tuesday, 21 March 2006); Esser (2004: 35)

Box 14: Huaycán (Lima, Peru)

The Huaycán self-managing urban community is located at the 16.5 kilometre point on the Central Highway in one of the districts of Lima. Like many other low-income settlement, Huaycán is the result of the desperate need for land and accommodation by the poor. A group of families came together, formed an association (the Andrés Avelino Cáceres Association) and invaded vacant land in Huaycán. At the grassroots level, the most important aspect for the execution of the land invasion early in 1983 was the work organised by the United Left (a coalition of political parties) militants. Once it was clear that land would be allocated by the state, two other political parties, the Mariateguista United Party and the Red Fatherland, also sought to register their own members for 15,000 residential plots. Both these parties were members of the United Left, although they operated along the lines of traditional political patronage. In part, the parties' objectives were to block possible political control of the Andrés Avelino Cáceres Association by the independent socialists or those who were supporting Alfonso Barrantes, then Mayor of Lima and at the head of the United Left coalition. Another party, the Acción Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) (who in 1985 won the national elections and formed the government under President Alan Garcia) sought to infiltrate these party organisations and seek control of the Association. Meanwhile Shining Path were also seeking to infiltrate existing organisations, whilst at the same time registering their own organisation.

Source: Arévalo (1997)

A further reason why strong political movements may not be effective in advancing the interests of the poorest is that such political orientations rapidly become party political and appear to run the risk of dividing and hence weakening the urban poor (see Box 14 on the land invasion in Huaycán, Lima. The ability of the poor to press their case is reduced if there are divisions within previously powerful movements. Box 14 is an extreme case of a common phenomenon in which parties seek to control local processes both for political domination and because of access to land. It is for reasons such as this that the National Federation of Slum Dwellers has sought to avoid any specific political affiliation offering to work with whoever is in power to further the interests of the poor (Box 1). This theme is returned to below in the discussion of relations between movements of the poor and the state.

3.6 Conclusion to Section Three

The poverty reduction strategies of the urban poor can be orientated to any one of a number of their critical needs. Many families and individuals follow multiple strategies, many of which are collective and some of which are political. This section has identified a number of distinct orientations for such activities. The final sub-section has focussed specifically on strategies that fall within our broad definition of movements, i.e. those undertaking political collective strategies, and Table 1 below summarises some of the significant factors to have emerged from the analysis in this sub-section. These factors are the extent to which such organising is supportive of social movement activity (i.e. politicised, collective, mass movement), the potential for such collective activities to include the poor and the potential for them to act in the interests of the poor.

The emphasis on land, housing and services that emerges from this overview resonates strongly with Escobar's (2004: 221) interest in place-based movements. The failures of modernity (using his language) are acute in low-income urban settlements. The "modern" urban development model of infrastructure and services together with adequate residential land is a long way away from many people's realities. Out of this evident failure, self-help alternatives have developed that offer some security of tenure (as much as possible) and which deliver the basic services critical for livelihoods and reasonable health. However, there are evident limits to what individuals and individual neighbourhoods can do for themselves. The prerequisites for an adequate urbanisation drive an organising process that is both collective and political. Despite this, only some such organisations transform into broader movements. Indeed why more movements do not happen is perhaps a more relevant question than why movements do occur.

In respect of inclusive participation, not all neighbourhood groups have the same imperative. The poorest may hesitate to be active in anti-eviction struggles, having chosen to locate on the most precarious land, which is least likely to be regularised. Whilst some may join in with larger scale land and housing movements, others may lack the resources including time away from the search for basic survival. The ability of these groups to secure solutions that are inclusive i.e. that the poorest can afford, varies considerably. Many outcomes involve at least the partial payment of service charges, which may limit those that can afford to participate. In addition there is a group that all such neighbourhood based groups find hard to reach – those who are no longer resident in a definable neighbourhood, possibly but not always the street homeless, who seek to find a very minimally services space somewhere in the city. It might be those characterised by Harriss-White (2005: 883) as the destitute i.e. those who cannot find a living within the market, and those for whom local social support institutions have collapsed or being withdrawn. Or it might be those who have only a minimal income to secure basic needs i.e. those who "hot-bed", renting space to sleep for a few hours each day.

Table 1: Summary of movements by catalyst/cause of movement

Forms/locations of exploitation, dispossession/denial, exclusion	Supportive to SM and SMO (i.e. collective and political)	Inclusion of poorest	Act in the interests of poorest
Labour markets	Yes, in terms of collective action through unions. Focus is the employer not the state.	Not really. Poorest not that likely to be formally employed. Informal workers not sufficiently protected to be able to organise.	Unlikely, because the poorest are generally not included. Unions may make alliances and/or have a larger political agenda (e.g. macro-economic policies, minimum wages) but not that many examples.
Street traders – markets in goods and services, denial of access to trading space	Weak but some seek political support for informal trading. Primarily defensive. Strongly related to urban management and zoning. Rarely large scale.	Differentiation of movements in terms of the profitability of trading; not many examples of solidarity between trading groups. Poorest are the weakest.	There is potential – but seems to be rare. Many of the poorest do not trade in the more profitable places so even if access to central city land is secured the poorest may not benefit.
Micro/small entrepreneurial activities, home workers	Weak political orientation	Differentiation of movements. Many of these self-help groups are organised through micro-finance initiatives and do not include the very poor.	Potential. But market orientation may result in exclusion. Rules such as minimum contributions are not in the interests of the poor.
Groups facing eviction - Neighbourhoods	Yes. Generally strong political orientation. Defensive action in these cases.	Generally some in neighbourhood – incentive to include if squatters. May be tenants and hence not involved directly in anti-eviction struggles.	Depends on ownership structure. Success may exclude in time if formalisation of tenure results in withdrawal of the poorest. Poorest likely to locate on most precarious sites – least likely to win the struggle.
Groups without secure tenure - neighbourhood	Yes. Generally strong political orientation. Collective imperative.	May include but poorest may not see as relevant, or may hesitate to engage with political process. Once more poorest may be tenants and therefore not able to benefit.	Depends on outcomes. Options may require some finance, in terms of payments for land, and hence poorest may struggle to be included.
Groups without basic services-	Yes. Generally strong political orientation.	Generally includes all in the neighbourhood.	Access may depend on the solutions that are

neighbourhood.	May be little linking of neighbourhoods across the city.	Tenants may not benefit.	secured which are likely to be dependent on the market.
Exclusion on grounds of race/ethnicity	Yes. Strong political orientation	All included on "group" basis	Tendency for class interests to dominate
Exclusion on grounds of gender	Maybe but may resist strong political identity for gender roles	May be interested in drawing in the poorest. However, seem to be most successful in being inclusive if they are orientated to basic services.	Tendency for class interests to dominate
Exclusion on grounds of being very poor or poor/class	Requires some kind of class identity. This in turn seems related to economic structure, spatial development options, and political structures.	Differentiation within the poor may be significant.	May be vulnerable to majority interests.

What is apparent is that the broader political structures within which movement activity takes place are a very significant influence on the likelihood of movement success (see Section Four). This is particularly obvious at the level of land policies, state investment in basic services, and state attitudes to, and capacities in, shelter investment. The costs that communities have to pay to secure access to these assets will be a determining factor for the poorest groups seeking inclusion. State policies, programmes and attitudes are also important in terms of the opportunities for street traders (often one of the livelihood activities of the poorest urban dwellers), and state policies towards micro-entrepreneurs more generally are important in determining if these activities are encouraged or repressed. State rules and the enforcement of these rules determine the context in which organising opportunities and constraints occur within workplaces. Perhaps even more significantly, the informally accepted rules and customs that dominate clientelist-based exchange appear to intervene to reduce explicit political claims and the emergence of more equitable relations between movements, their members and political powers within the state. What is suggested here is that political structures and systems and related relationships between political power and the populace, particularly in the form of clientelism play a major role in deterring movement type activities and controlling social movement organisations. The significance of the political sphere, beyond specific government institutions, also emerges from the review of identity-based movements. Political exclusion, particularly exclusion on the grounds of ethnicity, may be used by one or more powerful political groupings and provoke a political response. Ethnicity may be used to advance specific political claims and/or to destabilise situations enabling one particular political grouping to benefit whilst others are denied.

In this context, social movement organisations (democratic structures that bring together grassroots organisations in a stable and persistent interaction) play an important role in offering an institutional structure in which learning and re-strategising can take place. Earlier discussions (Mitlin, 2004a; Bebbington, 2000) have elaborated the significance of federating in moving forward the political objectives of grassroots organisations. Federations enable these local organisations to increase the depth and scope of their lobbying activities, and help to ensure a positive response from government agencies and, more generally, political processes. By creating a permanent institutional framework, grassroots organisations can share ideas about what works and what does not work, they can see more clearly the different strategies being following by different political representatives and their parties, and can make choices accordingly. As significantly, they can build their confidence as they share their experiences and gain solidarity from peer to peer exchanges. As shown by the

experiences in Goiânia, persistent collaboration between local settlement associations can identify strategies that secure significant redistribution with very few resources. Appadurai (2001: 32) articulates the significance of federating in a study of grassroots organisations and support NGO in Mumbai thus:

[it] is a constant reminder that groups (even at the level of families) that have a claim to political agency on their own have chosen to combine their political and material power. The primacy of the principle of federation also serves to remind all members, particularly the trained professionals, that the power of the Alliance lies not in its donors, its technical expertise or its administration, but rather in the will to federate among poor families and communities.

The movements discussed here may be place-based both at a micro level, in that people realise their shelter within neighbourhoods; and at a meso-level as the poor have an essential struggle for political inclusion (citizenship) at the level of the city. However, whilst these struggles may be place based they are not necessarily trans-national (unlike Escobar's groups) – and they may not have a significant national presence. As acknowledged by Castells (1983) and Sassen (2004: 650) – much action happens at the level of the city. For most social movements this is the primary sphere of action because of the significance of local authorities in influencing the conditions under which informal enterprise activity takes place and the rules and regulations, governance, access to land and basic services. In some countries, the provincial level (such as India, South Africa and Brazil) is also important. It appears that the greater the potential for national state subsidy finance, the more significant are the higher levels of government for movements. Subsidy funds that offer significant scale are almost always financed by national governments. Moving to another level, the rules and regulations within the international sphere do not appear to be so significant for urban citizens. There are few parallels as acute as the small farmers demonstrating against WTO tariff barriers. There are significant issues such as the pressure on the privatisation of basic services but these are not major issues for such social movements at the international level although they are taken up by Northern NGOs. Hence, despite Sassen's argument, there is relatively little evidence of a new politics of the disadvantaged in a new "transnational economic geography" (Sassen, 2004: 653). Urban social movements rather contest their issues, including those related to privatisation, at a local level.

There is relatively little international activity that links these social movements across countries and what does exist is supported by NGO structures. The exception is Shack/Slum Dwellers International (Box 8), which supports many horizontal exchange processes, and which incorporates both community leaders and NGOs within their governance structures. The primary purpose of the international engagement of this network is to support local (primarily city-based) struggles of the urban poor. Four key international networks are summarised in Annex A. Each of these groups functions independently, each links with local initiatives and helps these groups to strengthen their case through access to the international media and international donor agencies. These networks may bring together local movements; in some cases they also draw in more narrowly focussed self-help associations and NGOs working alongside the urban poor.

4. Social movements and their interaction with the state

Our analysis suggests that, to a significant extent, the strategies followed by the urban poor, and the success of such strategies, reflects the state within which they are seeking to better their situation (Tarrow, 1998: 18). Broadly speaking, this fits within the polity approach as described by Houtzager (2003: 2-3) with an interest on societal and state interaction in the context of different forms of institutions and the inter-relationships that develop. The emphasis on state policy emerges consistently from the studies and experiences reviewed in complying this background paper. Whilst the interests of the poor (especially the chronically poor) may not differ greatly, the way in which such interests can be realised reflects such state structures and systems.

To understand effectiveness of social movements in respect of the poor (and by implications the chronically poor), it is helpful to distinguish a number of such state “positions”. This list is put together from commentaries as well as individual case studies and my own observations. These “positions” are consistent responses that the state makes towards social movements, associated organisations and their approaches. They are not unchanging structures or structures but rather embedded practices which are applied with relative predictability in designing and enacting responses. This conceptualisation is somewhat analogous to Houtzager and Kurtz’s (2000) suggestion of structural linkages between state and society. However, they define structural linkages to be “institutional arrangements – legal frameworks and administrative organizations – and public policies through which the state exercises its diverse productive, social and regulatory functions” (Houtzager, 2003: 15). The positions discussed may or may not be such formalised explicit processes – in at least some of the positions, they include more subtle ways in which relations are constrained and repeated. The range below includes the most common positions taken by the state, and does not mean to imply that all states can adopt all such positions.

Bureaucratic – the state assigns rights related to accessing state programmes and state agencies with specific responsibilities; rights are realised on the basis of explicit transparent criteria; formal rules and regulations establish inclusion and exclusion.

Clientelist – the state seeks to be (partially) responsive through personalised links that seek to diminish the collective power of movements. Personal channels of communication and resource allocation are of primary importance.

Authoritarian – the state dictates what happens and who is involved, tending to use coercion rather than negotiation to manage pressures from movements.

Participatory democratic – the state seeks to work in predictable but flexible ways to encourage the involvement of a diversity of local groups in decision-making and thereby augment existing state structures. Systems of participation generally lie somewhat uneasily alongside those of representative democracy.

Co-production – the state supports programmes with a high degree of decentralised decision-making and seeks to find or agrees to collaborative approaches to delivery, enabling local control over implementation to augment participatory strategies for consultation and decision-making.

Before analysing the success of urban social movements under each of these positions, it is useful to highlight several generalities. First, states may adopt more than one of these roles. That is, at any one time, government may be partly clientelist and partly authoritarian. This is true within each level of government, and across the levels of government. Second, many of the priorities of the poor can be addressed through local government and the relatively less formal nature of social movements is more effective at a local level, so the attitudes (position) of the local authorities may be more significant than those of central government. Third, the position taken may reflect elite attitudes both to poverty and urban development. As Appadurai (2001: 25) suggests in his analysis of the work of the National Slum Dwellers Federation in India “...movements among the urban poor ... mobilize and mediate” the contradictions between the high concentrations of wealth and of poverty that are commonplace in Southern towns and cities. This highlights a fourth generality, state positions are not fixed and the astute social movement may succeed in shifting the state from one position to another.

As argued in Section Three, the focus (e.g. infrastructure, political inclusion) of social movements is relevant to understanding their relationship to the urban poor and the poorest, and in influencing whether they are more or less inclusive. However, there are also other aspects that affect inclusivity and another, relevant in this Section, is the way in which political cultural emerges and the associated attitudes with respect to authority, leadership and entitlement.

4.1 The Bureaucratic state

Bureaucratic regimes address urban poverty through allocating formal rights and entitlements to the poor, which are then codified into rules with recourse to further institutions such as the courts if the rules are not maintained. Many social movements concerned with extending access to land, housing and basic services are orientated to securing a bureaucratic response from the state. In some cases, as noted above, they are defensive, seeking to protect squatters and secured some kind of legal protection that will enable them to remain in their homes. However, the more significant are the struggles for land and basic services that are not defensive; i.e. those that engage more strategically in presenting their demands (claims) to the state. Movements request the creation and extension of programmes that provide resources through entitlements that are transparent and far reaching. The alternative to bureaucratic is seen as traditional clientelist methods of political mobilisation i.e. the allocation of state subsidies in exchange for support for a particular party or a particular candidate. Bureaucratic (rule-bound entitlements) is counter-posed to clientelist (arbitrary unequal exchanges) – modern forms of government against the traditional forms of abuse of state power. The strongly rights based approach has been popular amongst many civil society groups since the 1960s; for example, the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights was established following the regionally organised protests against the evictions associated with the Seoul Olympics in 1988.

Whilst a strongly rights-based approach is often considered by development professionals to be associated with success and pro-poor, neither associations emerge from experience. As argued below, it is not evident that “successes” have been particularly successful. Mitlin and Patel (2005) suggest a number of reasons why the poorest are not comfortable with such approaches, particularly highlighting the reluctance of the poor to be confrontational given their vulnerabilities in social relationships that are not located in institutions that respect the rule of law. Gledhill (2005) argues that the focus on individual rights is strongly linked into the neo-liberal ideology that is not pro-poor due to its emphasis on the market. The following paragraphs consider the success and pitfalls of such an approach, looking in turn at two issues: first the problem of maintaining the gains that social movements can secure; second the problem of ensuring that the gains reach the poor(est) (or other target group) (with the perhaps bold assumption that this was intended by the movement). We return to these questions in the conclusion.

Whilst social movements have been successful in establishing such programmes, it appears that the gains have a tendency to be eroded once programmes are passed over to the bureaucratic state to take forward. Such programmes may diminish in scale, become clientelist or co-opted, embedded in market approaches or simply disappear. A few illustrations exemplify the problems. During the mid-1990s, the social movements in Colombia pushed for the incorporation of the right to housing with the constitution. However, the government interpreted this right as being realised through a housing subsidy programme that provides assistance to a limited number of households (and there is now a long waiting list) and which requires a savings contribution from applicants if they are to qualify for subsidies. In the years that followed, the situation was more difficult than before because the activists were exhausted and many believed that real gains had been achieved despite the fact that the right to housing was not being realised (personal communication, Alejandro Florian, Fedevivienda). In the Philippines, the strong people’s movement behind the defence of the National Government Centre believed that they could trust the government when it promised them secure tenure following the fall of Marcos (see Box 5). The problems in this case were not solely political but rather were also technical with major concerns over establishing entitlements as the bureaucratic world collided with the informal personalised world of the poor. But, as suggested above, community members also believed that delays suited the self-interest of city officials. Philippine movements and associated organisations repeatedly sought to defend the Community Mortgage Programme against a hostile state (Porio *et al.*, 2004). Similar outcomes emerge from political movements as

suggested by the example from South Africa cited above. Despite the scale of the anti-apartheid struggles and the risks of street protest, the economic problems faced by many of the poor in South Africa have not been addressed as indicated by the figures for poverty and inequality given above. Whilst an extensive housing programme has been introduced, following clear expectations and priorities of the urban poor, the housing backlog is larger than before (Baumann, 2004).

A second problem, related to the particular focus of this study but not always a concern of social movements, is that the poorest may struggle to access programmes run by state bureaucracies. The problems for the poorest in participating in the Community Mortgage Program in the Philippines and for immigrants in South Africa to gain access to housing improvements have already been identified. This is not arbitrary but reflects the fact that rules that establish entitlements almost inevitably create those who are not entitled to participate. Even if they fit within the rules, the poorest struggle to establish their entitlements due to the associated social process and anti-poor attitudes amongst officials. Sabry (2005) discusses the intrusive questioning and observation that widows face in Egypt when they apply for social assistance. It is for such reasons that, when Gomez-Lobo and Contreras (2000) analyse the Chilean (means-tested) subsidy system for water, they find that even under the most optimistic of assumptions only half of those entitled to receive the subsidy in the poorest groups actually receive the subsidy.

The introduction to this Section touched on the cultural aspects of inclusion, suggesting that the nature of the state has a significant influence on the expectations and perceptions of the poor with respect to authority. In bureaucratic programmes, the culture of entitlement requires a capacity to meet formal requirements, for example, to produce birth and marriage certificates, to be able to complete forms (or find someone else to complete the required forms). Leadership may be established around a relative advantage in such areas, including the capacity to speak the language of government officials. Barrig (1991: 70) discussing the communal kitchens in Peru, highlights the consequences of such a culture for women although she argues that women should join it rather than seek a more effective alternative:

“The values that predominate amongst women ... cannot find adequate channels for expression within political institutions. If women want to transform the state along participatory and democratic lines, they will have to become more aggressive about intervening in the spheres of public representation.”

Some consequences of highly bureaucratized systems are highlighted by Castells discussing the struggles that social movements in San Francisco had to face when working with municipal authorities on poverty reduction strategies. Castells (1983: 133-4) argues that the way in which the state responded to citizen needs had a negative impact on the capacities of the movement, through its influence on leaders' relations with members, and the delays and uncertainties:

“... the Federal government and city hall reacted in the traditional American way: they created a piecemeal constellation of *ad hoc* programmes, funded on a year to year basis, in those areas or for those problems where the community was strong enough to command a response to its dramatic needs. Furthermore the management of all those programmes was left in the hands of community leaders who obtained jobs and funds for becoming a cushion between the people they represented and the public administration responsible for the social policies. This practice had a devastating effect on the community's capacity to preserve its unity and strength since it encouraged corruption, personal power and the formation of cliques, and divided people's energies with fights between different groups to win control over narrowly defined programmes that framed popular needs into bureaucratic categories.”

Similar experiences emerge in state programmes in Southern towns and cities. In the mid-1990s the *Favela Barrio* improvement programme in Rio de Janeiro was only being offered to 10 per cent of low-income neighbourhoods in the city; residents' associations found

themselves competing with each other for entry on the programme, rather than working together to put in place a more comprehensive solution. In the South African housing subsidy programme, contractors develop close relationships with community leaders, offering them mobile phones, letting them influence who is selected for construction work and, potentially, other favours such as first choice of plot. In Mumbai, Desai (1995: 234) suggests some residents are cautious about being involved in negotiations with the state as they are "...unwilling to trespass into the domain of 'officialdom' which they saw as the prerogative of community leaders".

A further problem is that the scale of state bureaucracy (in those countries with the institutional capacity to manage a bureaucratic poverty reduction programme) means that even when the poor win "protected pro-poor space" within the system they postpone rather than avoid problems. The problems that the poor face as their experiences within these programmes evolve are illustrated in Windhoek where the Shack Dwellers Federation sought to influence the authorities to adopt a pro-poor approach to urban development (Mitlin and Muller, 2004). The new policy, described by the City of Windhoek as "...a 180 ° turn to the traditional land delivery process" enabled newly arrived migrants and long-standing residents to access secure tenure with communal services at very low costs; it belongs to the state position of co-production. However, the first groups to use such strategies are now finding that the increase in rates (in part related to local developments such as services and housing construction) and the level of service charges is considerable.¹⁵ These rates and charges fall within the regular bureaucratic operation of the municipality.

Such problems suggest that social movements may be naïve in demanding a bureaucratic response from the state to the problems that they face. Pro-rights solutions have tended to result (in part because of claim-making demands) in strengthening bureaucratic approaches of the state to poverty reduction without addressing the underlying anti-poor stance of the market and the frequently discriminatory stance of the state. Drawing briefly on a rural example, Masaki (2005) discusses the disinterest of the excluded low-income group in participating in a joint community to improve infrastructure despite the right to do so within the framework of a donor programme. He suggests that the group believed they would do better outside of the framework because, whatever their legal entitlement, they lacked the power to ensure inclusion worked to their advantage. The analysis here suggests that the group was correct in their analysis. Whatever the initial intentions of the state when they commit to such programmes, there are serious considerations in respect of programme maintenance. Moreover, the poorest households, even if the programme continues successfully, may struggle to benefit because of the rules and the operation of such rules. In the case of the National Campaign for Housing Rights (India), the National Slum Dwellers Federation in India was disinclined to take part because its leadership did not believe that the strategies would be effective. The Federation's experience was that policy change did not favour the poor unless it emerged from grassroots practice. Land tenure strategies could not, in their opinion, be developed by middle-class activists and pushed through with legal reform; rather they had to be rooted in the realities of the poor, be developed through practical demonstration, ideally with the collaboration of local authorities, and with a mobilised mass base able to press for specific policies and their subsequent enforcement. In Bangkok, families threatened with eviction used a low-interest loan programme of the state (Urban Community Development Office) to purchase land outside the city. However, the only affordable land was at a considerable distance from the city and livelihood opportunities. Families simply could not manage to secure their incomes, and hence many left their new plots. Community groups in the country are organised into networks; when they reflected on this experience, the networks concluded that groups requiring tenure security due to eviction threats needed a political rather than market solution (even a subsidised market solution).

¹⁵ In the case of one group called People's Square, average monthly family repayments were over N\$200 (approximately \$30 dollars). A recent survey of 3,914 Federation members in Windhoek found mean monthly incomes of N\$977 and median incomes of N\$800.

They concluded that the better option is for collective grassroots pressure should be put on the authorities to allow communities to remain in their existing locations or to find alternative state land close to the city centre.

This suggests that successful social movements need to put in place an ability to maintain pressure on the state and see policy achievements as the beginning and not the end of a process. As suggested below, active and creative movements may not choose a bureaucratic solution. Most notably in Latin America, there is a strong and prevailing sense of “self-managed” communities, rather than the integration of low-income settlements into the “formal” city. More recently, SDI affiliates have sought to avoid such problems by preferring the state to finance community-managed programmes that address material needs whilst building the capacity of grassroots organisations. This is returned to below in the discussion of co-production.

4.2 The Clientelist state

Whether or not social movements follow a strategy of making demands (claims) for a competent and bureaucratic state, they actually have to work with clientelist regimes which dominate many local situations in the South. The practice of clientelism prevails in many low-income urban settlements – the poor (nominally at least) accept their dependence on political patrons, whom they support (generally with votes) in return for favours relating to access to employment, basic services and/or other state resources. Such clientelist relations span individual (leader) and collective goals for low-income neighbourhoods.

The prevalence of clientelism reflects the benefits secured by the elites through using this means to allocate scarce resources. The state does not have sufficient resources to provide essential infrastructure and services. In the absence of scale, it uses personalised relations to manage protest, buying off, co-opting and absorbing pressure and protest from the urban poor. The clientelist state pre-empts the potential of social movements by putting in place social relationships between leaders and the state that reduce the likelihood of protest. On the one hand, local leaders dominate local debates and protests against the difficulties of urban living, on the other, residents are offered a minimal response to address their needs. The everyday violence of low-income settlements is rarely the subject of research, but there are considerable illustrations of the ways in which local protest is controlled and a local clientelist community leadership consolidated (Scheper-Hughes, 1992; Garrett and Ahmed, 2004; Henry-Lee, 2005; Thorbek, 1991). The common practice of coercion by local leaders creates a framework of violence in low-income settlements.

Our particular interest is in those movements that get somewhat further and which begin a process of more explicit negotiation with progress towards redistribution. One avenue is through a “porous bureaucracy”, lower level bureaucratic channels that are amenable to influence by local groups in non-transparent ways as its rules are relaxed due to clientelist relations (Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari, 2001). However, the benefits are not always collective and in many cases the relationships they identify simply deliver personal benefits to the leaders (Benjamin and Bhuvaneshwari, 2001: 16). Most authors are less optimistic in their analysis suggesting that relatively little is on offer to the poor from the clientelist process and that movements can do little to make substantive progress. Melo with Rezende and Lubambo (2001: 94-102) describes the interface between participatory budgeting and a clientelist political state in Recife. The participatory budget was opposed by local politicians and councillors sought to abolish the participatory budgeting scheme. The mayor managed to prevent this action but allowed the councillors to change the rules significantly, enabling them to propose locations for investments. Connolly (2004) recounts the experience of FONHAPO, a land, services and housing programme in Mexico who strengthened autonomous social movements to manage resources through self-build collective developments. The success of the programme resulted in it being seen as attractive by the ruling political parties. The political elite moved to control the programme, only to deliver benefits using alternative strategies which increased the dependency of the social

movements on the state and reduced the likelihood of local communities gaining in collective capacity, autonomy and resource redistribution. In a further example, this time from Asia, strong grassroots community participation in decision-making emerged in Colombo (Sri Lanka) through neighbourhood-based Community Development Councils (Russell, 1999). However, when grassroots organisations threatened clientelist arrangements, they were undermined: "Some politicians ... actively seek to weaken CDCs They don't want a competitor taking credit for improvements." (Russell, 1999: 104)

The ubiquitous nature of this state "position" is indicated by the struggles of more successful initiatives. The movement of *posserios* in Goiânia (Box 4) recognises that it needs to manage clientelist pressures. Barbosa *et al.* (1997: 28) argue that relations with the state continue to be problematic in many respects; "During the dictatorship, the repression of the urban *posses* was brutal and vicious: today the repression is more subtle and polite." The *Partido do Movimento Democrático do Brasil* (Democratic Movement of Brazil Party) government has tried to weaken the autonomy of the *posseiros* movement by offering public services and state housing programmes but seeking to determine and control the process. This account highlights the problems that local communities face when they are considered to be a threat to an established and powerful political group. Members of the South African Homeless People's Federation invaded land in Port Elizabeth (South Africa) just outside the city boundaries (calling themselves the Joe Slovo Housing Association). After they maintained a presence for some months, they secured the land and were allocated subsidies for a people's managed development. However, the municipal council was anxious to manage all development in the city and, through the ANC, began to organise opposition to the existing community leaders who had emerged from a savings scheme that was affiliated to the South African Homeless People's Federation (Huchzermeyer, 2004). Many disputes took place as two factions developed. In this context, the state countered a social movement organisation by developing alternative grassroots activities more closely aligned to the politically powerful. The municipal supporters argued that the municipality could only become involved in construction if the land was transferred to the municipality, although in fact this was not the case; "the either-or situation at Joe Slovo was ideal breeding ground for party political clientelism" (*ibid.*: 13).

Before leaving the clientelist position, it is useful to reflect on the tendency of such a state to address the needs of the poorest, and the culture of leadership, authority and entitlement that it encourages. The clientelist response seems to reinforce social relations that are at best hierarchical and patronising, and at worst patriarchal and violent. By establishing and reinforcing hierarchies within local communities, clientelist states seem to work against inclusive and collective action at the level of the settlement. Such relations may help the "deserving" poor (e.g. widows as described in the case of Bangalore above) but they may also demand a high level of psychological dependence as the price of assistance. The familial and potentially exploitative relations between political and community leaders may be reproduced within the community, undermining movement activities. Some movements manage to resist such a state and if such movements are grounded among groups that are representative of the poorest then they may be more successful. However, movements require considerable maturity to manage the situation and they may be vulnerable to rumour and innuendo about which leader has or has not accepted which benefits and from whom. Under such circumstances, solidarity becomes difficult. The personalised engagements work against solidarity across neighbourhood organisations, an essential component of any social movement that wishes to be taken seriously by local political interests. For this combination of reasons, the clientelist state poses a considerable problem to social movements, and social movements wishing to advance their cause generally seek some degree of accommodation due to the difficulties of confrontation. This helps to explain the strategies of movements such as NSDF seeking to avoid both affiliation and opposition to specific political parties (see Box 1).

4.3 Authoritarian

Social movements also emerge in an authoritarian context despite difficulties in organising. Large-scale citizen protests against particular regimes have characterised the national politics of some countries in the last decades of the 20th century with international impact. In such cases, social movements often organise in the face of considerable opposition and with greater personal risks for members. It is only when the political leadership recognises that the end is near and compromise might be opportune that the risks decline. Authoritarian positions can be taken even by democratic states who decide to oppose movements; such positions are most commonly associated with land invasions or other activities that are perceived to be law breaking.

This position can be exemplified by the present situation in Cambodia and Zimbabwe, and by a historical analysis of Peru. The first two states are notionally democratic but act in authoritarian ways towards the urban poor. In Cambodia, social protest is very weak as, in the context of their recent history, people struggle to defend themselves and their interests. The commercial opportunities in Phnom Penh, as in many Asian cities, have led to pressure on the low-income residents to move away from land that they had occupied since the fall of Pol Pot. In 2003, the fire bombing of inner-city urban poor squatter settlements took place (allegedly by powerful interests seeking to secure land for commercial development) (Kazmin, 2002); and the government took advantage of people's vulnerability to move them to the outskirts of the city with little or no public services. Despite this situation, there are emerging neighbourhood movements that have been consolidated into a Squatter and Urban Poor Federation. The hesitation of these groups in pushing forward their plans for tenure security and basic services resulted in support professionals creating an alliance with the municipalities and other NGOs (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, 2004). Practical engagement around specific activities together with significant mobilisation resulted in the Prime Minister Hun Sen agreeing to a policy for the upgrading of 500 settlements over five years in Phnom Penh as a part of his election campaign in 2003. However, there have been considerable difficulties in realising this commitment at a time when the Federation has been through internal dispute related to allegations of self-interested actions by leaders.

In Zimbabwe, an estimated 700,000 urban dwellers were evicted in 2005 when the national government launched *Operation Murambatsvina* (restore order), strengthening the climate of fear and vulnerability in low-income settlements (Tibaijuka, 2005). *Operation Murambatsvina* was followed by *Operation Garikai / Hlanlani Kuhle* (we promise things will be better) to resettle the homeless and provide better trading sites for small businesses. By 2006, the government's rebuilding programme was evidently inadequate. One social movement organisation, the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation has carried on its work through this period, negotiating for access to land and services. Whilst shacks have been destroyed, members have been allowed to remain on land they have been allocated, although they are required to complete permanent houses within 18 months. The Federation has been divided about a more assertive strategy to promote people-centred housing alternatives. Community leaders fear a violent response if they were seen to be taking a political stance against the government¹⁶, both in terms of the risks of the organisation being banned and individual leaders being killed (Federation discussions, January 2006). More recently, the state has come to see the Federation as a potential collaborator in a political solution and has promised them access to thousands of plots. As elsewhere, the leadership of the Federation seeks to identify a strategy that advances the cause as much as is possible without provoking a backlash from the state. A further example of the difficulties (but also the possibilities) of working with an authoritarian state is given by the example of the squatters in Lima living under a military government at the beginning of the 1970s. As elaborated in Box

¹⁶ The government, it was believed, would construe this to be party political even if this were not the case

14, Castells (1983: 191) argues that the state came to understand the possibilities to secure political support in return for land.

These experiences suggest that it is a mistake to view authoritarian positions as impenetrable, although they may be resistant to change. Whilst their rule may rely on state coercion and subsequent fear, they may also seek to accommodate opposition and address the needs of some groups. The poor may be able to negotiate for something although the gains may be very limited. The difficulties faced by external commentators who have to dissect politics, power and grassroots strategies in such a situation are illustrated by Castells (1983: 193) who argues both that the squatters in Lima were “deeply realistic” and that they appear to have behaved as a “manipulated mob”. On the one hand, he recognises that they secured land for their members; on the other, he suggests their alignment to the political strategies of the military state made the movement “an instrument of social subordination to the existing political order instead of an agent of social change” (Castells, 1983: 194).

Box 15: Lima (Peru)

Following the establishment of a military junta in the revolution of 1968, the military government first tried to implement a law-and-order policy, repressing all illegal invasions and putting the squatters' associations under the control of the police. Nevertheless, its attitude towards the low-income settlements changed dramatically on the basis of two major factors: first, the difficulty of counteracting a basic mechanism that determines the housing crises in the big cities of dependent societies, and second, the military government's need to obtain very rapidly some popular support for its policies when they were criticised by conservative landlords and business circles.

The turning point appears to have been the vigorous repression of an invasion of land in the neighbourhood of Pamplona. When a Bishop intervened on the side of the invaders, the crises between the state and Catholic church caused President General Velasco Alvarado to personally intervene. He conceded most of the squatters' demands but moved them to a very arid peripheral zone close to Lima, where he invited them to start a “self-help” community supported by the government (the beginning of Villa el Salvador). The military government discovered the dangers of a purely repressive policy and the potential advantages of mobilising the squatters. The military government then created a special agency tasked with legalising the land occupations and organising material and institutional support to the squatter settlements. The low-income squatter settlements become a significant focus of popular mobilisation for the new regime.

Source: Castells (1983)

Castells' pessimistic stance on the potential of social movements to influence an alternative against the mainstream political process is reinforced by the commentary of one very experienced community leader in Rio de Janeiro who argued (in 1995) that two things had destroyed the grassroots movements in Rio, drugs and democracy. The sub-section below on participatory democracy explores some of the problems that grassroots organisations face within democracy but it is worth dwelling on the implied strengths of organising within the authoritarian state. The argument is that unity of purpose is easier within an authoritarian state as the alternatives are blacker and whiter, rather than shades of grey. The political processes within democracy mean that many parties promise much to the poor. The process of seeking agreement becomes difficult and, as illustrated by the example of Huaycán (Box 14), leaders have party as well as neighbourhood loyalties, and partisan party politics may divide the poor.

4.4 Participatory democratic

The next state position to look at is that of the increasingly participatory state, in which efforts are made to be more inclusive of citizens. We divide this discussion into two to reflect alternative distinct approaches. In this sub-section we discuss participatory processes that extend democratic decision-making and in the next section we discuss processes that devolve both decision-making and implementation activities. Our argument is that these are distinctive, with the second transferring considerably more power and resources, and producing different political outcomes both in neighbourhoods and at the level of the city.

The differences are highlighted in Table 2 which compares four state positions, contrasting the implications for movements of the urban poor.

Table 2: Social movement responses to state positions

	Clientelist	Bureaucratic	Participatory democratic	Co-production
In their interaction with the state, social movements:	seek to negotiate for general rather than personalised benefits; resist co-optation of leaders.	make claims for public services, rights for the poor; demand accountable, transparent state.	demand inclusion in policy and other decision making mechanisms; less emphasis on accountability and transparency as greater involvement of movements themselves.	negotiate for state resources to support an agenda defined and realised by the movement.
Success is:	autonomous collective action that serves the interests of members and not elites. Changing the nature of state citizen relations.	effective state programmes being established.	inclusive decision making followed through with action; more effective state programmes better informed by the reality of the poor.	strong local capacity to identify and implement priorities; redistributive state; policies that work with informal systems.
Social movement values emphasize:	weak values as mostly defensive	equal representation, universality	voices of the poor	self-managed, people-centred

Participatory governance seeks to provide an inclusive political space at a local level, recognising that other fora enabling the views and opinions of citizens to enter the political process can usefully augment representative democracy. Participatory governance places a particular emphasis on the inclusion of the people, especially the poor, as well as measures to increase participatory governance, focusing on creating new and more effective spaces for more equal decision-making processes. Participatory governance emphasizes the need to introduce mechanisms to encourage the involvement of those who do not find it easy to participate in state structures and processes because they are generally far removed from their own cultures and practices (Mitlin, 2004b). Participatory governance implies the engagement of government with a group with interests beyond those of a single individual (although members may not benefit equally). Government that engages individual citizens in individualised consultation and decision-making processes may be considered to be good government but it is not considered here to be good governance.

The best-known present day example of the participatory democratic state is the example of Porto Alegre and participatory budgeting. However, this is far from being the only example and Fung and Olin Wright (2003: 15) suggested that that there are a number of similar models which they group together under the term ‘empowered participatory governance’.

Box 15 explains how the innovation in Porto Alegre evolved in a context in which the movements sought an alternative to both the authoritarian and clientelist state. Critical to the process of innovation was the federating of local neighbourhood organisations, thereby enabling a strategic grassroots intervention to transform local government practice.

Box 16: Porto Alegre (Brazil)

In the late 1970s, the military dictatorship in Brazil began to weaken and a “golden era” of popular mobilisation emerged. Urban community movements demanding the provision of basic services made substantial gains. Other grassroots movement activities also grew stronger and, from this network of mobilisations, the Workers’ Party was born. From the beginning, the Party took care to distance itself from the centralism of earlier socialist parties. Meanwhile, in the early 1980s, local community activists began to form regional organisations linking neighbourhoods in Porto Alegre, rapidly leading to a city-level umbrella organisation, the *União de Associações de Moradores de Porto Alegre* (Union of Neighbourhood Associations of Porto Alegre).

The Union campaigned for the Democratic Labour Party candidate in the first post-dictatorship election for mayor in 1985. When the candidate was successfully elected, the local movements had high expectations. The Union began to conceptualise a system of joint budgeting to ensure that local political representatives addressed the needs of low-income settlements and did not follow previously ineffectual strategies. The movements were very conscious that previous demands on local government had been too specific and too isolated to achieved substantive change. However, despite demands for citywide debate on investment priorities, the mayor did not respond and he ended his term with accusations of rampant corruption and with a notably weak administration. When the Workers’ Party came to power in 1989, the Union was more forceful in its demands and more strategic in its interaction with the state. Despite considerable financial difficulties within the Council, the administration agreed to take up the ideas being promoted by the Union and “over the course of 1989, neighbourhood leaders from various regional organisations met with the administration to begin to discuss how a participatory budgeting process might occur...” (page 44).

Source: Abers (1998: 41-44)

Hence the strategy of influencing the budget was a deliberate attempt by social movements to ensure that their electoral influence was not rendered ineffectual by a government that was not accountable to the urban poor who voted it into office. In Porto Alegre, the participatory budget is widely considered to be a success, delivering significant benefits in terms of investment in infrastructure and services within low-income areas. Abers (1998) argues that it has also been successful in other respects, transforming neighbourhood associations, enabling them to better represent their members’ interests to the state. She suggests that: “the budget policy is a direct incentive for new neighbourhood associations to emerge and old ones to broaden their membership base... In this context, there has been a marked decline in the capacity of closed clientelist neighbourhood associations to survive.” (*ibid.*: 50) The number of neighbourhood associations in Porto Alegre increased from 240 to over 540 between 1986 and 1998 (Baiocchi, 2003).

However, other views are less positive about the potential of participatory budgeting to transform clientelist practice. Melo *et al.* (2001: 143) discuss the participatory budgeting process in Recife and conclude that the process is limited in what it has achieved. Souza (2001: 181) also notes the prevalence of clientelism despite a participatory budgeting process in Belo Horizonte. A somewhat similar experience to Recife emerges from the Philippines and the participation resulting from the Local Government Code (1991), which institutionalises a process of decentralisation and multi-sectoral development at the local level (Mitlin and Samol: 1997). These experiences reinforce the importance of context and Baiocchi (2003: 66) implies this when he argues: “Porto Alegre has a unique history of left-wing popularism dating back to the 1930s.” Whilst the experiences of participatory budgeting cannot be dismissed, the successes may be more dependent on the strategic insights and manoeuvrings of the social movements in Porto Alegre than the quality of the methodology.

Are the poorest really able to participate in the participatory fora that are created or do they continue to be disempowered? Research in Porto Alegre has sought to answer this question but is somewhat inconclusive. Baiocchi (2003) argues that the process is inclusive, however, there is clear under-representation of those with low-education as they include about 55 per cent of the city population and 60 per cent of general participants but only 35 per cent of elected delegates and less than 20 per cent of elected councillors.¹⁷ It is not clear what the findings would be from a more disaggregated study which considered, for example, the participation of the poorest 10 per cent of the population. Souza (2001: 169) in a comparison of Belo Horizonte and Porto Alegre argues "...the ideas that PB [participatory budgeting] has produced a generalised empowerment of the unorganized and of the poor has been challenged". She suggests that many who participate have higher incomes and that participatory budgeting is not reaching the very poor (Souza, 2001: 181). A further issue is that those who are without tenure security may see little reward in participating. In Sao Paulo, a new NGO has recently been established, INTERAÇÃO, by ex-municipal staff motivated to find new strategies to address the needs of this group. They are currently working with local residents' associations who have felt ignored by the existing social movements in the city, and by participatory budgeting processes.

Whatever the nature of those who participate, there does seem to be agreement that the processes of participatory budgeting result in a significant transfer of resources to previously excluded areas and neighbourhoods. Cabannes (2004: 39-40) exemplifies this with a report on Montevideo where low-income areas contribute with 21 per cent of the city budget, and receive over 88 per cent of the budget for highways, 79 per cent for sanitation and 70 per cent for lighting. Hence, there is evidence to suggest that they result in a significant shift in local government priorities in favour of basic services for those who have a stable residence and who have sufficient tenure security for infrastructure and service investments.

4.5 Co-production

The final state position to consider is that of co-production. This is a type of state that has been relatively little theorised although it appears to be relevant to social movements strategising. The concept extends participatory governance. By co-production, we mean a state that is both participatory in decision making and which allows local groups to be directly involved in the implementation of state policy; or, alternatively conceptualised, a state that is willing to give financial support to development strategies defined and undertaken by the poor themselves. Such initiatives broadly fit within institutionalised co-production which is "...the joint and direct involvement of both public agents and private citizens in the provision of services" involving "...regular, long-term relationships between state agencies and organized groups of citizens, where both make substantial resource contributions" (Joshi and Moore, 2004: 33 and 40). However, when driven by social movements, such initiatives also relate to Escobar's (2004: 209) claim that there are no "...modern solutions to many of today's problems" and hence the need for solutions to be reinvented by the poor themselves. Through co-production, social movements seek to engage the state on the terms of the poor, not on those of the state. Whilst mostly used in the South, Northern application is illustrated by Fung and Olin Wright (2003: 16) when they recognise that "bottom-up neighbourhood councils [in Chicago] invented effective solutions that police officials acting autonomously would never have developed".

The development profession may under use this concept, as these solutions are seen as second rate compared to state provision. As Joshi and Moore (2004: 44) suggest, such alternatives undermine the Weberian principles that public organisation has defended: public and private separation, public accountability, universality and uniformity. However, that is not the context in which social movements put forward ideas of co-production where the involvement of the local communities is seen as positive (self-management) and where the

¹⁷ Annual meetings of residents (participants) elect delegates on a neighbourhood basis. Delegates determine priorities and then elect councillors who sit on the Municipal Council of the Budget.

informality of everyday life requires something more appropriate than the highly formalised strategies for modern urban development proscribes. Alternatives are put forward by the poor because, in the context of a state with limited resources, professional discrimination against the poor, limited infrastructure or other reasons, the solutions the poor develop work better for them and they would prefer to have them, albeit with state financial contributions. The potential for co-production is particularly strong in the context of land and neighbourhood development activities. Some groups began with self-help activities and came to realise that effective collaboration with the state is essential, but require it on their own terms.

In respect of urban development, the two most significant examples of co-production driven by the urban poor are the associations associated with the Orangi Pilot Project and Shack/Slum Dwellers International. The Orangi Pilot Project is an NGO which developed a methodology enabling 100,000 households in a suburb of Karachi to provide themselves with sanitation. The lane organisations that installed sanitation with the support of the Project came to recognise that the municipality authorities needed to install waste treatment plants when the scale of their work and volume of sanitation began to grow. Their capacity to engage with the state developed from their own practical experience with sanitation provision. Communities participated in neighbourhood associations made up of lane organisations and developed their own positions on a range of city level issues (Hasan, 2006a and 2006b). The Urban Resource Centre was established to support these community concerns and the Centre now acts as a hub for local associations in Karachi encouraging communities in need (such as those facing eviction) to come together, supporting movement activities to pressure the authorities, and providing a meeting place for movement organisations to interact with a range of interested and sometimes supportive professional organisations. In this particular case, self-help has grown into multiple autonomous local associations with a capacity to combine into movements. In the case of Shack/Slum Dwellers International, local communities develop plans to secure land, develop services and build housing with pressure on the state to contribute in-kind resources (especially land) and make cash contributions to urban poor development funds. In these examples, there are multiple reasons to enter into co-production relations with the state. One motivation is the need for state resources and redistribution to ensure inclusion of the poorest. A second is recognition of the need to build strong local community organisations able to represent the interest of the poor.

At the centre of both initiatives is a belief that there need to be new solutions to existing urban development problems. Such new solutions are required, it is believed, because the state has failed to work out ways of offering secure tenure, infrastructure, services and housing in ways that work for all in urban poor communities and ways that work for a long time. Typical state responses, it is argued, quickly disappear, tend to be bureaucratic or clientelist if they remain, are often too small in scale and do not include the poorest. One central requirement for effectiveness is that such new solutions fit within the primarily non-formal lives of the poor. The insistence by most state institutions to apply bureaucratic rules within the context of resource scarcity lies at the heart of many urban problems. Box 16 describes the SDI Indian affiliate's response to the state's need to resettle the shack dwellers living alongside the railways in Mumbai to enable improvements in the transport system. In this case, the government's task was highly contentious and the state could not complete it on their own as they would have been subject to claims and counterclaims in respect of entitlements to inclusion. Some state officials saw eviction as the only possible way forward if the mass transport system was to be improved.

In both these cases, the social movements themselves coaxed the state into a different position from the one that was previously adopted, or adopted in other contexts. However, states have also proposed co-production strategies, particularly around housing. Turner (1976) illustrated the development of low-income settlements in Peru and the considerable investment that households make over time, even though tenure is not formal and may not be secure, and services not provided. As a result of his work and other experiences, urban

professionals (architects and planners) have sought to build on grassroots energy and creativity. There have been a number of such programmes at the state level. One of the first was FONHAPO, the housing programme in Mexico as operated in the mid 1980s (Connolly, 2004). As was the case in Porto Alegre the strategy was seen as a way of addressing clientelist relations (although in this case it did not last that long) (see Box 18). The increased potential for self-managed activities strengthened the communities and helped them to consider alternative strategies towards the state.

Box 17: Co-production in resettlement (India)

Mumbai's recent transport strategy could be achieved without evictions because the National Slum Dwellers Federation of India provided an organisational resource to match state land allocations for resettlement and funds for construction. Mumbai relies on its extensive suburban railway system to get its workforce in and out of the central city; on average, over seven million passenger-trips are made each day on its five main railway corridors. By 1999, nearly 32,000 households lived in shacks next to the tracks at high risk and without water and sanitation; these households reduced the speed of the trains and the capacity of the network. Families lived there because they needed central location to get to and from work and could not afford an alternative. Discussions within the Railway Slum Dwellers Federation (to which most households along the railway tracks belonged) showed that most wanted to move if they could get a home with secure tenure in an appropriate location.

A relocation programme was developed as part of the larger scheme to improve the rail network. Land sites were identified to accommodate the evicted households and the Federation was given the responsibility for managing the resettlement programme. The resettled people were involved in designing, planning and implementing the resettlement programme and in managing the settlements to which they moved. Teams of Federation leaders, community residents and NGO staff, prepared maps; each hut was identified with a number. Draft registers of all residents were prepared and the results returned to communities for checking. Households were grouped into units of 50 and the families in each unit moved to the new site together. Identity cards were prepared for all those to be moved and visits were made to the resettlement sites. Then the move took place with some households moving directly to apartments and others moving to transit camps while better quality accommodation was being prepared.

In this case and in other programmes, the objective is not to work out a way for the state to provide essential services albeit with the financial and organisational support of residents, rather it is for the community to work out new ways of developing cities that are inclusive and then to secure state resources to enable the implementation of such solutions at scale. Critically important for SDI is that these processes further strengthen the movement of the urban poor including its local membership and their capacities, such that existing benefits can be maintained and new priorities can be addressed.

Source: Patel *et al.* (2002)

Box 18: From co-production to clientelism (Mexico)

FONHAPO offered subsidised loans to enable the improvement of low-income settlements. Partly as a result of this opportunity, by the mid 1980's the main actions of the urban movement had shifted substantially from defensive measures, such as resisting evictions, opposing land tax and regularisation charges or simply getting rid of corrupt community leaders, towards much more active demands. "*Protesta con propuesta*" (protest with proposal) became the dominant theme, a position whose logical conclusion was the realisation of housing and urban development projects designed and controlled by the community organisations themselves. The aims and achievements of many projects went beyond solving immediate housing needs. Communities also considered employment, health and education, women's organisations, communal facilities, alternative technologies, ecology and integral neighbourhood development. By the end of the 1980s, the major task of most factions of the Popular Urban Movement in Mexico City was the development of popular or community housing projects.

However, during the 1980s, the loose agglomeration of community-based organisations that made up the Popular Urban Movements was influenced by the general tide of political reform. Initially, these mostly Maoist inspired "mass-line" organisations had steered away

from party politics but, as the opposition parties expanded and mobilised around electoral campaigns, it became increasingly difficult for the Popular Urban Movement to remain disassociated. Their allegiance and, very often, their leaders became absorbed into electoral politics and, as a result, party politics began to permeate community-housing production. Housing loans became used to muster support for local organisations affiliated to one or other political party. Despite the initial intention to have a programme that was free of clientelism, the increasing political competition resulted in state resources being allocated to secure votes.

Source: Connolly (2004)

Box 18 describes what happened to FONHAPO when the government replaced a professional directorate with one that was more politically orientated at the same time as changing the mechanics of the process to strengthen the dependency of the grassroots organisations. Delivery by a participatory democratic state that is willing to find new ways to transfer assets to the poor can be effective but grassroots structures that do not own the programme do not appear able to protect the programme. When grassroots organisations do own the process, the scale of on-the-ground activity may reduce the risks of clientelism because ongoing activities help to strengthen local ownership, local involvement and mean that leaders can be held more easily to account. Such dangers may help to explain the choices made by a further community studied by Castells (1983: 197-8), the squatter movement in Monterrey (Mexico). This movement rejected state help during their first stages of development so as to preserve their autonomy. Hence they stole or negotiated for building materials for their schools, health and civic centres.¹⁸ Families built their own houses but the plan for the settlement was decided collectively whilst water, sewerage and electricity were provided through illegal connections to the city services. After negotiations, the state paid for health and education staff but the health clinics and schools were managed by the community.¹⁹ This experience highlights the ways in which co-production strategies that are determined by the community are often highly cost-effective, reducing costs by their avoidance of the market and innovating in ways that sidestep government standards.

The participatory state is also vulnerable to a further tension (both in the case of participatory democracy and co-production) although arguably a stronger force in the case of the second. Whatever the form of relationship between the electorate and the citizen, experience suggests that a clear tension emerges between representative and participatory democracy. Councillors and other elected politicians become nervous when measures to support direct democracy begin to develop. Such individuals believe that their mandate to make decisions is superior to this alternative form which is seen as less accountable, messier and less well-informed; however, arguably they have fail to take full account of the extent to which the bureaucratic state is anti-poor. The relations between the state and local citizens that emerge through co-production may involve different groups of people and work on a different basis than those that emerge through traditional political practices. For example, one programme in Thailand, which worked with the community networks to emerge from the Urban Community Development Office in the mid 1990s offered small grant finance for local

¹⁸ The tendency to be “outside” the rule bound system repeats itself with many examples. There are alternatives to illegal connections and the theft of materials. For example, one local group within the South African Homeless People’s Federation recently had to manage a debt of R80,000 with the local authority for rates and services. They tried to persuade the council to accept ten per cent of the debt but the council refused; the group then offered to make a first payment of ten per cent. After a week this was agreed to and the group gathered the finance for the payment. They went to the bank and changed their money into 5 and 10 cent pieces, then they went to municipal offices and put the money on the table. “This is how we save,” they explain. Faced with the reality of counting this change, the municipality let them off the rest of the debt.

¹⁹ Similar strategies are described by Cabanas Díaz *et al.* (2000: 91) for El Mezquital in Guatemala City and are familiar to many who work with the urban poor. The scale of deprivation combined with the reluctance of the authorities force people into illegality to meet their basic needs.

community improvements. Each city established a small committee of councillors and community groups to allocate the funds. The councillors and their officials could not believe how cheaply local communities could improve walkways, improve drainage and undertake other improvements.

Existing community leaders who operate in the political sphere may find their interest threatened and put pressure on the political system to reduce state involvement. Party political competition can have a particularly damaging consequence as highlighted in Castells' (1983) study in Madrid when he describes how party politics eroded a strong neighbourhood movement providing a range of services to local groups in the dying years of Franco's regime. The Madrid Citizen's Movement was one of a number of city movements in Spain during the 1970s which involved hundreds of thousands of residents in struggles for "the matters of everyday life, from housing to open spaces, from water supply to popular celebrations" (*ibid.*: 215). Castells perceives the movements as being particularly pro-poor: whilst neighbourhood associations existed in many localities, the working class neighbourhoods were the most organised and most militant on urban issues (*ibid.*: 266). Castells (1983: 273) argues that its leadership was political but non-aligned; however:

"This was a continuous tension that characterised Madrid's Citizen Movement; it was based, at once, on the self-organization of residents to foster their urban interests and on the connection of their demands to the political struggle against the urban crisis, whilst keeping their autonomy in relationship to partisan politics. The ambiguity of the situation was both a source of creation and destruction: it was a creative tension because it allowed the Movement to expand, to find powerful allies, to shift from local and piecemeal demands to alternative models of urban policy enabling citizens to have a decisive impact on the political mechanisms that were prerequisites for the transformation of the city. It was also the major source of crisis and, ultimately, of destruction. Partisan goals and the Movements' orientations became increasingly divergent."

Whilst everyone in Madrid agreed that the reestablishment of political democracy was a priority, options diverged once this was achieved. The bigger parties believed that democracy was an adequate channel for participation and that the Movements were vulnerable to manipulation by communities and radicals. The militants' energies went into winning control of the neighbourhood associations, thereby creating divisions and weakening the Movements whilst the politicians sought to strengthen parties at the expense of local activities. Castells (1983: 274) concludes: "In the increasing tension and contradiction between urban struggles and political militancy, most neighbourhood leaders ceased to be party militants and some ceased to be neighbourhood activists". Similar tensions are evident in the experiences of the South African Homeless People's Federation in South Africa who face local councillors who perceive the Federation to be political and a resource threat. Assisted by international development aid and a direct grant from national government, the Federation has had access to a capital fund (uTshani Fund) to innovate in respect of pro-poor housing strategies. The Fund was used to negotiate access to subsidy finance at the provincial level, enabling a self-help housing management process, and in so doing it circumvented local councillors who then responded by seeking to sabotage the plans. The tension is elaborated in Box 19. The box highlights the tendency, also found in Madrid, for party politicians to seek to monopolise, or at most control, political space replacing co-production with clientelist or bureaucratic positions.

Co-production strategies seem to change the nature of the local community organisations making them more orientated to local, practical activities and less concerned with interaction with political systems that are external to the community. This seems to encourage the local involvement of the poorer households as they can see that what is being offered is of direct benefit to their livelihood struggle, rather than the continuation of traditional processes of redistribution that take place at some distance from the poor and which may offer little of value. The need to secure agreement for neighbourhood plans and to obtain volunteers to

undertake work in the neighbourhood pushes the processes to more inclusive strategies. A second force towards inclusion is the need of a degree of unity to protect the process against claims by local politicians that it is unrepresentative. It is often difficult to manage such conflicts and strongly embedded groups have an advantage; the movement has an incentive to recruit greater local support. Finally there is a cultural dynamic towards reaching out in many of these processes because of their orientation to the local neighbourhood rather than the powers of the external state. However, the pressures to inclusion are not always positive and it is difficult to draw any conclusions on the scale of such inclusion. The nature of the activities does not avoid the differentiation between landowners and tenants who have very different interests in the development process. Tenants may or may not be poorer and may be excluded from local activities. Second, the emphasis on the community resources, even if it is not a requirement for financial resources, may mean that the poorest (perhaps those with few adults in the family) struggle to take part, and hence do not take part at all or receive fewer benefits.

Box 19: Co-production and party politics (South Africa)

The strategies used by the Federation resulted in competition with the ward councillors as the social movement contested the right of the state to control housing developments, and sought to grow in strength by attracting residents away from developer housing, the state's favoured housing production strategy. As one member of 1025 (a grouping of savings schemes) explained at the regional meeting in Gauteng (2005):

...the municipality is not open and do not have trust in us. They think we are another political organisation that wants to sabotage them.

The ward councillors and Federation compete with each other to attract community residents to join "their" housing scheme. The councillors (in some cases) sought personal gain from the developers but this does not emerge as the sole or even core problem. The problem appears to lie in the fact that the Federation was a separate organising force that was, by virtue of its existence, a threat to the incumbent councillor. Even if Federation members were closely associated with the same political party (in most cases the ANC) the conflict was not resolved because the councillor was a risk from the party processes which could result in them being replaced. Conflicts emerged as councillors responded defensively, and Federation leaders in turn sought to build their membership and thereby strengthen their position within the Federation and neighbourhood. Building a membership base meant that a priority for the Federation leadership was the extensive building of large houses. Councillors responded even more negatively to such developments as they felt the stakes were raised and political pressure on them grew when residents were attracted to the Federation. The presence of a capital Fund enabled local Federation groups to de-prioritise building a relationship with local government because the Fund enabled the Federation to pre-finance subsidies. The Federation was too strong for the state to break and its independent resources enabled the Federation to avoid co-option. However, the councillors could and did respond by blocking subsidy releases.

Source: Mitlin (2006)

4.6 Conclusion to Section Four

In concluding this Section, it is significant to recognise that whilst the Section has been subdivided around the nature of the state, the community process is not passive. States have multiple positions and adopt different strategies. One of the influences on the positions that they take is the specific demands made by social movements, and the way in which these demands are made. This Section has reviewed five such positions. In the first three (bureaucratic, clientelist and authoritarian) the social movement makes demands on the state for resources (claims); in some cases it may also demand political access. Even when social movements are forced to be relatively passive in the case of an authoritarian state, they may choose to make demands on the state. In the other two state "positions" the social movement is more pro-active. As illustrated by the example of the Union in Porto Alegre and SPARC's work in India, the social movement has negotiated for a social and political space that enable local grassroots organisations to operate very differently.

The discussion here is broadly sympathetic to Houtzager's (2003: 15) argument about the significance of institutional forms of relationship between collective agencies and the state. In many respects the collective action of these social movements is determined by the institutional contexts (in a political sense) in which the poor have to operate. However, whilst Houtzager (2003: 16) suggests that change is catalysed by legislation, public programmes and how the state treats the poor, and Thorpe, Steward and Heyer (2005: 916) suggest an honest broker in the state may be required for pro-poor policies to be secured, these movements have an autonomous capacity to influence the state and there is space for agency by the poor. Social movements can influence and change the nature of the structural linkages, and in so doing advance their cause.

With respect to pro-poor strategies, the analysis points to the robustness of strategies from pro-active social movements. Many failed programmes in the South highlight the weaknesses of the "honest broker" approach. For example, in the Million Houses programme in Sri Lanka the processes used by the state were innovative and participatory (Russell and Vidler, 2000: 77). However, political support waned in part because the programme was strongly associated with a single political party and the balance of power changed in favour of an alternative party. In this context, the grassroots communities did not have the strength and capacity to negotiate for a reversal of the process. Our argument is that when the poor perceive the need for an autonomous capacity to make a sustained and effective political response, then the nature of their strategising changes and more is achieved as exemplified by the discussion of the "participatory" positions above.

One of the underlying issues for agencies that work with the urban poor is the relative advantages and disadvantages of claim based (rights and entitlements) as against more autonomous self-managed approaches in which the movements draw down state resources into their own processes (rights and co-production). This debate suggests that it is not just an engagement with the political system that matters nor about the attachment to a concept of social justice (Hickey and Bracking, 2005: 856) but rather how the engagement is made and what is a strategy for achieving justice. This debate is captured within the ongoing dispute within Asian urban NGOs about the relative merits of Alinsky style community organising which primarily results in claim making on the state, and the alternative methodology of savings as a foundation for strongly rooted accountable and representative grassroots organising with emerging solutions for co-production (Masatsugu, 2004). This debate is significant to our purpose of understanding the contribution of social movements to addressing the needs of urban dwellers who are chronically poor.

The critiques of Alinsky's methodology have overlaps with concerns about the emphasis on rights and the rights-based approach. Central to the approach of co-production is that rights are not enough. The poor cannot trust the state to deliver appropriate policies whether this is in recognition of citizenship rights or in response to specific claims. Rather they have to rebuild a relationship with the state that enables the poor to design policies that are suited to the realities and potential of the poor themselves. Hickey and Bracking (2005: 862) argue that there is a need to look beyond the rights-based approach, as it cannot help the weakest members to mobilise to claim their rights. The alternative approach offers a more fundamental critique; that the poor can neither rely on professionals to design programmes that rescue them from poverty, nor can they rely on the state to act in their interest. They have to find a way to design their own policies, strategies for their adoption, and maintain an engagement in the process, both to ensure that the design is maintained and improved, and to ensure that their political influence does not wane. As shown by the experiences above, it is possible for the poor to secure inclusion to the decision-making but this does not necessarily bring the anticipated shifts in power and hence influence over resources and resource allocations.

Table 3 below summarises the points made above in respect of the core orientation of the different movements within state positions.

Table 3: Issue of movement inclusion within the different state “positions”

<i>State position is ...</i>	Inclusive in process?	Inclusive in outcomes?	Inclusive in culture?
Bureaucratic	Not really. May build movement to force through significant demands. However, there seems to be a risk of mobilisation with relatively low levels of engagement within the process.	Possibly, though difficult to conclude from programmes to date. In general they cannot easily be accessed by the poorest due to formalities. Appears hard to maintain redistributive programmes.	The transparent rule bound ethos and requirement to interface with formal organisations is likely to fit badly with the realities of low-income urban and rural households' livelihoods and practices.
Clientelist	Not really. Highly personalised relations lead to deserving and undeserving poor. The nature of relationships is anti-collective.	Appears to be unlikely to offer that much. Over time neighbourhoods may improve. Resources may be granted but resource scarcity limits inclusion at scale.	Relations of hierarchy, patronage. Maybe culture of fear in terms of “strongmen”. Tendency of hierarchies to be replicated at the local level.
Participatory decision-making	Likely to have open process, those who want come. Pro-participation central state may have to counter resistance of local elected councillors to citizen participation.	May be inclusive. Likely to be concerned with land development and service provision. This benefits those of the poorest who have land ownership, and excludes those without.	Open culture likely to be supportive. Poorest may not be comfortable participating in municipal structures unless culture is reformed.
Co-production	Likely to have open process and encourage participation. May seek large-scale involvement to strengthen legitimacy. Self-help is a further motivation to extend inclusion. Minimum contributions may exclude. Poorest more comfortable doing something than the higher income groups who expect the state to provide.	Generally supportive. People's strategies included i.e. illegal tapping of water lines, use of local informal workers, locally acceptable standards. This reduces costs and potentially increases inclusion. Outcomes may be restricted when/if the scale of activities threatens other state activities that work on a different basis.	Culture is pragmatic. Validation of alternative community ways of doing development assists in increasing local confidence leading to further skill and capacity acquisition.

5. Conclusion

5.1 A favourable context?

The shift to an urban lifestyle does not just mean a shift in livelihood and shelter strategies, there is also a significant shift in social relationships. In subtle and not so subtle ways, social relationships may begin to move away from familial and traditional. There are many reasons for shifting perceptions and expectations. One important reason is that higher densities make the need for basic services more acute, and a much more complex level of inter-dependency between citizens and the state emerges. It is no longer possible for the poor to solve all their own problems. As we have argued above, the nature of land and services struggles tends to collectivise and may politicise the process of social action. Another reason is that inequalities of income become more visible, as does the apparently arbitrary process of distribution – people see for themselves the lack of fairness and justice. Such visibility increases support for social change and financial redistribution, and increases a sense of identity in being poor. A third reason may be a greater understanding of opportunity and higher levels of education help to form ambitions. For such reasons and others, the urban milieu appears to support an increased awareness of the need for redistribution by the state. Collective action with an inter-twinning of self-help, negotiation with government and party political involvement is characteristic of many urban settlements. Identification with being poor, and having a common cause with others who are disadvantaged and excluded, adds to these changing social relationships, higher expectations and belief in the legitimacy of redistribution. Despite this changing consciousness and the frequency of collective action, there are relatively few success stories in terms of social movements.

However, rather than look for explanations of why social movement activity occurred in specific incidences, perhaps the question that demands to be asked is why it does not occur more often. Why does the myriad of self-help collective activities not emerge to place the political system under coherent and systemic pressure to deliver more? In practice, when movements push for redistribution within a non-discriminatory state process, multiple obstacles emerge. This concluding section considers what movements have achieved, and why their achievements have not been more significant. Drawing on this analysis, it ends by suggesting what development agencies might contribute if they wish to support movements.

5.2 The interests and inclusion of the poorest

Social movements secure power by building a critical mass of engaged participants who recognise their common interest in taking action. The underlying orientation is one of solidarity rather than divide and rule. Their legitimacy comes in part from their mass appeal.

Movements have been successful in improving workers' rights albeit with very limited gains for workers within the informal sector. They have also been successful in campaigning for improved access to trading places, and in at least some cities, there is a greater recognition of the importance of informal vendors working in well-located inner city areas. Whilst the poorest may not be centrally involved and may not benefit to the greatest extent, it is likely that some very low-income households will receive these benefits. In respect of access to assets such as land, basic services and housing, movements have been able to defend land that has been squatted, and have, in some contexts, been powerful enough to secure land allocations. There are many state programmes to address basic services (as well as tenure) and, in all likelihood, their presence reflects direct movement pressure in this sector. Once more, some of the poorest households have benefited, although they may not have benefited equally. Perhaps some of the most vulnerable households are tenants, themselves providing an income to other low-income families and often lacking a strong local network and the associated security. Campaigns for political inclusion and for the extension of democracy and/or of democracy practices have gained famous victories, such as those in South Africa and the Philippines. However, such victories are often the beginning rather than the end of

the struggles for the lowest-income, and sometimes lowest status members, who find it difficult to participate equally in the opportunities that may follow.

Many urban groupings, however formed, contain households and individuals with a range of incomes. The differentiation of incomes does not result in any consistent pattern in terms of involvement in movement activities. Ethnic based movements tend to cross income groups building on the shared social identity. Traders' groups tend to divide with higher income groups being represented in different associations, although such groups may make common cause if their collective interests are seen to be threatened. Groups that are residentially based may include some of the very poor, i.e. those with assets in the form of a claim to own land in the vicinity, and exclude those who are tenants. Or they might seek to work with all of those living in the area, recognising the commonality of their struggle. Or they may only work with those who are likely to have a claim for the land recognised excluding those settled close to waterways or on road reserves. In many of those activities and associated organisational forms, the chronically poor are generally in a minority, albeit a sizeable minority. Even when they are not in a minority, it may be difficult for their interests to be represented and their voices to be heard. Some of the reasons for this lie not in the catalyst for movement activities, or even the processes within movements, but in the emerging demands of movements, the kinds of solutions that they propose and that are secured. Vulnerable groups may be vulnerable because of social discrimination, and discriminatory processes may be repeated in government support programmes. Solutions to inadequate collective goods and services may require some level of payment, especially as cost-recovery requirements have strengthened, and the very poor are the least able to pay. For such reasons, despite the interests in building mass, the involvement of the poorest cannot be assumed but will depend on many factors including the leadership of the movement, the goals and objectives of organising, and the kinds of solutions that are negotiated.

The difficulties that movements face in responding to the needs and interests of the chronically poor reflects, at least in part, the interests and aspirations of the not-so-poor, the penetration of ideas about politics and political outcomes, and of the perceived "common sense" solutions that dominate policy discussions. In particular, the market-based decision mechanisms that prevail at present result in particular problems for those with very low and irregular incomes.

5.3 The complexities of democracy

"... there is no evidence that democracy leads to pro-poor policies Votes are not enough. In personalistic or patrimonial political systems, the potential power of the votes of the poor is neutralized by their fragmentation among numerous, competing, particularistic networks and interests." (Moore with Leavy and White 2003: 186 and 187).

"...moves towards democratization, good governance and human rights since 1990s have arguably increased the political space within which citizens can organize and seek representation" (Hickey and Bracking, 2005: 853)

These contrasting perspectives are reflected in our analysis of movement failures and successes, and help to explain some movement activities and anxieties. Whilst democracy has increased the political space open to citizens, it is less evident that it has created the possibility of pro-poor agendas (Hickey and Bracking, 2005: 861). The problems faced by the urban poor as discussed in Section Two go to the heart of the capitalist model for development. The poor need a greater share of profits, through higher wages and/or through taxation for state services that they actually receive, in order to secure well-being within a market economy.²⁰ In many Southern countries, the institutions that might enable the

²⁰ Arguably groups facing very specific needs, such as street children or prison reform, may be more successful as the scale of resources required is less than labour market reform. As for mass needs:

transformation of capitalism towards a form that is more supportive of equity and justice are not there. Hence, even when it is the will of the majority, the redistributive development state emerges as an unlikely outcome of democratic elections. As discussed in Sections Two and Three, low pay and inadequate service provision characterise the lives of the urban poor. In particular, there are three common difficulties movements face and these emerge from the discussion in Section Four. Movements have to find a way to avoid being neutralised by clientelist interests. Equally, they have to find a way to work with bureaucratic state tendencies, avoiding the negation of pro-poor intent and ensuring effective redistribution. And a further major challenge is often to manage the level of party political competition in low-income settlements and prevent it from damaging their unity.

5.4 The pervasive nature of clientelist relations

As noted above, many low-income communities operate clientelist political systems to ensure their needs and interests are met (to at least some extent) and to avoid an overt political challenge. Clientelist relations establish an “informal” exchange between the political system and electorate. As evidenced by the experiences discussed above, the political system has a vested interest in maintaining relations that enable “movements” to be closely controlled by the political elites and which involve a less than egalitarian exchange. The discussion in Section Three suggests that self-help provision in basic services tends to lead to collective action with an orientation towards the political to overcome substantive constraints on addressing real needs. However, the influence of clientelist relations over the political systems appears to be strong enough, in many cases, to control the pressure for redistribution. As discussed below, the more successful movements emerge when there is networking between settlements at a district and city level, enabling community leaders to analyse the constraints they face, and strategise to secure greater autonomy. With the ability to compare and contextualise their experiences, movement leaders are more able to understand the outcomes that are emerging and develop effective strategies.

5.5 Bureaucratic solutions

Movements, once established as agencies seeking a political response to their needs and interests, often favour claim making on the state as they seek to extend entitlements to state provision through dedicated programmes aimed at addressing their members’ needs. What is suggested by the analysis here is that movements that press for bureaucratically established and management programmes may secure short-term advantage but may weaken their capacity to maintain long-term pressure for redistribution. Concessions are granted but social structures are not changed, hence substantive gains are rarely secured as programmes are established and then eroded either by financing being reduced, rules becoming more restrictive, and/or being transformed into an agency of clientelism. In many cases the medium and long-term re-distributive impacts are negligible for the poorest and most disadvantaged families who have limited participation, however, slightly higher income households are more likely to benefit.

5.6 Party political division

Houtzager with Pattenden (2003: 94) suggest that democratisation and electoral competition will help to create a politics of inclusion; – their argument is that clientelism and personalisation reduce the capacity of movements to establish ties to parties, and that parties are the more progressive (redistributive) institution. However, the analysis here suggests that partisan politics is not necessarily a positive force for inclusion of the poorest; rather it may divide the urban poor and weaken their influence on the powerful political elites.

“Different policies provoke different distributional conflicts and are therefore more or less likely to generate broad alliances of support. The hypothesis has an uncomfortable implication for those of us who subscribe to the normative view that development is only development when it addresses the needs of the disadvantaged.” Bebbington and McCourt 2007 – forthcoming.

Social movements such as the National Slum Dwellers Federation (India) that are successful in pushing forward the agenda of their members appear to protect themselves from some aspects of political society as much as they engage with other aspects. Political society, even democratic political society, is not enough. The inter-action of social movements with political parties is essential but the power of the movement is attractive for established interests who seek to capture and control this power, equally politicised leaders may develop strong party affiliations in addition to their movement activities. The interaction of party politics with movement aspirations and activities is a subject worthy of greater research.

With a recognition that the political systems (be they clientelism, bureaucratic and/or democratic) cannot be trusted to deliver to the interests of the majority of the poor, let alone a minority who require significant redistribution for inclusion, the autonomous capacity of movements to influence political processes becomes even more important. This insight has significant ramifications for the kinds of poverty reduction programmes that need to be supported. Poverty reduction programmes that create and strengthen the sense of individual of household beneficiaries, that divide communities (perhaps into competition with each other) and which individualise citizen state relationships may deliver short term material benefits but render the poor vulnerable in the medium to long term. Programmes that required the formalisation of urban poor processes, to access the benefits, may be unlikely to reach the poorest and may act to undermine the networks and relations between and within groups of the poor, whilst strengthening those between the poor and the professionalised world (thereby favouring the somewhat less poor). Participation, when it takes place, is generally on the terms of, and within the institutions of, the more powerful.

More successful strategies appear to be those that build movement organisations of the poor which are able both to innovate new approaches which strengthen collective capacity, and which maintain the autonomy of such collective capacity, enabling the poor to constantly renew its pressure on the state. The problems of securing sustained advancement are reflected in movement pressure for participatory rather than representative inclusion; movements have recognised the need for an ongoing engagement rather than electoral moments. The ongoing interest in co-production strategies appears to be based at least in part on their potential to nurture knowledgeable local organisations with strong links to their members, which are then able to maintain movement type power whilst maintaining relations with the state. In this context, the weakness of claim orientated rights-based development is not the incapacity of institutions in the South to support its rules and entitlements, but its ideological orientation to state-based individualised citizen state relations. Such insights help to understand the failure of poverty reduction strategies in the North. Material transfers have reduced levels of malnutrition and starvation whilst the widespread provision of services enables most to secure their basic needs. While significant investments continue to fail to address exclusion and the multiple incidence of deprivation, there is very little protest and action on the part of the poor, aside from occasional outbursts of frustration through rioting. In addition, levels of mental ill-health are notably high. The poor cannot function equitably in a professional world that continues to control resource distribution and, without a significant collective movement, they cannot begin to identify the problems and develop more effective solutions. Divided, they are dependent on the state, which replicates systems of exclusion alongside seeking to address them.

5.7 Cohesion and collaboration

The discussions in Sections Three and Four suggest that the poor need their own autonomous movements to develop and contest development strategy. The successes of the movements in Porte Alegre, in Goiânia, and within SDI all point to the significance of city level organising. Indeed the wider experience with participatory budgeting points to the importance of the strategic insights and manoeuvrings of the social movements in Porto Alegre. Collaboration across settlements appears to be particularly significant in avoiding clientelism and co-option, understanding the constraints of government programmes, and strategising to address the needs of the poor. Community leaders that work together across

settlements have a chance to observe how the system works and in whose interest it works. Citywide collaboration helps to secure the level of autonomy from the state which appears to be a pre-condition for more effective poverty reduction.

Movements, by their very nature, involve compromise and collaboration, and successful movements go beyond the poorest, reaching out to other groups of citizens (Tarrow, 1998: 64). The experiences discussed here suggest that, in addition to working across organisations of the urban poor, it is also important to make alliances with other groups with common interests. The conclusion that Castells (1983: 68) draws for his Northern and Latin American movements appears to hold for the movements considered here: grassroots movements go beyond the specific (class) interests of low income communities to create alliances with those who need urban development irrespective of their particular class interests. The emphasis on neighbourhood improvement appeals widely to other groups in the city including the municipality (which often has responsibility for these services). Urban management issues may require a coalition between the poor, the middle and the higher income groups in order, for example, to ensure that a central city area is well maintained and clean. In such a context, movements can attract widespread interest in their efforts to negotiate with the state and, with an increased mobilisation capacity, they strengthen their ability to negotiate with the state. It is important to recognise that the state is not a unified set of interests, and movements can find allies within, as well as outside, state agencies and structures.

5.8 An alternative approach?

“...when squatter movements break their relationships of dependency *vis-à-vis* the state, they may become potential agency of social change.” (Castells, 1984: 194).

‘...surely “empowerment” and “transformation” require not just the opening up of participatory spaces to debate citizenship, to hold the state to account and so on, but also the more prosaic transformation of everyday life.’ Cleaver (2004: 275)

These two quotes each summarise significant lessons to emerge from Sections three and Four in terms of movement success in the context of the poorest. Despite their relative weakness against more powerful political forces, movements have managed to achieve success through political strategising. An important element to this success, in terms of the poorest urban residents, appears to be their capacity to simultaneously engage with larger political interests, and transform everyday possibilities. The transformation of the every day is particularly important for the lowest income residents and/or those facing discrimination and exclusion. Whilst the limits have been discussed above, it does appear to be possible for a more people-orientated transformation social process to exist alongside the exploitative labour relations found in Southern towns and cities with a polity that is often weakly democratic, unaccountable and in which the chronically poor are in an electoral minority. Whilst structural conditions limit outcomes, social movements can secure some success. Despite recognising the immense structural forces against redistribution, the argument here is that some kind of pro-poor incremental change may be possible. Within the experiences discussed here, there is a grouping of strategies that appear to offer effective and inclusive poverty reduction, at least in some respects. This grouping of strategies is based around urban upgrading and urban development strategies that offer land and/or services to collective groups of the urban poor. In terms of implementation strategies, the more progressive initiatives appear to be based around forms of co-production with participatory governance and joint implementation. Such initiatives are spaces for self-managed initiatives of the urban poor with a substantive resource contribution from the state offered in ways that are determined by the poor (either directly or indirectly). As importantly, through experiential learning related to implementation and management, movement members, embedded in their organisations, grow in their ability to catalyse further political activities, and therefore advance their interests.

One of the important dimensions of this approach is an enhanced role of women, who come to the forefront of practical activities and pragmatic strategies for improved basic services. The strong practical base helps to give women the confidence they need to be proactive influencing both the decisions that are taken and, as importantly, the style of working. Informal practices are more likely to predominate in part because of the predominance of women activists, as there are fewer opportunities for women to access formal sector jobs they favour informal practices. This is likely to encourage the participation of lower-income male residents who are more comfortable with this way of working.

5.9 Donors, development assistance and movement capacities

With respect to donor agencies, experiences suggest that more can be done than the somewhat pessimistic conclusions of Hickey and Bracking (2005: 861) (donors should “do no harm”) and Moore (2003: 277-8) who argues that donors have found it difficult to promote civil society and social mobilisation where states are weak and ineffective. The movements that are discussed here have, in many cases, received donor support. The support offered to such social movements is invariably locally orientated (i.e. not large-scale donor programmes) involving, in the majority of cases, professionals including NGOs and academic institutions. The funding is flexible, responding to the needs of the social movement alongside changing opportunities that emerge. Almost inevitably it is somewhat personalised, as the trust from such personal relationships appears to be needed to overcome the inability of such movements to fulfil the basic requirements of donor assistance bureaucracy. Movement funding, for example, would rarely fulfil the stipulations of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound). Another requirement is that the relationships with donors are likely to be long-term, extending for ten years and beyond. Central to the funding objectives is the strengthening of social movement capacities. It is argued that through strengthening such capacities, donors can contribute to stronger movements of the urban poor.

The experiences discussed in this paper suggest that particular social movement capacities increase their effectiveness, both in terms of representation and actions in the interests of the poor, potentially the chronically poor and the poorest. The strengthening of such capacities is consistent with the general conclusions of this discussion, i.e. that the greatest gains are not through any specific policy goal or implementation approach but rather through strengthening the capacities of movements to act politically, to think strategically about how their goals might be furthered and to build the relationships that are likely to be needed for medium and long-term success.

Five capacities emerge as significant

- Strong movements have a capacity *to act* at scale – they can build and maintain a mass movement. Such a movement is important in securing their power base. It is the strength of the movement at the grassroots that determines a political response from those who control state power. When tested, movements need to be able to demonstrate their capacity to act, through land invasions, savings or community investment, and/or a visible presence in political protest. It is often the credible threat of potential action that determines the political response.
- The capacity *to be* permeates all the other capacities. It creates an identity and cohesion within the movement. For individuals experiencing multiple forms of exclusion, the capacity of a movement “to be” creates identity, pride and a confidence to act, and strengthens engagement in the movement.
- The capacity *to represent* is a necessary condition if movements are to thrive and prosper. Without a capacity to represent, movements will not retain their members but will become vehicles for their leadership. With representation comes accountability. A movement that represents its members has strong links between the grassroots and leadership.

- Movements need a capacity *to relate* if they are to be successful in securing redistribution. They need to be able to build alliances to be able to strengthen their case for pro-poor change; they need to hold together the alliances that are central to the movement. They need to be able to manage competitive relationships between different political parties and understand how to secure the support of the administration once the political momentum is for change. They may need to work with private sector groups involved in urban development, commercial contractors, and financial institutions. They may need to build alliances with similar groups among the urban poor, even those with different ideological persuasions. The importance of avoiding isolation and division has been highlighted more than once.
- As relatively weak players in a rapidly changing context, movements have to be able *to strategise* to advance the needs and interest of their members. The interest of political elites in taking over and controlling movements has been discussed. Movements have to be able to negotiate their way through such threats, often in extremely difficult circumstances with both internal disputes and brinkmanship from external actors. The better that movements understand their contexts, their potential and hence their choices, the better they can secure the needs and interests of their members.

Annex A: International groups working to support the urban poor

The Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR)

The Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) is a regional network of grassroots community organisations, NGOs and professionals actively involved with urban poor development processes in Asian cities. The training and advisory programme (TAP) is a system of mutual learning and support, based on Asian experiences and processes, for Asian grassroots community organisations, NGOs and urban poor development professionals. Eviction Watch, a housing rights programme, aims to document and reduce the number of forced evictions throughout Asian cities as well as introduce alternative methods for solving housing related problems in Asian cities. Community environmental improvement project is a programme of community actions to promote change in the institutional decision-making, implementation processes of local government and environmental improvements in urban poor communities. In addition, there are documentation and advocacy activities with a specific programme to encourage young professionals to work with and for urban poor communities. In some countries in Asia where the community base is very weak, ACHR has country level programmes.

Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE)

The Centre has set itself a challenge: to promote and protect the right to housing for everyone, everywhere. To achieve this, COHRE has carefully developed a varied work programme, guided by international human rights law, and designed to reach as many people as possible. COHRE's work involves Housing Rights Training; Research and Publications; Monitoring, Preventing and Documenting Forced Evictions; Fact-finding Missions; Housing and Property Restitution; Women's Housing Rights; Active Participation and Advocacy within the United Nations and Regional Human Rights Bodies and activities in all regions of the South.

Habitat International Coalition (HIC): HIC is an independent, international, non-profit movement of some 400 organisations and individuals working in the area of human settlements. Members include NGOs, CBOs, academic and research institutions, civil society organisations and like-minded individuals from 80 countries in both North and South. A shared set of objectives binds and shapes HIC's commitment to communities working to secure housing and improve their habitat conditions. HIC's Constitution sets out objectives that it pursues at local, national, regional and international levels through ever-emerging strategies and activities:

* Recognition, defence and full implementation of everyone's right everywhere to a secure place to live in peace and dignity. Legal protection of the human right to housing is a first step to support the efforts of communities producing housing. Since 1988 HIC has contributed to the work of UN human rights bodies in defining the right to housing, as well as states' obligations to respect and fulfil it.

* Defending the human rights of the homeless, poor and inadequately housed. HIC promotes public awareness, serves as a platform for formulating NGO policies and strategies in the field of human settlements, and serves as their advocate in international organisations and fora.

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)

A global research-policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy through better statistics, research, programmes, and policies and through increased organisation and representation of informal workers. The individuals and institutions in the WIEGO network are drawn from three broad constituencies: membership-based organisations of informal workers; research, statistical, and academic institutions; and development agencies of various types (non-governmental, governmental, and inter-governmental). The common motivation for those who join the network is the

troubling lack of recognition of, and support for, the informal economy, especially the women who work in it, by policy makers and the international development community. The Members and Associates of the WIEGO network are drawn from its three constituencies: member-based organisations of informal workers; research, statistical, and academic institutions; and international development agencies (non-governmental and inter-governmental).

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