

Extending Understanding of Chronic Poverty Dynamics: Towards a Post-disciplinary Approach.

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DRAFT FOR COMMENT
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Abstract

This paper begins with a critique of recent tendencies to define policy-relevant poverty research as either 'quantitative' (the household consumption approach) or 'qualitative' (the participatory approach). I then explore the ways in which 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' approaches to chronic poverty are presented in Hulme and Shepherd's recent World Development paper, concluding that there is scope for a more integrated and theoretically-based approach to the actors, structures and dynamics involved in the social construction, reproduction, and reduction of chronic poverty, which could be usefully pursued in a multi- (or even post-) disciplinary fashion. This would take the concept of 'time' seriously and require deeper dialogues between and among 'quantitative' and other researchers around the deep knowledge assumptions involved in poverty research. The paper makes a start in this direction using the 'qualitative' technique of conceptual analysis to develop an analytical framework which takes account of three different levels of analysis (person, livelihood figuration, big structure) and three conceptions of time (calendars, rhythms, histories). Using another qualitative technique (secondary analysis of anthropological case study material from Sierra Leone, Brazil and Haiti) I use the framework to explore the long-lasting poverty of four people living in four different livelihood figurations in three different in/security regime contexts. A comparison of these cases throws up some important features of chronic poverty which are not currently high on research or policy agendas. The paper concludes with a discussion of some of the implications for research approaches to chronic poverty and for praxis more generally.

Key words: chronic, poverty, qualitative, quantitative, multi-disciplinarity

Word Count

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Extending Understanding of Chronic Poverty Dynamics: Towards a Post-disciplinary Approach¹.

‘Poverty wields its destructive influence at every stage of human life, from the moment of conception to the grave.’ (WHO, 1995: 5)

1. Introduction

This paper has four main sections. In the first I argue that there is currently a good opportunity for development studies and policy to adopt a truly multi-disciplinary approach to the study of global poverty. This depends on the removal of ‘development economics’ from where it ‘stands in beleaguered ascendancy, atop development studies and development policy’ (Kanbur, 2002:[1]). One relevant contribution is the promulgation of wider and deeper uses of ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ approaches to poverty research than can be found in the current dominant development policy discourse (see for example the 2001 Cornell University Conference on Qual-Quant, or Q²). In section 2 I explore the ways in which ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ contributions from different social science disciplines are used in Hulme and Shepherd’s recent World Development paper on conceptualising chronic poverty², concluding that there is scope for a much more ‘joined-up’ social science approach to the study of (chronic) poverty.

In the third section I propose (following Kanbur, 2002:[11]) that one way to deal with the ‘beleaguered ascendancy’ of development economics is to shift the focus from the ‘weaknesses of the economic method (which are well known, and well recognised by the best economists)’ to ‘the strengths of other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology or political science’. I make a sociological contribution to the understanding of chronic poverty which involves the inter-active use of conceptual frameworks at three levels (actor, livelihood network, big structure) and the three different conceptualisations of time implicit in the concepts of calendars, rhythms and histories. Section 4 uses four anthropological case studies to illustrate, in a necessarily superficial way, how such an analysis can advance the understanding of chronic poverty, while the concluding section discusses some implications for poverty research and praxis.

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² I have not had a chance to read the other papers from the March 2003 issue of World Development, but will take account of them in revising the paper.

2. Approaches to poverty: some problems with ‘Q²’

In the early and mid 1990s donor-funded poverty research was dominated by neo-classical micro-economists who were mainly developing and applying survey-based techniques and tools to measure household-level consumption poverty. At the same time the burgeoning NGO movement was producing a range of PRA techniques to explore what poor people had to say about their poverty, out of which the PPA approach eventually came to be established as part of the donor-financed PRSP process (www.worldbank.org). The World Development Report of 2000/1 made (rather confused) use of findings generated by both methodologies and there has recently been a move to bring the two approaches together in a more orderly way. A key example is the Cornell conference on ‘Q²’ organised in 2001 by Ravi Kanbur, following which he argued that it is possible to identify five dimensions or spectra along which the two ‘traditions’ range (see Table 1).

Table 1: Poverty Appraisal Spectra: ‘Quantitative’ and ‘Qualitative’ Traditions

Dimensions	Quant tradition) (consumption approach) ¹	Qual tradition (participatory approach)
Type of information on population	numerical	non-numerical
Type of population coverage	general	specific
Type of population involvement	passive	active
Type of inference methodology	deductive	inductive
Type of disciplinary framework	neo-classical economics	broad social sciences

Source: Kanbur, 2002:1

¹ In his discussion of underlying assumptions Shaffer (2002) replaces ‘quant’ with ‘consumption approach’ and ‘qual’ with ‘participatory approach’ which is a more accurate description of current dominant development policy research approaches to poverty.

An underlying theme of this paper is that recent debates about the ‘two ‘Q’s’ have taken very narrow views of what ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ can mean in relation to poverty research, associated with what seems to be an impoverished understanding of what is involved in doing good social science. In a forthcoming paper (Bevan 2003c) I will argue that with respect to any piece of poverty research nine underlying ‘knowledge’ assumptions have to be made, knowingly or unknowingly, all of which involve ‘qualitative aspects’. Table 2 summarises them.

The first three of Kanbur’s dimensions (type of information on population, type of population coverage, type of population involvement) involve assumptions related to ‘research methods’. The fourth, which identifies the economic approach as ‘deductive’ and the PPA approach ‘inductive’ seems arguable; how can regression analyses of household survey data be

Table 2: Poverty Research and Knowledge Assumptions

Knowledge assumption type	Examples
1.* Domain of interest (focus or problematic)	what is (chronic) poverty? what are the particular research questions? what analytical levels are being used? - personal, household, livelihood figuration, locality, region, country, trans-country, global? why?
2. Values	what moral/ethical theories lie behind this interest?
3. Ontology	what are the underlying ontological assumptions about people, social structures, the dynamic relationships between people and social and material structures, what is 'chronic poverty' (before the question of measuring it arises), how does social change occur? what is 'policy'? etc
4. Epistemology	in what ways can 'chronic poverty' be known about? how can we combine knowledges generated using 'positivist', 'post-positivist', 'realist'; 'interpretivist', etc approaches?
5. Theory and explanation	what does a theory look like? what constitutes a theoretical explanation?
6. Research methods	what research approaches are relevant? (e.g. conceptual analysis, modelling, short and long-term observing and/or participating, questioning at a point in time, etc) what is involved in the detailed research methods (techniques and tools for data collection and analysis)? how are issues of validity, 'representativeness' across space and through time, reliability etc dealt with?
7. Empirical conclusions	what kinds of empirical conclusions can be drawn about chronic poverty? what has so far been discovered about chronic poverty?
8. Rhetoric	what kind of language is used to persuade readers of the truth of the conclusions? what readers does the writer have in mind?
9. Praxis	How will the study contribute to anti-poverty action? Who should act? What should they do? Why should they do it? What relationship is assumed to exist between planned action and its consequences?
In what ways are these nine elements inter-related?	Viewed as 'ideology' whose interests does this discourse on chronic poverty actually serve?

*While I have numbered these for ease of referral in practice these assumptions are structured and inter-related rather than organised in a linear fashion.

defined as 'deductive' when analysts are meant to let 'the data tell the story' (White, 2002:). The depiction of 'disciplinary framework' as the 'fifth dimension', with 'neo-classical economics' at one end and 'broad social sciences' at the other (which is problematic in itself³) reveals the first problem with the Cornell version of Q^2 that I want to highlight. This is the practical exclusion from the 'qualitative tradition' of most of the poverty-relevant research that social anthropologists (e.g. Beck, 1994; Scheper-Hughes, 1993; Richards, 1996; Farmer, 1997), sociologists (e.g. Davis, 2003; Bevan, 2003a/b; Wood 2003), political scientists (e.g. Duffield, 2001; Reno, 1998), historians (e.g. Tilly, 1999) and other social scientists (e.g. Barrientos, 2003; Gough, 2003; Room, 2003) actually do, which does not involve 'standard participatory poverty techniques' or regression analyses, but depends on a wide range of other research techniques and tools⁴ some of which involve numbers.

³ I am not sure how disciplinary frameworks can constitute a 'dimension', although they can constitute one side of a 'fractal' (see Abbott, 2000a and below).

⁴ For example secondary analysis of found data, secondary sources, historical documents and artefacts, ethnographies which might include participant observation, semi-structured interviews with key informants, surveys, photographs and videos, mapping, etc which can also be done independently; design is key.

The second problem with ‘Q²’, found in both consumption and participatory approaches, is the failure to be transparent about assumptions being made in most of Table 2’s knowledge dimensions⁵. In most quantitative poverty literature very little information relating to any of these (qualitative) assumptions is provided – which does not mean that qualitative decisions have not been made, as a quick run through the list in Table 1 reveals.

In both approaches to poverty the decision to choose this focus is a qualitative one that can be justified on value and/or practical grounds⁶. Given that choice, why study only decontextualised poor households and poor people? Why not networks, localities, countries, the world? Moving to value assumptions, which link with praxis, ethical outrage at the suffering caused by chronic poverty is an emotion linked with qualitative assumptions about the importance of, and interactions among, values such as justice, equity, freedom etc; assumptions which should be transparent. Then, how ‘chronicity’ is defined ontologically is a qualitative issue, requiring conceptual analysis and, when it comes to epistemology, the imagining of ‘the poor’ as ‘households’ which produce and consume demands qualitative judgments and justifications, and constant acknowledgement that this is a *model* not a description of ‘reality’. The relation assumed between ‘reality’ and ‘model’ always demands qualitative argument.

Turning to research methods, good questionnaire design and application require ‘grounding’ (qualitative) in dialogue with conceptual analysis (qualitative), the construction of linked questions (which has qualitative and quantitative dimensions), appropriate design of question wording and coding (qualitative and quantitative), sensitising to the particular local context (qualitative), interpretation of variables (qualitative). Also, data do not ‘speak for themselves’: questions are framed in a language; someone decided to collect data at household rather than individual level for a (qualitative) reason; statistical techniques involve all sorts of (quantitative and qualitative) assumptions; establishing which correlations are meaningful and what they mean is a qualitative matter; making up a story about the processes whereby variables affect each other is pure ‘quality’. Then when it comes to rhetoric, numbers, equations and graphs take on qualitative as well as quantitative dimensions (McCloskey, 198?). And whether, after completing your study of chronic poverty, you call for a PRSP, a revolution, a micro-credit programme, or more research has nothing (logical) to do with the quantitateness of your research approach.

⁵ This may be because researchers are not aware that they are making them; or of their importance. Or they may feel that they are dealt with by others and nothing to do with them.

⁶ Which may be because it is where the dominant development discourse (and related funds) is ‘at’ currently.

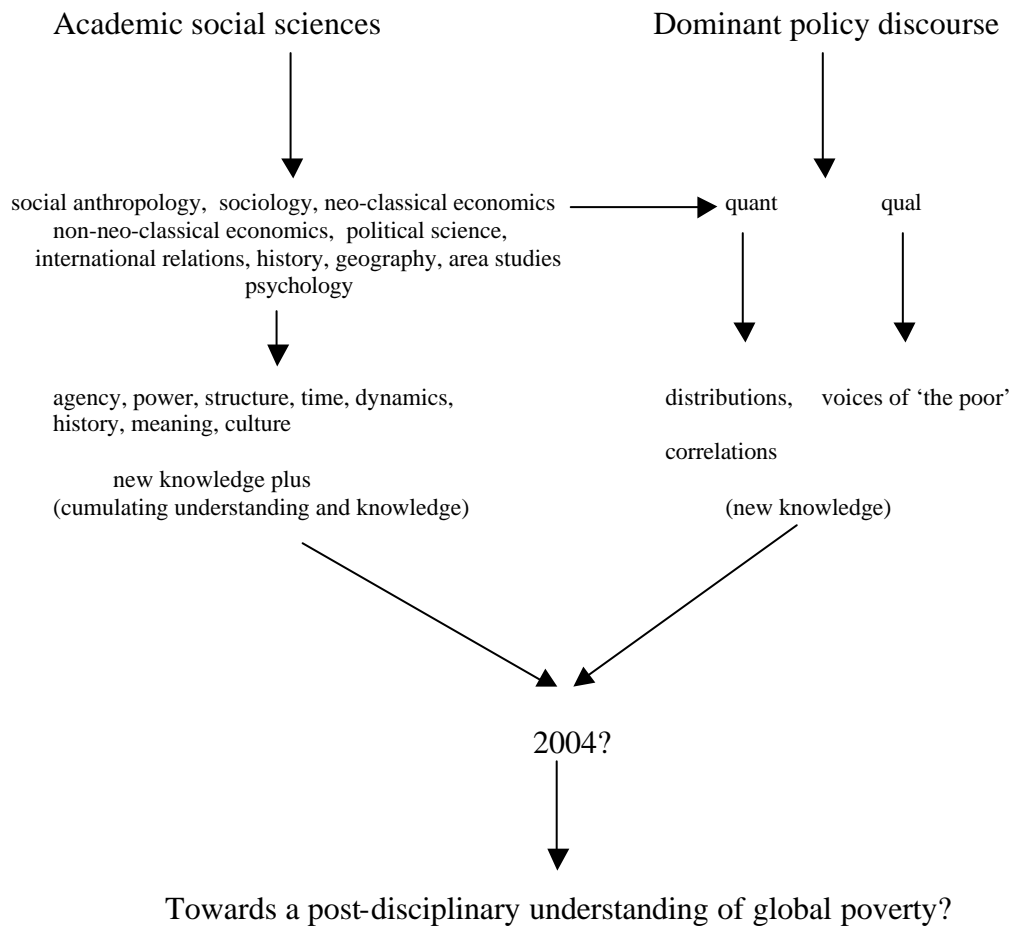
In summary I want to argue that neo-classical economists are actually doing qualitative poverty research using a limited range of data collected qualitatively (usually by other people, often bureaucratically and badly), analysed statistically (using a limited range of procedures), (sometimes) compared with mathematical models, and when it comes to empirical conclusions and related 'policy recommendations' interpreted qualitatively. Participatory poverty researchers are no more transparent about why they ask the questions they do and how they interpret the answers. While rarely acknowledged, both sets of experts are building on earlier research developments in their fields and assisting in the social construction of two taken-for-granted narrow and bureaucratic cultures of poverty research.

The good thing about these two approaches is that they are focusing world-wide attention on poverty. The international institutional of the counting of every poor 'household' in the world and the commitment to listen to the voices of their inhabitants is an important step towards reducing global poverty. However the modes of focus in each tradition decontextualise (remove meaning) and depoliticise (conceal power structures). They abstract from local cultural constructions and experiences of poverty in order that they can be described in the familiar 'universal' terms of Eurocentric development discourse, which contributes to a modernisation programme which needs constant challenging in the name of cultural diversity. And by focusing solely on a taxonomic linearly-defined category of 'the poor', they ignore the (historically situated) structures of power based on the unequal (globally constituted) relationships which generate the distributions and descriptions which they capture with their measures and questions. Finally there seems to be little interest in relating their findings to studies of how underlying structures, dynamics and processes 'work', understanding of which is essential for effective intervention.

Figure 1 depicts the current state of development-related poverty research. Currently 'non-neo-classical economist' poverty social scientists working in any developing country involved in the PRSP process will visit two worlds. The first is the development policy world dominated by Eurocentric images of 'the poor', and descriptions and explanations of their poverty coming out of household surveys and PPAs told in technical, non-emotional, even hopeful languages. The second is a world of ethnography, history and politics where these same poor people, embroiled in problematic relations of exploitation and exclusion, act, suffer and die while trying to make sense of what is happening to them.

Figure 1 also suggests a way forward.

Figure 1: Poverty Research in 2003 (and beyond?)⁷



3. The CPRC approach to ‘Q²’

i. Introduction

The wider donor-funded poverty-research context has inevitably affected the research approaches to long-lasting poverty adopted by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre in its first couple of years of operation. However, in their overview paper, ‘Conceptualising Chronic Poverty’, which appears in the CPRC special World Development issue (March 2003) Hulme and Shepherd do not draw explicit distinctions between ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ approaches to the topic. Rather they skip between concepts associated with neo-classical economic approaches (e.g. ‘poverty’, ‘vulnerability’, ‘poverty dynamics’), PPAs (e.g. God’s poor, shame and humiliation), and those associated with other social sciences (e.g. social exclusion, violence and conflict).

⁷ Thanks to James Copstake for providing the original of this diagram in a WeD Programme discussion.

ii. Quantitative approaches to chronic poverty

Hulme and Shepherd start with the notion that the chronic poor ‘are those who have experienced poverty for long periods or, perhaps, all of their lives...’ (2003: 4). However, for measurers this is not good enough, so, as ‘a rough working definition’ Hulme and Shepherd ‘propose that chronic poverty be viewed as occurring when an individual experiences significant capability deprivations *for a period of five years or more*. (my emphasis)’ (p6) Two of the main arguments for the choice of five years come from the economics literature: first in panel studies there is often a five year gap between data collection points ‘so that in practical terms the study of the duration of poverty will often be based on a five year period⁸’ and ‘some empirical materials indicate that people who stay poor for five years or more have a high probability of remaining poor for the rest of their lives’. The third reason, which is the one that I wish to deconstruct and build on later in this paper, is that ‘(f)ive years is perceived as a significant period of time in an individual’s life course in most cultures’ (p6).

With minimum duration established Hulme and Shepherd describe two quantitative approaches to chronic poverty: one with neo-classical economics roots based on household survey data (of the LSMS type) which identifies and analyses *households* in chronic poverty, and the second which measures the number of *people* in chronic poverty and is related to the MDGs. In the former tradition interest is focused on understanding the nature and degree of multi-dimensionality of income and other capability deprivation. The categories of *always poor*, *usually poor*, *churning poor*, *occasionally poor*, and *never poor* can be used to classify households and to describe poverty transitions and the processes underlying them. Conventional poverty analyses have tended to rely on cross-sectional data but this is not possible when the focus is on long-lasting poverty (which can only be established retrospectively). There are also methodological problems around how to deal with premature deaths and with life course and inter-generational poverty.

With regard to measurement Hulme and Shepherd argue that assets and asset change must play a larger role in poverty and vulnerability analyses. They suggest that the length of a deprivation episode is likely to correlate with its severity and with the number of dimensions involved. The HDI and HPI applied at national level combine measures of GDP, life expectancy and education. Household survey data collected for neo-classical economics analysis has not generated much information on ‘who’, in terms of social categories, is chronically poor (although appropriately-designed surveys could help to establish this in particular empirical contexts). Hulme and Shepherd provide a ‘guesstimate’ of between 450 and 900 million and chronically poor people in the world.

⁸ Although people who were consumption poor at time 1 and at time 2 five years later may not have remained in such poverty in the five years between.

iii. Qualitative approaches to chronic poverty

In the Hulme and Shepherd paper interspersed among measurement-related definitions of chronic poverty we find definitions that are more ‘qualitative’ in tone: ‘intuitive idea of chronic poverty as persistent poverty’ (p9); ‘it is individuals who ultimately (!) suffer chronic poverty and whose life experiences should be tracked and analysed’ (p7). They suggest some ways in which qualitative data can be used in conjunction with quantitative data. For example, to generate understanding of the processes involved in transitions into and out of chronic poverty (p9). Qualitative judgments about the sustainability of observed transitions are also required (p10).

They make use of some of the ‘Voices of the Poor’ information collected using PPA techniques (Narayan *et al.*: 1999) and presumably would use more such information if it dealt specifically with the duration of poverty. Ghanaians responding to the PPA distinguished two categories of perennially needy: God’s poor (who in the paper’s terms need social protection) and the resourceless poor (who need livelihood promotion). They also report the finding of differences in the ways in which chronic poverty is culturally understood and psychologically experienced and adapted to (p12), an extremely important theme explored more fully below. The notion that poverty is culturally constructed emerges again on p21 and connections are made with social exclusion approaches. Social exclusion also figures in connection with the identification of ‘who’ is chronically poor; the authors identify the following (cross-cutting) categories relating to:

- ?? stage in the life cycle
- ?? social exclusion within households (as a result of intra-household status/identity)
- ?? social exclusion (as a result of the status/identity/culture of the household)
- ?? spatial location (people living in remote rural areas, urban ghettos, regions where prolonged violent conflict and insecurity have occurred). (from p17)

Structural themes can be found in other places, initially in the opening quotation from Amartya Sen (1981), who argued that the ‘poor’ should be studied according to occupational class (small peasant, landless labourer). The fortunes of these two categories are not tied together since they have different endowments and rather different entitlement relations (p1). Patron-client structures are mentioned in relation to Wood’s argument (2003, same volume) ‘that some people stay poor because their priority is to minimise vulnerability, and this is best achieved within a patron-client relationship that in turn limits possible exit routes from poverty.’ (p14). This (dynamically) structural notion of ‘adverse incorporation’ also has a cultural dimension (p22). The authors also make an important statement about the importance of structures which needs to be followed up:

The study of chronic poverty is the study of poverty dynamics with a focus on those who are poor and have little or no mobility. The goal of research is to understand the evolution of social structures, mobility within them, and the particular immobility (if this is the case) of the chronically poor at the bottom of the structure. (p15)

However I have to disagree with their subsequent statement that ‘(s)ocial structures evolve little over five years’. Social structures have the potential to change at all sorts of speeds and only some changes are meaningfully described in terms of ‘evolution’; for example the collapse of communism was pretty sudden and swift.

Later, using a livelihoods perspective, they suggest that the existence/extent of social and political networks may be important for the mobility of chronically poor people, but do not make the necessary links with what they say elsewhere. From a different perspective these social and political networks are elements in the power structures which underlie unequal distributions of income and wealth (p20) (and therefore the incidence of [chronic] poverty); they may involve relationships and processes of exploitation, adverse incorporation, exclusion, domination, and/or destruction and/or each of their opposites.

The Hulme and Shepherd paper, and the World Development collection as a whole allows some voice for non-economist, non-PPA poverty researchers; but it is not a theoretically-grounded, ‘joined-up’ voice. In this connection I think that sociology has an integrating contribution to make to poverty research.

4. A sociological approach to long-lasting poverty⁹

i. Ontological assumptions about people and social structures

While I believe it important that all social scientists be transparent about the assumptions they are making in all nine ‘knowledge’ dimensions listed above this is not the place to do the lot (see Bevan, 2003c). I am going to concentrate here on ontological assumptions (about what exists) since I believe that, in principle, most social scientists with an interest in poverty research could reach some level of agreement here. Current arguments tend to revolve around (1) relatively unexamined differences in values (what should be done about it), (2) relatively unexamined epistemological issues (about how to know about what exists) which underpin some of (3) the differences over research methodologies, and (4) who should get the research money.

⁹ Conceived of as ‘multi-dimensional’ (discussed further below); the use of long-lasting avoids the association of ‘chronicity’ with severity.

In a recent draft for the WeD programme, and expanding on a statement by McGregor and Kebede (2003), I argued that all social scientists interested in studying (well)being in developing countries ought to be able to agree on seven elemental inter-penetrating components that exist ‘out there’. These are ‘things’, people, relationships, structure, meaning, time, and energy. Following Sayer (2000) I argue that there are (mostly unobservable) universal mechanisms, powers and liabilities (possibilities for doing and not doing), attached to things, people, social structures, etc as a result of the way in which they are structured – physically, biologically, psychologically, economically, politically, culturally etc. However, in different empirical contexts these universal mechanisms work together in different ways to produce variable empirical outcomes (McAdam *et al*, 2001; Elster, ; Hedstrom and Swedberg, 1998).

Here I make the following ontological assumptions:

- ?? People are biologically/psychologically/socio-culturally constituted actors with agency;
- ?? Throughout their lives ‘from the cradle to the grave’ people are continuously interacting with others and with ‘things’ of various kinds in relationships involving differential power;
- ?? Unequal social structures (political economies/ cultural structures) are dynamically constructed through ongoing inter-actions among people; they are also historically constructed and destroyed as ‘things’ (e.g. people, landscapes, buildings, weapons of mass destruction), rights (e.g. property rights), laws, norms, values, knowledge (including technologies) which are changing with the ‘moving now’ (see below);

Accordingly the ‘joined-up’ approach to long-lasting poverty in this paper locates (1) people living in long-lasting poverty in (2) structured and dynamic lifeworld¹⁰ livelihood figurations¹¹ in long-lasting crisis which themselves are located in (3) structured and dynamic globally-situated political economies/cultures riddled with long-lasting inequalities which benefit rich and powerful people and cause suffering to the poor and weak people whose poverty is measured in household surveys¹². Conceptual frameworks for analysis must be developed at all three levels.

The qualitative techniques and tools I am using include conceptual analysis around the idea of ‘time’ to generate some new ways of looking at how it affects people, lifeworlds and ‘big structures’ (Tilly, 1984), and secondary analysis of four case studies which form part of three research endeavours in

¹⁰ Habermas

¹¹ Elias

¹² Although the administration of a household survey requires relatively high levels of peace and security.

social anthropology, supplemented with information from other social scientific disciplines.

ii. Conceptualisations of time: calendars, rhythms, and histories

“ ‘I know what time is if I am not asked’ a wise old man once said, ‘if I am asked, I no longer know.’ ” (Elias, 1992:1)

Any study or discussion of ‘chronic poverty’ involves assumptions about the meaning of ‘time’. In the Hulme and Shepherd paper time is implicit in a number of concepts and methods: chronic poverty; vulnerability; poverty dynamics; transient poverty; spells; life course poverty; inter-generational transmission of poverty; social mobility; economic processes; investment; growth; shocks; trajectories; stage in the life cycle; dynamism of local economy, etc. However, the authors do not explicitly tackle the conceptual complexities involved in taking ‘time’ seriously.

This is not the place to explore ‘time’ in any depth (see Elias, 1992; Gell, 1992; Abbott, 2001b). However its conceptualisation is clearly relevant to a discussion of long-lasting poverty. In the Hulme and Shepherd paper it is possible to identify two approaches to time: calendar time and historical time. With regard to the first we in modern societies have grown so accustomed to living with quantifiable calendar and clock time that, although these have been socially and culturally constructed over millennia, we tend to see them as ‘naturally occurring’ (Elias, 1992). This represented or objectified temporality (e.g. five years between 1998 and 2003; or between 2003 and 2008) is one important conceptualisation of time. There is an assumption that there is something ‘universal’ about five measured years wherever and whenever they (have) pass(ed).

One justification Hulme and Shepherd give for the selection of five years is that ‘(f)ive years is perceived as a significant period of time in an individual’s life course in most cultures.’ (p6). This assertion is not supported by any evidence, but there is a reason why it is intuitively acceptable which relates to the biological/psychological/social rhythms governing people’s lives. To provide just three examples: a boy of 9 is very different from a boy of 14; most British people see the move from 36 to 41 as very significant; a person can not exist at time $t=0$, but be a relatively socialised $4\frac{1}{4}$ year old member of society at time $t=5$. This illustrates a second useful conception of ‘time’ in terms of ‘rhythms’. This conception, relates to the aforementioned powers and liabilities (structures and dynamics) built into people, ‘things’ and social structures as they (metaphorically speaking) move (develop, evolve, decay according to their natures) with the ‘now’ that is ‘eternal’ from one perspective and ‘moving’ from another.

The third shifts attention to history and the particular way in which all people experience¹³ ‘time’.

¹³ This has universal as well as culturally-constructed features.

While the durations of each second, month, and year, as measured by mechanical and digital clocks, the movements of moon, planets, sun, and stars, and/or the time it takes for a particular atom to decay, are in one sense the same, every second, month and year is unique and unrepeatable. We constantly live in a ‘moving now’ and as time ‘passes’ there is path dependence between what happened yesterday, what is happening today, and what will happen tomorrow. History matters for people, livelihood figurations and big structures.

These three conceptions of time can be brought together with the three conceptual frameworks described earlier to generate an analytical framework that can be used to increase understanding of particular episodes of chronic poverty (see Table 3). This framework involves the adoption of a ‘dynamic actor/structure’ (DA/S) approach (Bevan, 2003a/b).

Table 3: A DA/S Framework for Analysing Chronic Poverty Structures and Dynamics

Level of analysis	Timeframe		
	Calendar	Rhythm	History
Actor			
Lifeworld			
Big structure			

Calendar

In the calendar boxes we have the same period of time, based on the chronic poverty of the actor¹⁴. It range between five years and 75+.

Rhythms

At the actor level there are key periods and transitional times when people have particular physical, psychological, and social needs¹⁵ and goals which, if not met at a minimum level will lead to lasting harm¹⁶. Organised social networks which form part of people’s livelihood figurations and lifeworlds also have particular time rhythms which are ecologically constrained, structurally linked and culturally constructed. For example in rural livelihood systems there are agricultural and livestock cycles, seasonal market cycles, religious cycles (e.g. for fasting and feasting), in some societies age-set cycles, political cycles etc. In many societies there are calendrically-related times to become adult, times to be married, times to die. A locally widespread episode of chronic poverty can cause

¹⁴ It would be possible to focus on the chronic poverty of the livelihood figuration, or the larger in/security regime (Bevan, 2003a/b).

¹⁵ WeD researchers are exploring the ‘basic human needs’ of autonomy, relation, competence and meaning. These can be used for exploring the ‘multi-dimensionality’ of poverty in a more theoretically structured way.

¹⁶ For example not having a dowry at the time when marriage should happen, a war breaking out when a man is

structural and cultural disruptions which affect the longer-term ‘health’ of the society. At this level household formation, cycles and collapse also play an important role. The passage of ‘household time’ relates to the ways in which roles, relations and identities within a household interact and change under the pressures produced by long-lasting poverty.

The big structures or open systems in which lifeworlds are embedded also have their own rhythms (or mechanisms – McAdam *et al*, 2001). Individual and livelihood figuration chronic poverty episodes are embedded in larger episodes of structured inequality (in/security regimes) involving dynamic relations, processes and actions of exclusion/ inclusion, exploitation/ caring, domination/ egalitarianism and/ or destruction/ creation. These reside in particular spatially, socially and historically located passages of ‘historical time’.

Histories

Time rhythms can be seen as ‘mechanisms’ which arise from the structural features (powers and liabilities) of the people, things or relationships involved. Social life involves the ‘in time’ interaction of these mechanisms. What actually happens in any interaction varies according to the particular mechanisms involved, how they are sequenced, how they interact, and the choices that key people make during the interaction. (Sayer, 2000; Tilly, 1997).

With regard to actors, subjective experiences of ‘objectively-measured’ long-lasting poverty are not uniform; in one sense they are unique since every individual’s life course is uniquely located in time-space. There are differences associated with cultural constructions of gender and stage in the life cycle both of which have inter-twining socio-cultural, biological and personal dimensions; and there are cross-cultural differences. With the focus on actors, poverty that is ‘chronic’ involves the passage of ‘personal time’. People mature and age during the chronic poverty episode; bodies and ‘habitus’ are affected. At different (gendered, biologically based but culturally constructed) life stages and turning points what matters will be different and people’s lives will be differentially affected.

Livelihood figurations vary as a result of diversity in divisions of labour and figurations of power, in varying dynamic ecological, technological and historical contexts. In some cases the chronically poor individual will be isolated – perhaps one of only a few scattered chronically deprived people in the locality. In others the experience will be culturally shared over the five plus years in livelihoods and lifeworlds characterised by long-lasting poverty.

young, not being able to afford a school uniform, eating poor food when a toddler, being excluded from ancestral burial sites etc

Episodes of individual and livelihood chronic poverty may be features of in/security regimes in longer-term equilibrium or associated with regime transitions, including ‘contentious episodes’, (McAdam *et al*, 2001) as system contradictions and social conflicts either (1) are sufficiently contained to produce episodes of stability or (2) construct periods of rapid transition. Highly unequal regimes with large pockets of chronic deprivation may persist for centuries; or episodes of structural chronic poverty can result from rapid transitions which in some cases may be violent.

Summary

In this view episodes of long-lasting poverty can produce long-lasting harm at three levels: long-lasting harm to people’s bodies, minds, relationships and subjective quality of life; long-lasting harm to local political economies, societies and cultural repertoires (Dean, 2003); and long-lasting harm to global relations, values and interactions. In the next section the analytical framework described above will be used to explore four episodes of chronic poverty.

5. Four case studies: a qualitative analysis

To illustrate the value of this approach to long-lasting poverty I have chosen four case studies¹⁷ of suffering related to long-lasting poverty from material written up by three social anthropologists. One case study involves a young male teenager involved in the civil war in Sierra Leone (Richards,). The second focuses on a woman in her forties from an urban slum in NE Brazil (Scheper-Hughes,), while the third and fourth compare the experiences of a young man and a young woman from a rural area in Haiti who lived and died in long-lasting poverty (Farmer,). Table 4 provides a brief summary of the timeframes involved in the different levels of chronic poverty involved in these cases.

The comparative analysis below expands on the summaries in Table 4,. For each of these people I asked the same seven questions, developed out of the approach described above:

- ?? What was the person’s location in the gendered lifecycle?
- ?? What was person’s location in his/her lifeworld network?
- ?? What was the location in the wider political economy/socio-cultural context?
- ?? What choices made by others contributed to this suffering?
- ?? What choices did the person make?
- ?? What were the consequences for the person?
- ?? What were the consequences for other people?

¹⁷ These have been chosen from my bookshelf, the basis of choice being the quality of the research and the variation in individual experiences, livelihood figurations and in/security regime structures and dynamics. In what follows I keep referencing to a minimum.

Table 4: The Four case studies

CHARLIE: A CHILD SOLDIER FROM SIERRA LEONE			
	Calendar	Rhythm	History
Actor	1989-94	From boyhood to adolescence (9 to 14);	1989 – 92 schoolboy? 1992-94 child soldier
Lifeworld	1989-94	Local rhythms disrupted; household collapsed 1992	1991 village attacked 1992 attack kills grandfather
Big structure	1989-94	89-90 declining patrimonial regime 90-95 (and beyond) civil war regime	'A drama of social exclusion'
ACÉPHIE: AN AIDS VICTIM FROM HAITI			
	Calendar	Rhythm	History
Actor	1965-91	From babyhood to womanhood mostly in gradually increasing poverty; improvement between 22 and 25 then sudden shock	1965-84 farm, primary school 1984-87 no school, trading, affair 1987-90 maid in capital 1990 – pregnant goes home 1991 – dies
Lifeworld	1965-91	Small community in entrenched poverty; military presence; landlessness, hunger; household - parents plus twin brother.	Parents lifeworld and livelihood disrupted in 1956 by building of dam
Big structure	1965-91	Bottom rung of social ladder in an unequal racialised insecurity regime stabilised by state violence sometimes US aid.	Military regimes, Papa Doc, Baby Doc, etc Poorest country in Americas
CHOUCHOU: A VICTIM OF STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE FROM HAITI			
	Calendar	Rhythm	History
Actor	1967-92	From babyhood to death aged 25 in severe poverty.	2 yrs primary school; early teens worked land. Blacklisted in 1991, murdered in 1992.
Lifeworld	1967-92	Rural village in entrenched poverty; military presence; landlessness, hunger; first household - parents plus older sister; second household - wife plus child(ren?).	Peasant agriculture in steep and infertile highlands of Central Haiti; little change.
Big structure	1967-92	Bottom rung of social ladder in an unequal racialised insecurity regime stabilised by state violence sometimes with US aid.	Military regimes, Papa Doc, Baby Doc, etc Poorest country in Americas
BIU: A MOTHER OF FOURTEEN FROM NORTH EAST BRAZIL			
	Calendar	Rhythm	History
Actor	1944-86	From babyhood to 1986 in severe poverty; 1 period of destitution; things better in 1986 than childhood	Hunger, begging, sugarcane work, 2 partners, 15 births (6 dead; 1 street daughter; 1 fostered; 3 taken by partner; 3 girls living with her).
Lifeworld	1944-86	Rural area until 1952 then shantytown (home to sugarcane workers and others); very unstable 'households'.	Shanty-town dominated by sugarcane workers; little change between 1952 and 1986.
Big structure	1944-86	Occupy bottom rung of social ladder in an unequal racialised insecurity regime.	Feudal landlords/exploited workers since 16 th century; 1950s/60s: transformation of sugar industry pushed peasants into shanty towns

i. Four people in long-lasting poverty

A child soldier from Sierra Leone¹⁸

'Charlie' lived with his grandfather (who was his guardian) in Pujehun district which was invaded by the RUF in 1991. In 1992 when he was 12 Charlie's grandfather was killed by the RUF leaving Charlie with no source of livelihood at all. For two years he became a child soldier, living in ULIMO (Liberian militia) camps, taking 'crack' cocaine, fighting in villages and shooting people. In 1994 ULIMO moved out of Pujehun district and Charlie decided to leave the militia; he returned to secondary school.

An AIDS victim from Haiti

Acephie was born into long-lasting poverty. She attended primary school for a couple of years. At the age of 19 Acephie started passing the military barracks on her way to sell goods in the market. She met a married army captain who seemed interested in establishing a long-term relationship. However, after only a month Honorat developed unexplained fevers and returned to his wife; a few months later she heard he was dead. From 22 to 25 she was a servant in the capital and began to pool resources and plan marriage with Blanco. However when she became pregnant and returned home he abandoned her and their daughter. Shortly after the birth she was diagnosed with AIDS and she died aged 26. Acéphie's mother, twin brother and small daughter mourned her death and her father hanged himself.

A victim of structural violence from Haiti

Chouchou grew up in a small village in the steep infertile highlands of Haiti's central plateau. He attended primary school for a few years but left when his mother died to help his father work their land. His other main activities were going to church and listening to the radio. When he was about 22, he moved in with pregnant Chantal. Two years later, in 1991, while travelling on a truck he made a remark about the bad roads which could have been interpreted as a criticism of the regime which had just come to power as a result of a coup. An off-duty soldier dragged him off the truck at the next stop; he was beaten by soldiers and taken to the barracks for several days where he was tortured. He was put on a blacklist but although he mostly stayed away from his home village he was arrested in 1992, while visiting his sister. He was taken to the nearest checkpoint where he was tortured; three days later he was left in a ditch and three days after that he died.

¹⁸ There is no information about how well Charlie lived when his grandfather was alive although it seems he was attending secondary school; his parents were not dead but he did not turn to them once his grandfather died. While Charlie may or may not qualify as living in chronic poverty if the 5-year rule is applied, there are other child soldiers who have lived similar lives for longer periods (growing up in the process).

A sugarcane worker and mother of 14 from North East Brazil

Biu was born in a rural area in 1944. She began work as a beggar as soon as she could walk. Her father left her mother soon after she was born and she and her sister were fostered to an 'aunt'. They went hungry many times and were forced to eat wild greens, grass and cactus¹⁹. When she was 8 they moved to the shantytown; at 15 she ran away with a 50-year-old widower. She had five children with Vladimar, two of whom died, before he hanged himself (unemployed, alcoholic, depressed). She took the children 60 km to the city, lived in the centre on a piece of cardboard and begged. Her baby son died and her eldest daughter ran off with a band of street children. The third was rescued and fostered by her older sister. Biu returned to the shanty town and the sugarcane fields, had 9 more births with Oscar (6 survived) who left her for a younger woman when she was 43 taking with him 'his pick of the children, our two healthy sons, to help him in the fields and our beautiful fat Patricia.' (470). She was left with four daughters one of who died shortly afterwards.

Discussion

There are three striking things about these stories, none of which figure prominently in current analyses of chronic poverty. The first is the importance of relationships and interactions. People suffer as a result of the actions of other people; and their suffering causes suffering to other people. The second is the way in which gender affects chronic poverty experiences. The third is the importance for 'what happens next' of the (gendered) stage in the lifecycle when the long-lasting poverty episode occurs. People of different ages and sexes face and make different choices, and their actions have different consequences because of age-related variations in biological and psychological structures and needs, which change as the years pass. Charlie was only 12 when he became a soldier; '(u)nder-age boys are good soldiers, slipping through the bush with ease and little fear, treating battle as an extension of play'²⁰. However his experiences will have left a lasting mark.

'Child soldiers were treated very harshly. The boys were inducted through a process of initiation by which they were drugged and forced to commit some atrocity such as raping, killing or throwing someone into a well or river, on pain of being shot themselves for disobedience. At other times, they would be lined up by force to witness the execution of members of their family or friends, and if they refused or failed to applaud the executions, or cried or screamed, they were themselves executed.'
(Abraham, 2000:10)

In the NE Brazil shanty town there is a cycle whereby many of those weak, sickly and malnourished baby girls who survive develop into 'stunted' and unhealthy women who in turn produce weak and sickly babies. 'The problem is that stunting from malnutrition is almost invariably accompanied by delayed maturation, reproductive problems (including high risk of miscarriage and low-birth-weight

¹⁹ 'Compared to this kind of suffering, life today is much better. Today you can always show up in the house of a neighbour and your *comradre* will never deny you a piece of bread or some cornmeal to take home. . .' (466)

²⁰ 'Girls also became combatants but they tended to be older.' (Richards, 1996: 89)

infants), ill health, reduced energy, lowered self-esteem, and adverse effects during childhood on the ability to learn' (Scheper-Hughes, 156)²¹. In the context of 'structural violence' of the kind found in Haiti chronically poor young women and young men face different, but equally fatal threats. 'Acephie Joseph and Chouchou Louis shared, as noted, a similar social status, and each died after contact with the Haitian military.' (Farmer: 274)

ii. Four lifeworld livelihood figurations in long-lasting crisis

Household and livelihood figuration collapse in Sierra Leone

Charlie's household consisted of two people, and he was dependent on his grandfather for food and shelter. With his grandfather's death this household collapsed and for the next two years his 'household' was a series of ULIMO camps. After leaving ULIMO he had two main 'households': his secondary school and the camp for under-age ex-fighters. He visited his mother at Gondama refugee camp 'from time to time' (93) and said his father in Freetown (the capital) 'treats me fine'. There is no information about the livelihood figuration that supported Charlie and his grandfather. ULIMO was an armed faction mostly recruited from Liberian refugees driven by Charles Taylor into Sierra Leone through the rainforest where most the diamond areas are located. Charlie was paid \$30 (a month?). It is probable that diamond mining and looting were the main sources of this income.

The long-term decline in respectable livelihoods in Sierra Leone is indicated by a fall in GDP per capita from \$277 in 1966 to \$151 in 1998²². Diamond smuggling has been part of the informal economy since the 'diamond rush' of the 1950s and since 1991 war has led to the destruction of many regular agricultural and urban livelihoods. Apart from some assistance from humanitarian NGOs, people had largely to rely on their own efforts to survive. Many of these caused harm to other people. For example, bandits and soldiers involved in 'sellgame' (looting) disguised themselves as rebels. Local civil defence units (kamajors) mobilised and refugees have fled to Guinea, Liberia, and other parts of Sierra Leone. Resources were raised through the trafficking of children (including sex slavery) and young people. There is also some creative informal livelihood and social protection activity including self-help schools. There is a search for patrons by war widows and orphans. Many women are widows or provisioning for family needs and this is reflected in high levels of prostitution.

Two households in a livelihood figuration in very long-lasting poverty in Haiti

Acephie's first household was based in Kay, a community of less than 1500 people that stretched along an unpaved road cutting northeast into Haiti's Central Plateau. M. Joseph was a farmer and his wife a market woman; Acephie and her twin brother were born in 1965. Thirteen years earlier the

²¹ This is something explored in the CHIP World Development paper by Harper and Marcus.

Josephs' original home, most of their belongings, their crops and the graves of their ancestors were drowned by a reservoir and they moved to Kay. Acephie stayed in her first household until she was 22 when she became a housekeeper for a middle-class Haitian woman. She was paid \$30 a month and sent as much as she could save back to the family in Kay. She returned to her first household when she became pregnant aged 25. Chouchou's family household consisted of his parents and an older sister. In his early teens Chouchou joined the other three in working in their hillside gardens in a small village in the steep and infertile highlands of the Central Plateau. In early 1989 Chouchou moved in with Chantal who was pregnant and continued to work the land. Following his death he left a widow and one or more babies.

Acephie was a 'node' in a social network linked by the HIV/AIDS virus. Honorat's first wife grew thinner each year and with no means of feeding their five children made a union with another soldier. Honorat had at least two other partners; both poor peasant women. One was HIV positive with two sickly children. Blanco was still handsome and well with plenty of girlfriends at the end of the case study, but who knows now? The isolated and insular village of Kay where Acephie was born and died 'owes its existence to a project conceived in the Haitian capital and drafted in Washington D.C.: Kay is a settlement of refugees, substantially composed of peasant farmers displaced more than thirty years ago by Haiti's largest dam.' (264) The valley where the Josephs farmed before the dam was built was relatively fertile and the refugees made a decent living. However most of the Central Plateau is chalky and arid, 'hostile to the best efforts of the peasant farmers who live here. (262). Chouchou was one of those farmers. There is widespread landlessness and hunger and high infant mortality.

Shanty town 'households' in the sugarcane economy of NE Brazil

Biu's story illustrates the flexibility of household structures in the shantytown. 'People of the Alto form households and families through an inventive bricolage, fashioning and making up relations as they go along, following a structured improvisation.' (475). Men often engage in informal practices of polygyny. 'These loosely constructed, improvisational families are sustained consensually and continue only for as long as they are useful or gratifying.' (477)

'Because of the implicit rule of reciprocity among the .. squatters .. household composition shifts radically even over very brief periods of time. ..For example, in July 1987 Dona Maria d'Água ..seemed quite overwhelmed by a household very nearly splitting at the seams. Into two and half tiny rooms were crammed Dona Maria, her two adult daughters, their children, an adult son, his child and two other grandchildren sent home by a daughter working in São Paulo. In addition there was the occasional visiting father, mother or boyfriend.' (99) When Scheper-Hughes returned in February of

²² This information is taken from the Sierra Leone case study in Bevan 2003b.

the next year the household consisted of Dona Maria, one adult daughter, a two year-old granddaughter, and an eleven year old grandniece. When she asked where 'the others' were 'Dona Maria looked perplexed'; she could not remember who had been in the house the previous July.

Many people living in the shantytown worked in the sugarcane fields which had been cultivated since the 16th century. During the late 19th century slave labour gradually gave way to wage labour and the modern industrialised factory replaced the traditional mill. 'The transformation of the plantation economy, completed by the mid-twentieth century, had a disastrous effect on the traditional peasant class ...: the tenants, sharecroppers, and conditional squatters. A process of evictions began in the 1950s to increase the land under sugar which produced a growing class of rural day labourers who settled in shantytowns on the edges of towns. In the 1980s women and children entered the rural industrial labour force in increasing numbers. Some women also worked as servants for the upper and middle classes of the town.

Discussion

In many stressed parts of the world 'households' are not the stable entities imagined by the constructors of household surveys. The continuous social (re)construction of 'households' is an element in many individual and social coping strategies. Stable wider livelihood figurations can contain more or less stable household structures. Livelihood figurations in long-lasting poverty fit differently into wider global economic and political structures which have both stable and unstable aspects. The figurations described here are marked by hunger, violence and illegality.

iii. Three globally-located political economies with long-lasting inequalities

Civil war in Sierra Leone

Suffering in 1990s Sierra Leone involved deaths, dismemberment, and displacement leading to loss of loved ones and livelihoods, societal destruction, the rupture of inter-generational links, and psychological devastation. Between 1990-95 estimations are that 15,000 civilians were killed, there were 100,000 mutilation victims, 40% of the population were displaced, and refugee-filled camps sprang up in which boredom, sexual and physical violence were endemic.

Failing patrimonialism and social exclusion (Richards, 1996: 161) are two elements underpinning the civil war. 'In much of Sierra Leone *de facto* citizenship remains a privilege for those domiciled in old villages registered for tax collection'. Young people, itinerant workers and other low status people 'find themselves in attenuating orders of precedence in access to basic rights and properties.' (Fanthorpe, 2001:363). Generally women and children lack voice and power.

The war has also required outside participants. ‘Charlie’s’ insecurity regime flourished as an episode of a wider West African insecurity regime²³ involving wars that are simultaneously civil and international and was constituted by the Sierra Leonean Government plus its allies and the RUF plus its allies versus ‘the people’. The linked conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia have been sustained for more than ten years as a result of the building of sophisticated international commercial and political networks; for example rebels and the ECOMOG soldiers who were meant to be controlling them engaged in commercial cooperation to exploit diamonds. Other interests being met were those of Bulgarian arms dealers, South African mercenary companies, Belgian diamond dealers, Asian timber importers, the UK army, French business, the Presidents of Burkina Faso and Togo, the UN, Nigeria, ECOMOG, and humanitarian NGOs.

‘Development’ and structural violence in Haiti

Through the 1980s Haiti was ruled by the Duvaliers; Papa Doc, and then Baby Doc. They governed through violence, most of which was directed at people in similar positions to Chouchou. The growth of a pro-democracy movement caused Baby Doc to flee in 1986 but he was replaced by a military government which received over \$200 million of US aid in its first eighteen months (Farmer, 1997). In internationally monitored elections held in 1990 the leader of the pro-democracy movement took almost 70% of the vote. However, he was overthrown in a military coup in September 1991 and it was only a month after this coup that Chouchou was blacklisted for his remark about the roads.

Exploitation, patriarchy, and racism in Brazil

Scheper-Hughes divides the residents of Bom Jesus into ‘somebodies’ and ‘nobodies’. The ‘somebodies’ include the traditional landed gentry – the old families with names ‘heavy with the history of sugar and cotton plantations and cattle *fazendas* – and ‘the aggressive commercial and industrial middle class holding the new wealth and power, those who would transform Bom Jesus from a traditional patriarchal town of patrons and clients into a thoroughly modern, more open, and “republican” but still class-, gender-, and race-stratified society.’ (80) The middle class is in an unstable social position since social standing depends on certain levels of conspicuous consumption.

At the bottom of the social hierarchy is the undifferentiated mass of ‘nobodies’; the humble population or *os pobres* (the poor) (84). Legally they are referred to as ‘the illiterates’ who were unable to vote until recently. However, among themselves they make distinctions: the working classes; the respectable poor; the disreputable poor; and the “beyond the pale” under-underclass’ (84)

²³ Currently affecting Côte d’Ivoire.

Discussion

The three insecurity regimes in which the livelihood figurations of the case study protagonists are embedded each occupy a particular niche in the global economy and polity (Castells, 1996/7/8). Charlie's suffering can be linked to an uncontrolled illegal global capitalism. Acéphie was partially a victim of development. Chouchou was murdered by a regime supported by US aid. Biu was one of many poorly-paid sugarcane workers who subsidise cheap global sugar prices.

6. Implications for poverty research and policy

In this paper I have offered a language for talking about poor people's experiences and a framework for analysing the causes of their poverty that are different from those found in the currently dominant poverty discourse. This is a much more complex picture of 'the poor' which takes account of the different gendered powers and liabilities to be found at different stages of the life cycle. Also it is recognised that men, women, boys, girls and gendered babies act in relationships; harming and helping each other. There are rich people as well as poor ones. Chronically poor livelihood figurations ('households', 'communities' and 'markets') involve (poorly understood) unequal power structures and actions involving exploitation and exclusion, domination and destruction, and are characterised by informal social protection as well as hunger, death, violence and illegality. Households, communities and markets may be extremely unstable. These poor livelihood figurations occupy more or less long-term niches in wider economies and polities which may or may not coincide with national economies and 'the state' and which all fit somewhere in wider global structures which are characterised by larger (poorly understood) unequal power structures and actions involving exploitation and exclusion, domination and destruction.

This is one of a number of possible approaches to understanding what is only one 'reality'; the reality of (chronic) poverty. It provides a view of the dynamic relationships which generate the 'outcomes' measured in household poverty distributions and PPAs. I believe it is important to measure, but that it is not the place to begin. In reality there are no lasting 'outcomes'; they are transient elements in the 'moving now' and can be seen simultaneously as 'inputs' for later 'outcomes'. Household surveys and PPAs capture 'outcomes' at a particular point of time and as such cannot bear the research or policy weight that is currently required of them in the PRSP process. Also their focus is restricted to pico and micro levels. There is little serious development-related poverty-focused research at meso, macro and global levels where the talk is all of 'absences': market failures, governance failures, public service failures, the need to build 'social capital' and encourage 'civil society'. This is a result of the 'beleaguered ascendancy' of development economics 'atop development research and policy'.

Microeconomists do not currently have the expertise to study the social and cultural construction of power structures and dynamics²⁴, but they have left little (financial and policy) space for other social scientists who do.

In a recent book on the 'Chaos of Disciplines', on the basis of case study evidence from other social science contexts, sociologist Andrew Abbott has argued that '(w)hen one side of a fractal distinction becomes dominant, it is forced to extend its type of analysis into territories that turn out to be ill-suited to it. It also ingests terminologies and conceptualisations largely alien to its own logic. There results a destructive sliding of the core concepts on which victory was built.' (Abbott, 2001a: 34)

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²⁴ And the argument that social scientific progress can only be made when the mathematical and statistical techniques have been developed will not stand up.

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