Section 2
Approaches to research

2.1   The qualitative-quantitative distinction

Whether to take a qualitative or quantitative approach to research is often presented as an either-or debate. In reality, the approaches are not only complementary but are often two sides of the same coin. Data collected, presented and analysed in a quantitative manner is not by its nature any more reliable or generalisable than qualitative information. The assumptions and biases of the researcher inform both types of research, and one type is often convertible to the other. As Trochim (2000) writes:

> 'Typically data is called quantitative if it is in numerical form and qualitative if it is not. Notice that qualitative data could be much more than just words or text. Photographs, videos, sound recordings, and so on, can be considered qualitative data. … In some areas of social research, the qualitative-quantitative distinction has led to protracted arguments with the proponents of each arguing the superiority of their kind of data over the other. The quantitative types argue that their data is hard, rigorous, credible, and scientific. The qualitative proponents counter that their data is sensitive, nuanced, detailed, and contextual. For many of us in social research, this kind of polarized debate has become less than productive. Additionally, it obscures the fact that qualitative and quantitative data are intimately related to each other. All quantitative data is based upon qualitative judgements; and all qualitative data can be described and manipulated numerically.'

For instance, think about a common quantitative measure in social research – a self-esteem scale. The researchers who developed such instruments had to make countless judgements in constructing them: How to define self-esteem; how to distinguish it from other related concepts; how to word potential scale items; how to make sure the items would be understandable to the intended respondents; what kinds of contexts they could be used in; what kinds of cultural and language constraints might be present, and so on. Researchers who decide to use such a scale in their studies have to make another set of judgements: how well the scale measures the intended concept; how reliable or consistent it is; how appropriate it is for the research context and intended respondents; and so on. Believe it or

15

not, even the respondents make many judgements when filling out such a scale: what various terms and phrases mean; why the researcher is giving this scale to them; how much energy and effort they want to expend to complete it, and so on. Even the consumers and readers of the research make judgements about the self-esteem measure and its appropriateness in that research context. What may look like a simple, straightforward, cut-and-dried quantitative measure is actually based on lots of qualitative judgements made by many different people.

On the other hand, all qualitative information can be easily converted into quantitative, and many times doing so would add considerable value to your research. The simplest way to do this is to divide the qualitative information into categories and number them … even that simple nominal enumeration can enable you to organize and process qualitative information more efficiently. As an example, you might take text information (say, excerpts from transcripts) and pile these excerpts into piles of similar statements. When you perform something as easy as this simple grouping or piling task, you can describe the results quantitatively.'

Within the CPRC, researchers are both expected and encouraged to collect, present, and analyse both qualitative and quantitative data. Many of the most interesting discoveries occur when findings based on one type of data seem to contradict findings based on the other.

See Report on Workshop on Panel Surveys and Life Histories Methods (eds. Baulch and Scott, 2006)

See Commissioning Q2 Research, A tailored training programme for Save the Children UK (Kate Bird, 2010)

2.2   Participatory approaches

As well as referring to a set of methods, participatory research refers to a methodological approach, which is influenced by the attitudes, training and political orientation of researchers.

Core features of participatory research include the following:

- *Concern with relations of power:* emphasis on the perspectives of poor and disadvantaged people and offsetting biases in dominant or outside paradigms.
- *Analysis by local people*: researchers facilitate local analysis in order to learn with and from local people. This requires analysing the process of discussions and interviews as well as the data these produce. Learning takes place face to face and on the spot.
- *Continuous analysis and progressive, systematic learning:* the process of inquiry is cumulative. These approaches favour use of open questions and semi-structured interviews rather than pre-set questionnaires. Joint analysis takes place in several phases and these are context specific.
- *Seeking multiple perspectives:* recognises complexity and looks for diversity of individual and group perceptions to understand contradictions and differences. This can involve purposive sampling rather than statistical sampling for participant selection.
- *Triangulation*: cross checking by using different methods, disciplinary perspectives, sources of information, and entities sampled.
- *Visual medium:* forms of diagramming that are visual and open to groups can encourage participation of marginalised people. By making the process open to those who do not read, are not used to verbal communication or do not share languages, diagramming can have an equalising effect. Visual techniques include mapping, time lines, seasonal analysis, matrix ranking and scoring.
- *Context specific*: researchers are encouraged to use methods flexibly, to innovate and improvise with conscious exploration in different circumstances. No research process is ever the same so there is no blueprint for researchers. The adaptability of methods and possibilities for different sequencing according to local conditions encourages greater sense of ownership.
- *Leading to change:* the process of inquiry embodies a strong capacity building element for local participants, the research team and other stakeholders. Dialogue and joint analysis help to define changes and motivate people to act. Depending on commitment of participants and stakeholders, action can include further capacity strengthening for

17

implementation of desired changes, or for increased participation in advocacy, decision making and policy development.

2.2.1 Strengths and weaknesses of participatory approaches

<u>Strengths</u>

- **Eliciting people's own analysis of their poverty** and wellbeing provides a deeper understanding of dimensions of poverty other than income and consumption indicators. This has potential for identifying key factors of chronic poverty within and between different settings.

- **Understanding complexity and diversity** of livelihood strategies, including the impact of structural economic and political factors over time on people's impoverishment and ability to become less poor. Establishing causality. Identifying barriers to participation, factors of social exclusion and assessing social capital of different groups according to gender, age, caste, ethnicity.

- **Highlighting areas for further detailed research** using other methods and comparative analysis.

- **Adaptability and flexibility** of methods provides potential for working in emergency situations and politically difficult environments, although links with community members and entry points may need to be firmly established.

- **Capacity building** of local people (as well as external researchers) in participatory approaches to research, advocacy and for increased participation in policy development.

- **Influencing policy and practice** - the in-depth and context bound nature of participatory research approaches can provide insights for policy and practical actions with high benefits for poor people in their own terms (at relatively low cost?).

- **'Scaling up'** - The process of participatory research emphasises the linking of information from communities to broader policy dialogue with stakeholders including, CBOs, NGOs, local and national government officers providers, academics, trade unions, business and insurance institutions, international NGOs, donors, UN agencies.

<u>Weaknesses</u>

- **Amount of time required out of the field**. Experience has shown that for effective outcomes, preparation time, (including training and stakeholder identification) and follow up time (including dissemination and policy linking) is equal if not greater than time spent on research activities in communities.

- **Generating statistical data**. Although some methods can produce quantitative data, the focus of the approach is to provide in depth analysis within locally identified contexts. Information generated in participatory research at household level can provide insights to

19

guide the collection and disaggregation of broader nationally and regionally generated statistical data. See How to generate statistics and influence policy using participatory methods in research from the Statistical Services Centre.

- **Comparability and generating commensurable information**. Information gathered and shared in different contexts may be hard to synthesise for central planning. However, comparison of findings across a range of contexts can enable central planners to distinguish between policies that are relevant for local and national formulation and implementation.

2.3   Livelihoods approaches

The phrase Sustainable Livelihoods can be traced from the work of Robert Chambers and others, through a research programme undertaken by the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex, involving work in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Mali in particular.

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (DfID, 1999 see also Scoones, 1998, and Carney, 1998, p. 4).

This approach was adopted by the Department for International Development (DfID) and a range of other development agencies and is therefore described here as the 'official' or dominant framework. DfID (1999, 2000) issued detailed 'guidance sheets' which are useful to explicate what rapidly became a familiar framework in the late 1990s, shown in the accompanying diagram. Within a particular 'vulnerability context', defined for example by shifting seasonal constraints, short-term economic shocks and longer-term trends of change, people deploy five types of 'livelihood assets' or capital in variable combinations, within circumstances influenced by institutional structures and processes, in order to pursue diverse 'livelihood strategies', with more or less measurable 'livelihood outcomes'.

A series of 'core concepts' are defined. Firstly, the approach is 'people-centred', in that the making of policy is based on understanding the realities of struggle of poor people themselves, on the principle of their participation in determining priorities for practical intervention, and on their need to influence the institutional structures and processes that govern their lives. Secondly, it is 'holistic' in that it is 'non-sectoral' and it recognises multiple influences, multiple actors, multiple strategies and multiple outcomes. Thirdly, it is 'dynamic' in that it attempts to understand change, complex cause-and-effect relationships and 'iterative chains of events'. Fourthly, it starts with analysis of strengths rather than of needs, and seeks to build on everyone's inherent potential. Fifthly, it attempts to 'bridge the gap' between macro- and micro-levels. Sixthly, it is committed explicitly to several different dimensions of sustainability: environmental, economic, social and institutional. Conflicts between these dimensions are, however, recognised.

Principles of livelihoods approaches include:

- Livelihoods research, of its nature, is essentially carried out at the micro-level: that of 'households' and 'communities'. It involves empirical investigation of combinations of modes of livelihood and, above all, of the relationships between them. It also involves pushing to the limit of their potential various methods of understanding changes that have taken place over time.

- For research into changing livelihoods to be illuminating and useful, however, it is essential to define the structural, historical and institutional elements of what may for convenience be called its macro-context. A time-frame must be specified, key variables identified, important trends of change discerned.

- In so far as livelihoods research is directed to the diagnosis of the causes of chronic poverty, the circumstances of poverty and the reasons for poverty should be understood through detailed *analysis of social relations* in a particular historical context. This implies a structural or relational view of poverty, and, in turn, that understanding of its 'persistence' or its intractability or its 'deepening' should be driven by questions about inequalities of power.

- It also implies that livelihoods research and discussion of its implications for 'policy-making' should contain explicit reflection on the particular, relevant, contexts in which 'policy' is made, with reference to key questions such as the following. Who makes policy? How is it made? For what purposes? For whose benefit? With what outcomes?

2.3.1   Strengths and weaknesses of livelihoods approaches

Strengths

- They seek to understand changing combinations of modes of livelihood in a dynamic and historical context.

- Explicitly advocate a creative tension between different levels of analysis.

- Acknowledge the need to transcend the boundaries between conventionally discrete sectors (urban/rural, industrial/agricultural, formal/informal, etc.).

- Recognise the necessity to investigate the relationships between different activities that constitute household livelihoods, which in turn requires attention both to intra-household and to extra-household social relations.

Weaknesses

- Elements of the 'vulnerability context', such as rampant inflation and extreme conflict and ripples of mass redundancy, are surely much more important than would appear to be allowed for.

- The language of 'multiplier effects' predominates, as does the presumption that it is possible to expand people's 'asset pentagons' in a generalised and incremental fashion. Inequalities of power and conflicts of interest are not, perhaps, sufficiently acknowledged, either within local 'communities' themselves or between 'communities' and, for example, regional elites and government agencies.

- The notion of 'participation' that dominates the discourse of intervention - with typically unresolved tension between these two words - presupposes heavy investment in 'community' on the part of donor agencies and thence a rhetorical tendency to disguise or weaken the probability that, in one way or another, enhancement of the livelihoods of one group will undermine the livelihoods of another.

- The qualifier 'sustainable' begs many questions which are not resolved even by positive 'livelihood outcomes' of the kind indicated in the framework. 'Sustainable' for whom? By what criteria? In the short term or the long term?

More generally, equating 'assets' theoretically with varieties of 'capital', through the 'asset pentagon' inscribed in the diagram, intellectually distorts our understanding of capital and politically distorts our understanding of the causes of poverty. On the first point, capital is properly a social relation between people, not an attribute of rich or poor households or

23

individuals, respectively. On the second point, attention is displaced from the inequalities of power that must surely be invoked to explain the persistence or the worsening of poverty. For a powerful critique of the notion of 'social capital', in particular, as it has been adopted by the World Bank and other agencies see Ben Fine's book *Social Capital versus Social Theory* (2001)

Go to Methods Toolbox at: www.chronicpoverty.org/page/toolbox

2.3.2   Examples of the livelihoods framework in practice

This section draws heavily on Murray, C. (2001). Livelihoods Research: Some Conceptual and Methodological Issues, CPRC Paper 5, which gives more in-depth examples of the uses of livelihoods approaches.

Some examples of disparate and partly overlapping methods of studying livelihoods are briefly outlined here. In view of the prevailing emphasis of the CPRC, they express a clear bias toward the study of rural livelihoods. It is important to recognise that this is not disconnected, however, either conceptually or methodologically, from the study of urban livelihoods along lines elaborated, for example, by Beall and Kanji (1999). The reader's attention is also drawn to the following work that is specifically relevant (see also Resources at the end of the toolbox):

- Livelihoods Connect is a resource for recent work on livelihoods including country case-studies and comparative reviews;
- the Sustainable Livelihoods Working Paper series and the Natural Resource Perspectives briefings published by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI);
- the mass of country studies carried out in sub-Saharan Africa in the mid-1990s under the auspices of the De-Agrarianization and Rural Employment project (DARE) co-ordinated by the University of Leiden (for an overview, see Bryceson, 1999);
- Elizabeth Francis' book Making a Living (2000), in which she explores the dynamics of struggle over livelihoods through comparative study of change in eastern and southern Africa.

This summary gives some indication of the complementary use of diverse methods of investigation in practice, on a relatively small scale, and also raises a question of general importance. Just as household livelihoods themselves straddle the boundaries between conventionally discrete economic sectors (industry/agriculture, formal employment/informal economic activity) and often the boundaries between conventionally discrete geographical spaces (urban/rural), so livelihoods research must transcend local 'communities' in order to comprehend both intra-household relationships and significant inter-household social relationships as these change over time. Both forms of relationship may be geographically 'stretched' over considerable physical distances. Neither form is readily susceptible to proper investigation through the conventional methods either of household survey work carried out within specified communities or of 'participatory' workshops confined to such communities. This immediately begs the question of an appropriate trade-off between work in one

25

'community' that purports in one way or another to be representative of that community, and work of a more dispersed but intensive kind that seeks to investigate at first hand disparate economic activities, and the relationships between them, that together comprise any one household livelihood but that often 'stretch' far beyond the physical boundaries of the community. A vital part of the effectiveness of this kind of work was following up the same individuals and families at different points in time, scattered as they often were in different places, with repeated (small-scale) household surveys to plot demographic turnover and the trajectories of individuals' experience. It could not, however, be claimed in any serious sense to be 'participatory'.

Four in-depth examples of uses of livelihoods approaches are:

1. Frank Ellis: combining sample surveys and participatory techniques (eastern Africa)

Frank Ellis, an agricultural economist at the University of East Anglia, is an important contributor to recent thinking on livelihoods, diversity and vulnerability, through influential articles (in 1998) and his book *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries* (2000). In Part III of this book he elaborates the combination of survey and participatory methods that, in his view, opens up the possibility of a better understanding of rural livelihoods.

He outlines a critique of large-scale income surveys, on largely familiar grounds, with reference to studies undertaken in Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania in particular, and concludes that they are of very limited use in understanding changes in rural livelihoods over time. Smaller-scale sample surveys relating to particular communities or regional populations are of rather more use. He also advocates various different PRA methods (key informants, semi-structured interviews, informal group discussions, focus group discussions, Venn diagrams) 'for discovering, quite quickly, the mediating processes within which livelihood strategies are adopted', relating to social relations, institutions and organisations. He then offers a useful summary of the typical characteristics of different field methods, under the headings of large-scale sample surveys, small-scale sample surveys, semi-structured or participatory enquiry, and case-studies (Ellis, 2000: 196-7).

Ellis illustrates the practical application of these disparate methods through a case-study carried out in three villages in northern Tanzania in 1997. An experimental combination of methods was applied, guided by 'considerations of cost-effectiveness and timeliness in obtaining policy-useful research results' (Ellis, 2000: 200). They were:

26

- Semi-structured focus group discussions
- A participatory wealth-ranking exercise
- A sample survey of household demography and remittance income, farm incomes, non-farm income sources and household assets [30 households interviewed in each of three villages]

Typologies of livelihood strategies were derived from these exercises, and households were 'mapped' according to the relative robustness of income contributions derived from each mode of livelihood. With some qualifications and reservations, the expectation of the study was broadly confirmed: that focus group discussions and other participatory methods were well-suited to discovering the 'vulnerability context' of rural livelihoods; while sample survey methods were better suited to 'examining more concretely how the assets and activities of the poor differ from those of the better-off' (Ellis, 2000: 227).

2. Khanya: the 'vertical transect' methodology (southern and central Africa)

http://www.khanya-aicdd.org/

Khanya-African Institute for Community-Driven Development, based in Bloemfontein, South Africa, has committed much of its work towards developing the applications of a livelihoods framework in the context of poverty reduction strategies. The Sustainable Livelihoods approach, in their view, does help to structure analysis of the support required to assist the poor. Particularly important are 1) a holistic analysis of strengths and 2) an understanding of macro-micro linkages. 'Decentralised approaches are needed, in which the district level acts as the interface between micro-level understanding of clients, with macro-level policies, and provides the key intermediation in terms of matching poor people's preferred outcomes and strategies with appropriate service delivery… At levels higher than district the complexity of achieving effective co-ordination and integration of services and programmes becomes too great' (Goldman *et al.*, 2000: 4).

Khanya identified the advantages of the approach as follows (Goldman *et al.*, 2000: 3): its participatory methodology; the opportunity and need for pre-project ownership creation; developing a common methodology. Four levels were identified: the community level; the local service-provider level; the meso-level; the centre. Through their experience in three countries in southern Africa, they laid out a series of phases in developing a poverty reduction strategy using the Sustainable Livelihoods approach:

- Developing an interest in and commitment to such a strategy

27

- Organising a detailed study
- Conducting and writing up the study
- Developing the strategy
- Implementation of the strategy

The main political requirement was a sense of 'ownership' and commitment in appropriate departments of government at a fairly high administrative level. The principal methodological approach, however, was a variety of PRA exercises undertaken directly with local people. 'The approach used builds from what we see (and don't see) in the reality of people's lives - so the focus of the study is on learning from people on the ground, the micro-level, understanding what impacts on their lives from that level, and how successive levels above support (or don't) the operation at micro-level' (Khanya, 2000: 5).

Khanya offers the experience of a vertical transect methodology, proceeding from an overview of policies at the centre to rapid assessments at village, district and provincial levels and then return to the centre. Such a vertical transect, they recommend, should involve an intensive study of about six to eight weeks, with a multi-disciplinary team of three to five people for efficiency and economy. The team proposed the following more detailed schedule: a few days at the centre; one week on PRA investigations in case study locations; moving through layers of government service and support with workshops, semi-structured interviews and key informants; returning to case-study locations for at least one day to validate and triangulate, as well as further to explore specific identified issues; and arrangements for involving local people in the production of the report. Much weight was attached to the analysis of rural livelihoods in case-study areas. Some basic quantitative data could be gathered from participants, but the principal techniques were those associated with PRA, with an emphasis on 'the community themselves' defining their circumstances, needs and desired outcomes.

One problem with such an approach is that constituencies defined separately for the purpose of setting up focus groups, such as 'farmers', 'women', 'youth', 'pensioners', often overlap in practice. The whole point of livelihoods research, after all, is to understand the ways in which diverse modes of livelihood are inter-related through the management of complex household portfolios in circumstances of structural change, not simply to identify the supposedly discrete concerns and interests of distinguishable social categories of the population.

3. Livelihood trajectories (western Nepal and eastern India)

See: Bagchi *et al*. (1998)

The explicit research aim of the ESCOR-funded project on Long-Term Change and Livelihoods, initiated by the Overseas Development Group (ODG) at the University of East Anglia, was to describe and explain trajectories of change for individuals and groups over time, through fieldwork in 1996-7 in 15 villages in Western Nepal and two villages in West Bengal and Bihar. The comparative base for the work in Nepal was a sample survey of 667 rural households in Western Nepal carried out by the ODG in 1974-5. The team drew on other survey work undertaken in the mid-1970s to support the comparative longitudinal work in the other two areas.

Livelihood trajectories, according to the team:

- provide insights into the changing welfare and capabilities of individuals and of groups;
- can illuminate the process of change by revealing the ways in which negotiation, bargaining and struggle can alter circumstances;
- make it possible to 'bridge the supposed micro-macro divide' by a process of aggregation upwards from the lives of individuals;
- combine insights, in a seriously inter-disciplinary spirit, from the many different paradigms prevalent in development studies.

On the third point above, 'progressive aggregation admittedly moves away from the rich and revealing, life-as-lived from day to day embeddedness of [Livelihood Trajectories], but increasingly makes possible generalisation and structural explanation as one moves upwards from households to local communities, districts, regions and states'. Livelihoods analysis 'starts from daily lives and experiences' but moves on 'to explore not only 'how people make history' but also the constraints that limit their functioning and capabilities'.

This project was explicitly 'longitudinal' in pursuit of its principal objectives, although not - for the most part - in the strict sense of following up the same individuals over time. Such research, while fraught with methodological problems, is potentially very valuable because of the time-scale of comparison. It is also highly unusual in practice, largely because of the massive wastage incurred through the familiar phenomenon of 'loss of institutional memory' over much shorter periods of time than the two decades considered here. A particular virtue of the article cited (Bagchi *et al*., 1998) is its explicit discussion of these methodological

29

problems: for example, the difficulties of replication of the original sample(s) against the need for random sampling of population(s) 20 years later; the 'gain' of pursuing 'original' households against the 'loss' of a demographically unrepresentative range of households, etc. In the Nepalese case, the team found, only about 40 per cent of the original 1974-5 respondents were still living in 1996-97. However, without access to reliable baseline studies in West Bengal and Bihar that suited the particular purposes of the study, the team had to adopt 'a more opportunist and eclectic construction' of livelihood trajectories, through the use of various studies carried out at different times and for very different purposes.

The team used a variety of research techniques, such as village mapping, wealth-ranking, formal randomised sample household surveys and life histories. They also experienced major tension between quantitative and qualitative techniques. 'The quantitative data provided the basis for showing *what* and emphasising what was representative, while the qualitative was able to reveal *how* and *why* and to highlight differences and variety within the range of human experiences in the areas studied - experiences that could help explain, problematize, and contextualize differences and changes in average values of variables from the quantitative survey' (Bagchi *et al.*, 1998: 461).

4. Changing livelihoods: life histories and 'cluster' analysis (South Africa)

The objectives of the ESCOR-funded Multiple Livelihoods and Social Change project (life-span 1998-2001) were as follows:

- to analyse socio-economic differentiation in two densely populated but relatively remote (former 'homeland') areas of South Africa;
- to identify the intervening socio-economic, political and institutional variables that affect efforts to alleviate poverty through improved livelihood opportunities;
- to develop a distinctive combination of methods for the study of multiple household livelihoods as they change over time, and for relating changes at the micro-level to changes at the macro-level.

Fieldwork was undertaken in the Central District of North-West Province and 'greater' Qwaqwa, Free State. Elizabeth Francis worked for three months in two adjacent villages in North-West in March-June 1999. She conducted forty-one life history interviews with people in forty different households in these two villages and with farmers on nearby state land. She used a unified interview framework that included questions about contemporary livelihoods. Interviews lasted around two hours. She also conducted interviews dealing with the local and

30

regional institutional context with chiefs, headmen, local councillors, other local political activists, members of local community-based organisations, district council officials, provincial government departments and the National African Farmers' Union.

Her sample was constructed in order to capture differences in livelihoods, resource access and income levels. She used snowball sampling, in order to understand inter-household relations through looking at clusters of associated individuals and households. Commercial farmers led her to people they had employed, members of other households introduced her to their kin and in-laws, to people they brewed beer with, people who herded their stock or helped them regularly, people who paid them to do domestic work, or to people who fostered their children. In following up relationships between individuals in different households, there was a tension between her wish to explore these further and her understanding of the importance of keeping the sample as widely-based as possible, in order to avoid potential biases. She asked informants about dispersed household members, kin with whom there was a lot of contact, and other people with whom there were relationships which impinged on livelihoods.

By placing these changes in the context of local and national transformations, it was possible to relate some of the household-level changes to socio-economic, political and institutional changes at the regional, provincial and national levels.

2.3.3 Undertaking livelihoods research

1. Collect relevant secondary data

An overview of the types of data which this may include is given in Box 3.

Box 3: Secondary data relevant for livelihoods research

Agro-ecological zone (may not be relevant for urban and peri-urban areas)
- Rainfall (average amounts, localised spatial, annual and seasonal variability)
- Temperature (seasonal variation, averages)
- Local geomorphology (including depth of water table, presence of aquifers, soil type)
- Climax vegetation type and forest cover

Contextual information
- Significant political, historical and cultural background

Infrastructure
- Road, rail and waterway connections
- Does the area have a good, reliable and affordable power network? What proportion of enterprises and households are connected?
- Does the area have a good, reliable and affordable telecommunications network?
- The proportion of households with water and sanitation access. Who provides this?

Social services
- The enrolment and retention rates for girl and boy children in the area
- The key health risks in the area
- Literacy, mortality and morbidity rates
- What services are available, and what do different types of people use?
- Who provides the health and education services and how are they paid for?

Existing development interventions
- By national and local government as well as CBO, NNGO, SNGO and donor involvement

Market information
- Functioning of markets for agricultural inputs (including land and labour) and outputs.
- Functioning of markets for other significant local industries/ enterprises/ livelihood activities.
- Do markets conform to neo-classical expectations? If not, what are the main causes of market failure? (e.g. they suffer from monopsony and monopoly or there is differential access)

Main economic activities
- List of main activities (by importance in generating food security, protecting households from vulnerability, generating employment, income, export from district or region?)

Livelihood activities and coping strategies
- Overlaps with the above, but includes *all* non-monetised activities and coping strategies

Socio-economic information
- What are the important determinants of poverty in the area?
- Have participatory poverty assessments been conducted in the area and what useful information do they provide? Do you need to conduct local wealth ranking and other participatory exercises to understand the nature of poverty in the local community?
- What proportion of people are below the poverty line? Is this information disaggregated by poverty severity and household/ individual characteristics?

Possible sources:
- (Government) Central Statistical Office reports (Household Survey Reports)
- Local government statistics – held at the municipal and district level
- Participatory Poverty Assessments
- World Bank Reports, held or produced by the country office
- Bilateral donor reports
- Grey cover reports held by NNGOs and SNGOs, local universities, in-country research teams

2. Collect basic primary data

Some of the information above will not be available in secondary sources. Researchers need to identify *key informants* to provide them with this, through structured or semi-structured interviews. These interviews can be followed up with participatory methods (including focus groups) to deepen an understanding of the context of local livelihoods. This should provide the researchers with sufficient information to identify the main livelihood activities.

3. Decide on an approach for collecting more in-depth data

Researchers then need to adopt an approach for the collection of further data. They may decide to purposively select households based on their *level of poverty* (wealth/ wellbeing rank or income decile?) and their *main livelihood activity* (importance in protecting food security, income, allocation of labour time, allocation of land or other capitals to production?). This will allow the research team to develop a number of in-depth case studies. This can be triangulated with findings from community level participatory exercises and sample surveys.

One possible approach is using in-depth case studies:

1. Select household using a mixture of wealth rank and livelihood
2. Interview household members at their home/ enterprise (increases researcher's understanding of the household)
3. Interview more than one household member, if possible (to increase understanding of intra-household dynamics and access to and control of resources)
4. Interview on more than one occasion, if possible (this allows cross-checking, probing and follow-up)
5. Use a semi-structured interview approach to build up an understanding of:

   - size and structure of the household (including migrants in and out, servants, adopted children, joint household structures etc.)
   - intra-household allocation of tasks and responsibilities
   - inter and intra-household borrowing/ lending/ giving
   - role of remittances
   - endogenous and exogenous risks
   - shocks
   - trends

- household responses to shocks and trends – coping and adaptation
- main household assets, (inventory of human, natural, social, physical, financial capital, plus political capital, if desired) (owned, held in common, available through reciprocal arrangements etc.)
- calls on household assets
- differentiated list of livelihood activities – differentiated by gender, relationship to household head, age, seasonal, occasional, regular, constant. Differentiated by level of returns. Which activity is main income earner, most significant for food security? Which are coping strategy activities, 'accumulation activities' (those aimed at enrichment)? Which are natural resource based/ non-NR based? Which are reliant on common properties? Which are dependent on relationships with others? Which are reliant on markets? Are any illegal or frowned on?
- the key constraints for these livelihood activities (including barriers to entry, like level of capitalisation needed, required skill level, high social and political capital necessary)
- the key risks/ problems/ constraints faced in each of these activities. Which have drudgery associated with them?
- asking the respondent: What are the livelihood activities of the poorest in the community? Why do they do these activities? What are the livelihood activities of the richest? Have these activities made them rich? If not, how did they accumulate wealth? What are the main barriers to entry for these activities?

The case study can be written up using the Livelihoods Framework as an organising principle, but might also include other issues, such as: intra-household differentiation, livelihood constraints, vulnerability to shocks, coping, and capabilities to escape poverty. The findings can be cross-checked with participatory and survey findings for representativeness.

2.4   Political science-influenced approaches

Political science uses a number of broad theoretical approaches and methodologies, including: normative theory; institutional approaches; behavioural analysis; rational choice theory; feminist perspectives; Marxist theory; critical theory; discourse theory; qualitative analysis; quantitative methods; comparative approaches and structure and agency debates. Certain aspects of each of these theoretical schools can be found in documents produced *about* chronic poverty, and it is important for the researcher to recognise these underlying assumptions. They can cause development projects to fail or succeed.

- <u>Normative theory</u>*:* describes how something should be, its ideal type and properties. Normative work covers, for example, the mode of theoretical analysis we might use to conceptualise how a democracy should work. Some research on governance in the south has included normative assumptions about western liberal democracy which may not have been relevant, and sought to test a political structure by whether it had recognisable 'good' features, such as an independent judiciary or multi-party elections. The advantages of normative approaches are that a particular institution, political system or set of social relationships can be judged or measured against an ideal type, which may serve to clarify weaknesses. The disadvantages of this approach are that it is ahistorical, inevitably judgmental and can cause offence.

- <u>Institutional approaches</u>*:* an example would be the widely used institutional appraisals which seek to test the efficiencies or otherwise of governmental systems. The weaknesses of institutional appraisal are that fundamental power relationships can be obscured in states which have been 'hollowed out' (Holloway), or where an institutional façade (Richards, 1996) hides other, often patrimonial types of resource allocation.

- <u>Rational choice theory</u>*:* this asserts that individuals behave in ways which are determined by their own self-interest, based in cost-benefit analysis of how they believe they will materially benefit from a choice of option open to them. However, the weaknesses of this approach as it relates to chronic poverty analysis is that people make more complex choices based in assessment of other collective identities such as family and community. They may not choose an option which represents the maximisation of material reward, or might make an inaccurate assessment of what that might be.

- <u>Feminist perspectives</u>*:* have been particularly important in demonstrating the weaknesses of assuming that individuals are motivated by self-interest and material concerns and have also shown that household-based quantitative research is particularly

35

inaccurate in terms of significant intra-household differences in income and consumption between the genders

- Marxist theory*:* stresses the role of classes in historical change, whereby capitalist accumulation leads to contradictory interests held by different groups in a society. Stakeholder analysis is used in poverty research to reflect the idea that different groups have competing interests and that unless these can be analysed and negotiated certain groups may harbour reasons to prevent particular outcomes of poverty reduction policy.

- Discourse theory: has established that people's identities are critical to their forms of behaviour and participation in development. Identities are also actively constructed for them by power-holders seeking to recruit political support by appealing to a particular collectivity: a region, ethnicity or historical identity. Ideas of participation, empowerment and ownership by the subjects of research are partly a response to the writings of discourse theorists.

- Structure and agency debates*:* are at the core of much political science analysis although more obviously prominent in Marxian accounts. These remind us that the process of political change and the positioning of the poor are a complex outcome of how different people(s), or agents, relate to and within institutions, or structures. Institutions are formed at particular times by an expressed need of a group of human agents. Over time they can develop 'institutional interests' which prevent them from changing to meet the requirements of a new circumstance. This is important to bear in mind when, for example, a governmental institution is failing to deliver services or perform its role. This could be because the function it actually serves, (such as providing livelihoods for its employees), prevents it performing its 'proper' governance function, (since there is then, perhaps, insufficient resources left to provide services).

- Political economy*:* this is an important theoretical tool since it recognises the intimate relationship between economic and political factors in processes of change and development. At an international level political and economic factors shape the boundaries of what is feasible and possible in the context of poverty reduction.

Political scientists also share many of their tools for political enquiry with social scientists more generally, including ways of designing research projects, the use of hypotheses and argument, literature reviews and content analysis, interviewing and participant observation, survey research, case studies and data analysis through the use of descriptive statistics, cross tabulation and regression analysis. Qualitative analysis; quantitative methods; and comparative approaches are also shared with other social scientists.

36

As well as these tools and forms of analysis, political scientists also use more complex concepts which describe the subjects of, types, and patterns of historical political change. However, most of these 'big' ideas are contested. Using concepts can, however, allow us to explore historical questions and development trajectories. For example, the concepts of 'nationalism', 'socialism', 'democracy' and 'secularism' have contested, but constructed meanings in political theory. However, when applied to processes in India, as in Box 4, it becomes clear that they can be used in widely different contexts and from different points of view to describe what a commentator might think has happened.

Source for above section: Morris Szeftel, course materials, 'Government and Politics in India' (University of Leeds, 2001)

Box 4: How key concepts can have differing meanings

Compare the following alternative arguments. To what extent are any of them accurate?

- Nationalism: **either** provided a nation-building ideology to unite India's disparate societies **or** legitimised state-led industrialisation and the fostering of an indigenous capitalist class.
- Socialism: **either** expressed an Indian commitment to greater equality, abolishing poverty and removing social discrimination **or** provided a rhetorical smokescreen behind which new privileged classes could develop and consolidate.
- Democracy: **either** reflected a commitment to parliamentarism and multi-party electoral competition **or** represented the reality of trying to meet local and regional demands through the use of government patronage.

- Secularism: **either** represented a commitment to religious tolerance and cultural pluralism within a united nation **or** was a means of suppressing and excluding a whole range of legitimate traditional and local interests.

Source: Szeftel (2001)

Go to Methods Toolbox at: www.chronicpoverty.org/page/toolbox

2.4.1 Political capital

'Political capital' is increasingly recognised as the missing dimension of livelihoods approaches, and as one potential remedy to the limited use of political analysis in studies of development and poverty. To a large extent, political capital is proposed as a means of overcoming some of the problems of using 'social capital' as a catch-all concept for explaining the importance of non-material factors in poverty. For example, John Booth and Patricia Richard (1998: 782) argue that in order for associational activism to have political significance, it needs to go beyond social capital and 'foster attitudes and behaviors that actually influence regimes in some way'. Carole Rakodi (1999: 334) makes a case for political capital because of 'the significance attached to powerlessness in the poor's own definitions of poverty' and defines it as 'based on access to decision-making' in the political process (ibid 318).

In a strongly argued paper, Pari Baumann (2000: 6) states that political capital 'is one of the key capital assets on which people draw to build their livelihoods'. Claims and assets are defined as 'rights' that are politically defended, and that 'how people access these assets depends on their political capital' (op. cit.). As such, political capital acts 'as a gatekeeper asset, permitting or preventing the accumulation of other assets upon which successful poverty-reducing growth depends' (Booth *et al.*, 1998: 79 cited in Rakodi, 1999: 318). Political capital also helps to explains where local people are situated in terms of the balance of power in relation to other groups (Baumann, 2000: 6).

The most extensive elaboration of political capital as an operational concept comes from Regina Birner and Heidi Wittner (2000: 6), who propose a distinction between 'instrumental' and 'structural' political capital.

- Structural political capital 'refers to the structural variables of the political system which influence the possibilities of diverse actors to accumulate instrumental political capital and condition the effectiveness of different types of political capital'. This includes not only democratic political institutions, political openness, devolution, and civil rights, but also 'perverse political capital' such as institutions of repression (which can catalyse activism and demand-making).
- Instrumental political capital 'consists of the resources which an actor…can dispose of and use to influence policy formation processes and realise outcomes which are in an actor's perceived interest'.

As yet, studies of political capital have tended to dwell on the links between political capital and poverty reduction, rather than those between low levels of political capital and poverty itself, chronic or otherwise. Research has so far focused on the transformation of social into political capital, particularly in terms of how local communities and groups can influence policy (Birner and Wittner 2000, Booth and Richards, 1998), on the links between political capital and levels of democracy (Booth and Richards 1998), and also on elaborating the analytical, conceptual and practical relationship of political capital to other capital assets within the sustainable livelihoods framework (Baumann 2000; Rakodi, 1999).

Following the distinction between structural and instrumental types of political capital, a number of key researchable variables emerge (Box 5). Rakodi (1999: 318) notes that levels of political capital are highly gendered at the local level, a finding that reinforces the need to examine political capital in terms of its relationship to key dimensions of social difference, including age, ethnicity, class and caste.

Go to Methods Toolbox at: www.chronicpoverty.org/page/toolbox

Box 5: Researchable variables for political capital

Structural political capital
- Political party system/level of competitiveness
- Political ideologies
- Freedom/presence of the press
- Political openness
- Devolution/decentralisation
- Political relevance of poverty problems in political decision-making
- Participatory elements in political decision-making
- Level of state institutionalisation
- Discretionary administrative authority
- 'Perverse political capital': institutions of repression, 'money-politics', vote-buying, patron-client links
- The political settlement: the balance of power that enables the definition of a structure of rights
- Political accountability and political leadership

Instrumental political capital/political capital as an asset
- Political and civil rights (e.g. of association, voting)
- Rights over natural resources
- Disruptive leverage (rallies, protests, cultural 'weapons of the weak')
- Access to press
- Access to decision-making processes
- Use of scientific knowledge and ideological resources in political discourse
- Level of associational participation
- Contacts/links with public officials
- International resources that can be used in local and national political processes (financial resources, international conventions)

Source: adapted from Birner and Wittner (2000: 20, 24), Booth and Richard (1998: 785) and Baumann (2000)

Macro- and meso-level research is clearly required at the level of 'structural' political capital. One study of political capital uses large-scale cross-sectional survey data of six Central American countries, focusing on items relating to political participation, political attitudes and values, and democratic norms (Booth and Richard, 1998: 784-5). The UNDP's 'Political freedom index' (2000) could also be of use here, as could its work on making the links between human rights and development.

One community level study uses newspaper-based and documentary research, along with key informant interviews, in the context of specific case-studies (Birner and Wittner, 2000). Some of the methods used to explore levels of social capital at community level may also be appropriate. For example, social mapping could be adapted to 'political mapping' of people's access to decision-making institutions, while timelines could be used to track changing levels of political capital, particularly in relation to wider events (e.g. elections, constitutional change). Participatory approaches have also been used to explore people's rights over resources (Slocum *et al.*, 1995).

41

<u>Researching the politics of chronic poverty</u>

This section includes a series of suggested themes and questions to investigate how politics relates to the reduction and reproduction of poverty. It is not intended to be a universal toolbox as politics needs to be understood within particular contexts and in relation to specific historical and socioeconomic trajectories. However, it does provide entry points for more detailed investigations into how politics relates to the causes, characteristics and eradication of chronic poverty.

 'Politics' is considered here at a number of levels within the boundaries of the state, and as pertaining to aspects of political science, political sociology, and, to a lesser extent, political economy. There are at least three different ways to approach politics in this context;

1. <u>Examine the key features of national level political systems</u>. This pays particular attention to aspects of the political system that have proven relevance to poverty (Table 4).

2. <u>A 'bottom-up' perspective investigating the political assets, and the agency, that is required for poor people to influence policy, and politics</u> more broadly, in ways that increase their capacity to accumulate assets and devise sustainable livelihood strategies.

3. <u>A 'citizenship' approach,</u> arising from a particular strand within the growing terrain of politics and poverty research, which suggests that poverty and poverty reduction can be conceived of in terms of 'citizenship', as defined within the parameters of a social and political contract between state and citizen in particular contexts.

Table 1: The political system

Themes	Key questions	Potential links to chronic poverty
Authority	Does the government:	
	Have a monopoly over violence and coercion?	Conflict; instability; respect for govt will influence citizen mobilisation
	Control its borders?	Illegal trade, migration
	Levy taxes widely?	Connection between state and citizens; accountability
	Do any groups benefit from 'disorder'?	Does impoverishment suit certain groups?
	How much confidence do people have in the ability of government to solve the main problems confronting society?	Influences extent to which citizens will pressurise state for pro-poor policy change
Geo-strategic and territorial features	Population size and distribution/density?	Affects capacity of state to reach people, achieve economies of scale, convert economic resources into human development, pool of human resources to draw on
	How is policy-making influenced by external actors? (Other governments, regional bodies, aid donors)	Locate intervention points
Internal distribution of power	Where does authority reside within the political system? (e.g. balance of powers between legislature and executive; role of the military; level of decentralisation)	Influences accountability, restraint on predatory government
	To what extent does legislation originate in the legislature rather than executive?	Scope for wider representation of interests/ideas; breadth of political debate; control over corruption.
	Does the judiciary have the authority to challenge the executive?	e.g. social movements have achieved success by targeting courts; land
	Do sub-national levels of government have significant levels of autonomy?	Complex links between decentralisation and poverty (see below)
	What role do leaders play at different levels of the system? What is their social background?	
Institutionalisation	What mode of operation typifies government conduct? (e.g. do institutional or clientelistic imperatives govern the distribution of resources, appointments etc?)	Influences (mis)use of public resources; shapes political action; scope for reciprocity
	To what extent is politics and policy-making either informal or routine?	
	What are the procedures for recruitment, promotion, and remuneration of staff?	State efficiency; access to different groups; reflects contract
Responsiveness	How accessible are elected representatives to their constituents?	Extent to which poor groups can influence politicians
	How systematic is consultation with users over service delivery?	Relevance, appropriateness of services
	What degree of political priority is given to issues relating to poverty?	
Representation/	What is the constituent basis of each of	

43

Competition	the main parties? (socioeconomic, ethnic, caste, region, urban/rural)	
	To what extent are poor groups represented within the main political parties?	Strongly informs likelihood of a pro-poor political agenda
	How accessible are the main parties?	Informs possibility of broad pro-poor coalitions
	How broad is the ideological spectrum?	Room for 'alternative' social projects
	How is political competition organised?	
	Are their fair electoral laws?	
	Is there a realistic opportunity for opposition parties to gain power through elections?	
	Are any parties interested of taking ownership of a poverty reduction agenda?	For long-term, cumulative poverty reduction
Participation	What are the main axes of participation/inclusion in system? (e.g. regionality, religion, ethnicity)	Cross-reference with spatial and social distribution of poverty
	How far do women participate in political life and public office at all levels?	Women as over-represented among chronically poor
	How equal is access for all social groups to public office?	
Resource base	To what extent does the state depend on its citizenry for its fiscal base?	Increased responsiveness, social contract
	Is the state heavily dependent on oil/mineral resources?	Politicians reluctant to lose control of access to resources, linked to military rule, disconnect
	Is the government a recipient of large amounts of aid from multiple donors?	Aid dependency reduces connection with citizens; donor competition can reduce policy-making coherence
Accountability	To what extent can the government be held to account by (a) other aspects of the system, (b) its citizens?	
	Are different parts of the state apparatus accountable to each other?	
Constitutionality	To what degree are the actions of the political executive constrained by law and constitution?	
	How easily can the government amend the constitution to suit its own purposes?	
Rule of law	Does the rule of law generally prevail/what are crime levels?	Impact on economic activity, electoral behaviour, protection of physical assets etc.
	How reliable, effective and lawful are the police?	Security as key aspect of poverty
	How affordable, impartial, and consistent are the courts?	Can poor protect themselves?
Capacity	How accessible and reliable are public services for those who need them?	
	What capacity does the state have to formulate and implement national policy initiatives?	
	Can the state raise, manage and deploy public revenue?	
	Does it have the capacity to monitor socioeconomic trends and activities	

44

	within its borders?	
	How high is the quality of personnel and organisation in the civil service?	
	How high is the quality of personnel and organisation in the military?	
Political elites	How is poverty conceptualised (e.g. are different categories of the poor identified) and prioritised amongst elite groups?	Extent of action on poverty; which poor groups targeted and how.
	What is the character and level of interdependence between elite and poor groups (e.g. exploitative, few links, reciprocity)?	Extent to which political power relations cause and/or reproduce poverty; constraints on elites
	What are the key modes of economic accumulation employed by elite groups? What resources do they rely on?	Poor less likely to be represented where economic and political power is closely entwined
	Is there a culture/code of reciprocity that could catalyse pro-poor action?	e.g. nationalist, ethnic, religious, regional obligations
	In what ways might elites perceive themselves as benefiting from poverty reduction?	e.g. fear of cholera in C19[th] European cities generated elite action
	How do politicians interact with market actors?	If ec & pol elites are entwined, less scope for 'progressive' politics
	What is the degree of inter-elite conflict? (e.g. low/medium/high)	Greater conflict / less cohesion allows other groups access
Decentralisation and poverty	How far do sub-central tiers of government have the powers and resources to carry out their responsibilities?	
	How far are these levels of government subject to free and fair electoral authorisation, and to the criteria of openness, accountability and responsiveness in their operation?	
	Is the ruling party at local level 'owned' by an elite group? Does it represent the interests of poor groups?	Strongly informs likelihood of a pro-poor political agenda
	Does the poverty in the decentralised zone result from internal/local or external/national inequalities?	If local inequalities, then decent. is unlikely to benefit poor.
	Which groups are best placed to take advantage of resources and decision-making powers that are devolved?	

Source: Hickey (2002) The Politics of Chronic Poverty: Towards a Research Agenda

The themes and variables in Table 4 are compiled from two types of sources: existing governance and/or democracy indexes, and lessons drawn from wider literature on the links between politics and poverty. The most useful sources have been the *International IDEA Handbook on Democracy Assessment* (Beetham *et al.* 2002) and Mick Moore's (2001b) paper on political systems.

45

2.4.2   Social exclusion and poverty

At its broadest level, social exclusion is defined as 'the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from the society in which they live' (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 1995 cited in de Haan and Maxwell, 1998: 2). Social exclusion is not coterminous with poverty (e.g. it is possible to be excluded without being poor), but seeks to provide a broader view of deprivation and disadvantage than poverty. More specifically, social exclusion can be viewed as an analytical concept which directs us to the way in which social structures can generate poverty, but which extends beyond explanations of social or material deprivation to include an analysis of the way in which social institutions function and develop (Gore and Figueiredo, 1997: 41).

In comparison to other poverty debates, social exclusion can be strongly linked to notions of 'relative poverty', Amartya Sen's work on 'entitlements' and the 'vulnerability' approach forwarded by Robert Chambers (de Haan, 1998: 14-15). There are also links to social and political capital, particularly in terms of working towards policies and programmes for challenging socially-related aspects of poverty. However, social exclusion is more firmly focused on deprivation than either of these concepts [op. cit.]. The World Bank (2000: 117) has adopted the discourse of social exclusion, explicitly recognising the importance of sociopolitical factors in causing poverty – including chronic poverty: 'Discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, or social status can lead to social exclusion and lock people into long-term poverty traps'.

In economic terms, exclusion from labour markets, credit and other forms of 'capital asset' are the key processes. Socially, exclusion may take the form of discrimination along a number of dimensions – gender, ethnicity, age – which effectively reduces the opportunity for such groups to gain access to social services and limits their participation in the labour market (See Box 6).

Box 6: Dimensions of exclusion

People might be excluded from:

- land and other natural resources (because of scarcity, landlessness and lack of legal entitlement)
- agricultural livelihood (due to lack of access to inputs or labour availability)
- formal and informal employment (relating to patterns of labour absorption, education and social identity)
- organisation and representation (due to patterns of political inclusion)
- social services (distance, usage costs)
- physical infrastructure (distance, usage costs)
- credit
- family and sociability
- housing

'Women', the 'elderly' and the 'young' might be considered to be particularly at risk from exclusion along some or all of these dimensions.

Source: Adapted from Silver (1994) and Gore (1994).

However, in terms of politics, the discourse of social exclusion has been criticised for being apolitical, in that it allows politicians and other officials to avoid discussing 'poverty', a somewhat harsher term (Gore and Figueredo, 1997: 44). Against this, it can be argued that it is arguably social exclusion's incorporation of the political dimension that makes it distinctive. Social exclusion attempts to analyse the political nature of deprivation, in that it examines the links between people's exclusion from political communities – i.e. a lack of citizenship status – and their levels of poverty. 'Political' aspects of exclusion include the denial of political rights such as political participation and the right to organise, and also of personal security, the rule of law, freedom of expression and equality of opportunity (Bhalla and Lapeyere, 1997: 420). More broadly, however, social exclusion is better understood not as a specifically political concept, but as an attempt to 'ground the understanding of deprivation firmly in traditions of social science analyses' (de Hann, 1999: 1).

Social exclusion has also been criticised for emphasising the residual rather than relational aspects of poverty, and thus detaching the study of poverty from a more political understanding of how power relations within society relate to and cause poverty. This is a valid criticism to the extent that a key argument implied by the concept of social exclusion is that exclusion has replaced exploitation as the main process by which people are impoverished, or 'actively underdeveloped' (Byrne, 1999: 44-59). However, other research within the social exclusion paradigm stresses that exclusion is part and parcel of social relations (de Haan, 1999), and needs to be analysed alongside the terms of incorporation

47

(e.g. adverse incorporation, subordinate inclusion, domination). For Silver (1994: 543), 'exclusion arises from the interplay of class, status and political power' in a way that benefits the included. An example of research that explores this approach would be a study of the Sans in Botswana, who have been conceptualised as being in 'extreme' long-term poverty as a result of being both excluded and structurally incorporated at a low level of socioeconomic reproduction (Good, 1999).

Further criticisms of social exclusion include that in societies where deprivation and political exclusion are mass phenomena that there is little value in labeling the majority of the population as 'excluded'. Social exclusion is also a too broad a notion of deprivation.

Researching social exclusion

Regional studies of social exclusion include sub-Saharan Africa (Gore, 1994) and South Asia (de Haan, 1995). Country studies have been carried out on India (Nayak, 1994; Appasamy *et al*. 1996) and Tanzania (Kaijage and Tibaijuka, 1996), and also Brazil, Yemen and Peru (ILO 1996). Three methodological approaches have so far been adopted in the country case-studies, focusing on *rights*, *groups*, and *institutions* respectively (ILO 1996: 17).

1. *Rights-focused* studies examine the factors or events which determine whether people are able to secure those rights which affect livelihoods. For instance, the study of social exclusion in India focuses explicitly on T.H. Marshall's concept of 'social' rights, specifying the dimensions of health, education, housing and social security (Appasamy *et al*., 1996: 2-3). Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997) suggest that the political dimensions of social exclusion can be explored in terms of Marshall's trilogy of citizenship rights (civil, political and socioeconomic).

2. *Group-based* investigations identify specific social categories and detail their relative deprivation (ILO, 1996: 17). This involves examining the:
   - links between the group's relative deprivation, the working of social institutions and personal attribute's/social identity;
   - relationship of these links to national development trajectories.

3. *Institutional* approaches seek to draw links between: 'the ability of certain categories of persons to participate in social life (and) the evolving nature of:
   - the economic organization of production and exchange;

48

- the political order which regulates the exercise of power, lays down standards and duties, and guarantees rights, and
- culture – codes values and aspirations by means of which people communicate amongst themselves, interpret reality and direct practices, and which are transmitted through primary relationships, education, religion and the various means of communication' (ILO, 1996: 19).

It is possible to merge approaches. For example, the group- and institution-based approaches can be pursued at the same time by examining the participation and interaction of a particular social group in and with a series of institutions.

Social exclusion can be measured through using both quantitative and qualitative methods. De Haan (1999: 11-12) argues that social exclusion can be measured in quantitative terms, while so far the following quantitative approaches have been taken:

- Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997: 426) suggest using the UNDP's political freedom index, which incorporates personal security, rule of law, freedom of expression, political participation and equality of opportunity, may serve as a proxy indicator for the political dimension of exclusion. Quantitative measures of participation and citizenship rights (voter registration, educational enrolment, land ownership) are sometimes available.
- The UNDP 1998 *Human Development Report* operationalised social exclusion as a key concept for its study of high-income countries, and examined levels of unemployment.

More generally, Silver (1998) suggests a number of approaches to monitoring social exclusion. Also see Room (1995) and Lee and Murie (1999).