

**Working Paper 120**

**INFORMATION AND POWER: IMPLICATIONS FOR  
PROCESS MONITORING.  
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

**Pari Baumann**

September 1999

Overseas Development Institute  
Portland House  
Stag Place  
London  
SW1E 5DP

ISBN 0 85003 431 0

8 Overseas Development Institute 1999

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publishers.

## Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 Background	5
1.2 Data, Information and Knowledge	5
1.3 Outline of the Review	7
2. Knowledge, Objectivity and Communication in Social Theory	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Habermas: Communicative Reason	8
2.3 Luhmann: System Stability	10
2.4 Lyotard: A Report on Knowledge	10
2.5 Rorty: Solidarity or Objectivity	12
2.6 Conclusion	13
3. Knowledge in Development Methodologies	14
3.1 Introduction	14
3.2 Epistemology and ‘Ways of Knowing’	14
3.3 Participatory Development Methodologies	16
3.4 Development Narratives	17
4. Structure, Actors and Agency	18
4.1 Introduction	18
4.2 The Actor Approach and Human Agency	18
4.3 The Interface: Long and Long (eds.) (1992)	19
4.4 Conclusion	20
5. Transaction Costs and Collective Action	21
5.1 Introduction	21
5.2 A Brief Overview of the New Institutional Economics	21
5.3 Institutions in the Public Realm	22
5.3.1 Case Study of the Weakness of NIE: Wade (1993)	23
5.4 Determinants of Cooperative Behaviour	25
5.4.1 Application to PDR	26
5.5 Conclusion	27
6. Governance, NGOs and the State	29
6.1 Introduction	29
6.2 The Good Governance Agenda	29
6.3 The State and Civil Society	32
6.3.1. The State in India	33
6.3.2 NGOs	34
7. Some Empirical Evidence of Information Generation and Exchange	38

7.1 Introduction	38
7.2 Chatterjee: Development Planning in the Indian State	38
7.3 Corruption	40
7.3.1 Khan: Clientelist Corruption	41
7.3.2 Wade: The Market for Public Office	42
7.4 Chambers: The Self-Deceiving State	44
7.5 Goetz: From Feminist Knowledge to Data for Development	45
7.6 Conclusion	46
8. Conclusion	47
References	48
<b>Boxes</b>	
Box 1 A Possible PDR Scenario ?	27

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Process documentation and monitoring (hereafter PDR)<sup>1</sup> seeks to capture the evolution of relationships between different institutions and actors in the course of a project, and to build on these so as to establish institutional capacity. As part of this objective, PDR aims to analyse the relationships between different actors in development projects and so build an understanding of relations of power and dominance. The attempt to build a consensus on development issues amongst different actors will then be informed by a more accurate assessment of these power relations. PDR is based on the analysis of information flow between different actors, and on their opinions and perceptions. It therefore relies on actors putting information in the public realm, on this information being placed in the public realm in a non-strategic way, on the observer having at least the intention of being objective, and on the information being developed into knowledge which does not transform its content.

PDR cuts right to the heart of several controversial issues. It addresses the power relations within a locality, between different actors, between observers and participants, between the periphery and the centre. It therefore necessitates a consideration of the relationship between structure and agency, because it presupposes that whilst there are structures which constrain actors, these actors also have the agency to change these structures. In the PDR context these issues all revolve around the central theme of how the relation between power, information generation and knowledge is manifested.

This paper reviews the way in which these issues have been explored in the literature. The guiding question is 'whether there are conceptual frameworks and/or existing empirical work which invalidate the (western liberal) assumption underlying PDR & PM, namely that actors (whether NGO or GO) will be willing to put information in a common pool for access by others from similar or different organisations?'.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2 Data, Information and Knowledge

The use and generation of data and information in the private realm has been analysed and rigorously defined by economists. No firm definition exists for information generated in the public realm so it is useful at the outset to distinguish between different processes and concepts which are often used interchangeably. The following categorisations have been provided by Machlup (1979):

---

<sup>1</sup> Process documentation relates to the implementation of activities or projects, and records site-specific information about the interface between actors/institutions involved in a project. It would normally be carried out by a non-project researcher. Process monitoring is an on-going monitoring of interactive relations in the project carried out by a mixture of project staff and outsiders. The focus here is not only on local level information but on the wider institutional linkages of the project and the concern is to gather feedback about the project from these sources which will assist in decision-making.

- Data refers to raw (unanalysed) material (facts and figures) at times collected by an information system;
- Information refers to analysed data, often presented in a form that is specifically designed for a given decision making task, and transmitted to/received by decision makers;
- Knowledge refers to the subsequent absorption assimilation, understanding and appreciation of that information.

The generation and exchange of information in the public realm is an issue which has come under increasing focus. The idea that 'knowledge is power' popularised by Foucault (1971) has gained wide recognition and spurred the consideration of the relation between the generation of information, knowledge and power. Relevant theoretical literature on the use of information in the public realm is disparate, and empirical evidence of how information is generated and used within the public realm is even more scarce. Most authors would however agree with Davies that it is 'very difficult to understand how and why information is generated and used in the public domain of development without an appreciation of the political and economic context within which it is happening' (1994: 1).

Davies (1994: 3) provides a review of some of the issues which influence the use of information in development policy. She points out that information gathering is in part fuelled by a persistent belief that there is not enough available to plan development. Davies argues that this perceived lack of information leads to several responses. On the supply side great efforts have been put into developing more appropriate techniques for data collection, in particular those which are 'participatory'. It is now widely accepted that techniques for data collection which involve the same people in the generation of information will make that information more practical. Further, information technology has revolutionised data processing so that information can now be rapidly disseminated all over the world.

This rapid flow of information has both positive and negative spin-offs which prevent it from being intrinsically beneficial in aiding decision-making in development. Davies identifies several barriers to the effective use of the increasing the volume of information which is being generated. The first of these is the notion that information is intrinsically useful, and the related methodological fetishism, in which attempts are made to solve the conflicts inherent in the use of information by ever more sophisticated techniques for data collection. The second barrier identified by Davies is the danger of creating the illusion of knowledge by analysing and presenting data in attractive ways. Thirdly, participatory methodologies can be skill intensive, requiring people who can interpret local information and feed them back into a planning process which is usually geared for aggregated information. Finally, insufficient information can become a justification for inaction by decision-makers.

An examination of the barriers identified to the use of increased information draws attention to the issue of what factors determine the conversion of data into information and then knowledge. In information systems analysis information tends to be treated either in a narrowly economic manner, or in terms of the institutional framework within which information is used. The conversion of data into knowledge and information is regarded as an expected process, and political factors are usually considered as external, peripheral or distorting variables (Davies, 1994: 8). The inevitability of this process is being increasingly called into question and examined by social theorists who suggest that information has a political value and that knowledge can translate into power (Foucault, 1971). Clark (1991) suggests that this is the 'age of information' in which access to and use of information will be every bit as important

as concrete actions in fulfilling organisational objectives.

There is very little evidence of information use in development which explores what happens when information enters a decision-making cycle. It is often assumed that once information exists it will be used in decision-making in a way which is consistent with stated policy objectives. The construction of knowledge is rarely examined. As Davies (1994: 8) points out it is deductively assumed that information existed from which knowledge was derived. White (1993) has noted that actors exercise power via the use of knowledge in both the behavioural sense (gaining as much information as possible from use of a piece of knowledge, possibly to the detriment of other actors); but also in a structural sense (using knowledge in a way that is possible given their underlying position of dominance or subordination relative to other actors). As this review will show, increasing attention has been paid to these dynamics, both by social theorists, especially post-modernists, and by development practitioners.

### **1.3 Outline of the Review**

Chapter 2 considers some views on knowledge, objectivity and communication in recent social theory and the implications of these for the potential of PDR. Chapter 3 will look at the ways in which different development methodologies have drawn on some of these theories. It will ask in particular whether the epistemologies of different groups prevent communication and the gathering of information. This chapter will also consider how the operation of development narratives may influence the information which is put into the public realm and how it is interpreted. Chapter 4 will look more explicitly at the relations between different actors and structures, and the way in which some authors have proposed that the interface between different actors should be explored. Chapter 5 provides an overview of the way in which information transfer has been considered in the economic literature and the possible relevance of game theory to an analysis of specific PDR scenarios. Chapter 6 looks at the current development orthodoxy – that of governance – which will provide the climate within which PDR will operate. This section explores some of the assumptions made by proponents of governance about the nature of the state and power relations with society and how these might affect PDR and the information actors put in the public realm. Finally, Chapter 7 considers some empirical case studies of information generation and exchange, and Chapter 8 is a brief conclusion.

## 2. Knowledge, Objectivity and Communication in Social Theory

### 2.1 Introduction

Social theorists have recently come to concentrate increasingly on information generation and transfer, many claiming that the production and control of information would soon become a hallmark of economic life (Clark, 1991). The post-modernist movement has been especially active in drawing attention to previously unexplored issues about the construction of knowledge. Methodological post-modernism rejects the possibility of establishing the foundations<sup>2</sup>, hence the ultimate reliability of knowledge understood as valid in a realist sense, that is, knowledge claimed to represent the 'true' independent 'real' nature of its objects. It shows that the traditional philosophical distinctions between real and ideal, objective and subjective, reality and appearance, fact and theory, are problematic. Instead knowledge is made valid not by its relation to its objects, but by its relation to our pragmatic interests, our communal perspectives, our needs, and our rhetoric (Lacoone, 1996).

Several of these post-modern texts offer insightful and contradictory ideas about how we might conceptualise the role of knowledge, objectivity and communication in society. The following are four very different explanations for the role that knowledge and information play in society. The conclusions which the authors reach offer different insights into the potential of PDR as a development methodology.

### 2.2 Habermas: Communicative Reason

The quest to understand 'lifeworlds', 'local truths' and 'multiple realities' has become a common theme in development methodology. An understanding of these, if this is necessary for building capacity, also constitutes part of PDR. There are several questions which are commonly asked in this connection: will we understand? can we be objective? and how shall we judge the 'other'? Habermas (1984) has explored these issues and offers some of the most important elements of his argument in his essay *An Alternative Way out of the Philosophy of the Subject: Communicative versus Subject-Centred Reason*.

The essay constitutes a defence for the notion of communicative reason. Habermas argues that communicative 'reason' is the only way to avoid problems of 'subjectivity'. Habermas illustrates how attempts by Foucault and others to free themselves from the 'philosophy of consciousness' have failed because it cannot be separated from subject-centred reason. He proposes that the paradigm of the 'knowledge of objects' should be replaced by the 'paradigm of mutual understanding between subjects

---

<sup>2</sup> Foundationalism is the belief that knowledge, inquiry and truth can be built on some stable ground whether this is the material world, God or reason/logic. Anti-foundationalism refutes this belief.

capable of speech and action' and that 'fundamental to the paradigm of mutual understanding, is, rather, the performative attitude of participants in interaction, who coordinate their plans for action by coming to an understanding about something in the world' (1996: 592).

The justification for this defence of communicative reason is provided by his two principal insights: 1) that rationality is inherently linguistic, hence social; and 2) that discourse requires that interlocutors assume the possibility of sincere, truth governed speech. He develops the notion of a life-world which 'forms a horizon and at the same time offers a store of things taken for granted in the given culture from which communicative participants draw consensual interpretative patterns in their efforts at interpretation' (1996: 593). As a totality which makes possible the identities and biographical projects of groups and individuals it is present only prereflectively. However, it is there, and can be accessed by participants in linguistically mediated interaction on a given theme, because 'it both forms a *context* and furnishes *resources* for the process of mutual understanding' (1996: 593).

Habermas goes on to argue that 'communicative reason' is directly implicated in social life processes insofar as acts of mutual understanding take on the role of a mechanism for coordinating action. 'The network of communicative actions is nourished by resources of the lifeworld and is at the same time the medium by which concrete forms of life are reproduced' (1996: 607). The theory of communicative action hereby takes over the mediating role that Marx had reserved to social practice. Habermas pre-empted the argument that using the concept of communicative action will re-establish an idealism incompatible with the insights of historical materialism because it is cut off from material life processes. He argues that it does not because the theory of communicative action takes into account the fact that the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld and its material reproduction are internally interdependent.

The relevance of the argument that Habermas makes for PDR is this notion that whenever participants enter into communication they recognise the potential for an ideal speech situation and can make claims which transcend the local context. 'The transcendent moment of *universal* validity bursts every provinciality asunder; the obligatory moment of accepted validity claims renders them carriers of a *context-bound* everyday practice. Inasmuch as communicative agents reciprocally raise validity claims with their speech acts, they are relying on the potential of assailable grounds. Hence, a moment of *unconditionality* is built into factual processes of mutual understanding – the validity laid claim to is distinguished from the social currency of a de facto established practice and yet serves it as the foundation of an existing consensus' (1996: 612). In this way an ideal community is intertwined with a real one, and the room for barriers to be shifted is revealed.

Habermas considers the relation between claims that are universal and claims that are context bound. 'Agreements arrived at through communication, which is measured by the intersubjective recognition of validity claims, makes possible a networking of social interactions and life-world contexts. Of course, these validity claims have a Janus face. As claims, they transcend any local context; at the same time, they have to be raised here and now and be de facto recognised if they are going to bear the agreement of interaction participants that is needed for effective cooperation' (1996: 612).

If we accept this argument, it would have the following implications for PDR. The information which participants in inter-subjective communication put in the public realm (this is assuming they agree to

communicate!) will contain within it validity claims which have the potential of shifting barriers towards an ideal community (as subjectively defined by mutual life-worlds). The role of PDR is then to expose these and assure that they are acted upon. These implications of Habermas' argument seems to be more relevant for process monitoring (done by a project participant/insider) than an observer. The extent to which his conclusions hold for an observer who does not share the same 'life-world' are unclear.

## 2.3 Luhmann: System Stability

Luhmann (1969), like Habermas, reaches the conclusion that consensus is a criterion which legitimates knowledge. His argument is however very different. Where Habermas argues that consensus is obtained by free individuals through dialogue, Luhmann argues that the system manipulates a consensus in order to maintain and improve its performance. Luhmann considers the role of knowledge production from the vantage point of the system itself and suggests that the establishment of consensus is the primary objective of administrative procedures. His conclusions have entirely different implications for PDR from those of Habermas.

Following Luhmann, the legitimation of any decisions which are reached in a PDR entails a learning process within the social system. Like Habermas, he explores the link between the centre and periphery. Habermas considers that validity claims raised in a local context can identify 'assailable' grounds for change. By contrast, Luhmann considers that a political/administrative subsystem (we can speculate on a PDR scenario here) will work to structure expectations in society so that they fit in with those of the centre. 'The effectiveness of the activity of what is only a part, for the whole, will in large measure depend on how well it succeeds in integrating new expectations into already existing systems – (doesn't read right) – without thereby provoking functional disturbances' (1969: 65). Administrative procedures should in fact make individuals want what the system wants.

Luhmann argues that the system can only function if it reduces complexity, whilst at the same time it must induce the adaptation of individual aspirations to its own ends. If all messages could circulate freely among individuals, the quantity of information that would have to be taken into account before making the correct choice would delay decisions considerably, thereby lowering performativity. Luhmann argues that it is possible to guide individual aspirations in order to make them compatible with the system.

## 2.4 Lyotard: A Report on Knowledge

Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1984) provides an insight both into how knowledge is generated and the process by which it is legitimated. Lyotard defines postmodernism as 'incredulity towards metanarratives', which are grand stories about the world and the place of

inquiry in it. In this essay he asks, if the legitimation which metanarratives had provided is no longer accepted, then where does legitimacy reside? The main insights which can be obtained for this review from this complex essay is the link that is drawn between knowledge, legitimation and power, for Lyotard argues that power has become a means for the legitimation of knowledge.

Lyotard, in complete contradistinction to Habermas, does not agree that legitimacy of knowledge can be obtained in consensus through discussion because 'such consensus does violence to the heterogeneity of language games' (1996: 483). Lyotard argues that the main form of legitimation of knowledge has become expediency or 'performativity'. He argues that performativity itself (the best possible input/output equation) has become the goal, not truth (1996: 483). Lyotard argues that since performativity increases the ability to produce proof, it also increases the ability to be right. Performativity is therefore a form of de facto legitimation.

'Power is not only good performativity, but also effective verification and good verdicts...it is self-legitimizing in the same way that a system organised around performance maximisation seems to be...the performativity of an utterance, be it denotative or prescriptive, increases proportionally to the amount of information about its referent one has at ones disposal. Thus the growth of power, and its self-legitimation, are now taking the route of data storage and accessibility and the operativity of the information' (1996: 498).

The implications for PDR of the argument that Lyotard makes is that as there is no longer any 'truth' criterion for judging information, whoever has the ability to place information in the public realm which improves performativity, and whoever can circulate this quickest, will be 'right' by default. The conclusion which would follow from this is the gloomy prospect that power and information will reproduce itself on the basis of performativity into infinity. The goal Lyotard seeks is however emancipation and justice, not performativity, and he suggests an alternative way forward for the legitimation of knowledge.

Lyotard argues that to follow Habermas in orienting our search for legitimation in the direction of universal consensus through discourse would be to make two assumptions: 'The first is that it is possible for all actors to come to an agreement on which rules or metaprescriptions are universally valid for language games, when it is clear that language games are heteromorphous, subject to heterogenous sets of pragmatic rules. The second assumption is that the goal of dialogue is consensus' (1996: 503).

Lyotard argues that 'consensus is a horizon that is never reached' because research and science is differential, and 'a statement is worth retaining the moment it marks a difference from what is already known, and after an argument and proof in support of it have been found (1996: 502). Its pragmatics provide the antimodel of a stable system. Lyotard poses the question of whether it is possible to have a form of legitimation based solely on paralogy, which is a move played in the pragmatics of knowledge.

Although Lyotard did not develop his argument for an analysis of development methodologies, his principles on how we can consider the role of information gathering, and the process by which it is legitimated as knowledge are universal. Further he makes two very concrete suggestions for how to analyse the information and knowledge that is generated in the discourse of everyday social life and how to link legitimation to a notion of justice that is not tied to consensus. The first is a 'recognition of

the heteromorphous nature of language games' and the second is the 'principle that any consensus on a language game and the "moves" playable within it must be local, in other words, agreed on by present players and subject to eventual cancellation. The orientation then favours a multiplicity of finite meta-arguments, by which I mean argumentation that concerns metaprescriptives and is limited in space and time' (1996: 504).

## 2.5 Rorty: Solidarity or Objectivity

Rorty (1996) has argued that the traditional philosophical pursuit of ultimate, transcendental, foundational knowledge is neither valid nor desirable. Rorty follows Habermas in criticising an attitude towards 'truth' which relates it to a non-human reality as opposed to a consensus reached by a community. Rorty however suggests that Habermas is insufficiently ethnocentric and directs his enquiry more directly to the understanding of other cultures. Like other post-modernists, he rejects the idea that the goal of inquiry is to understand 'underlying structures' which explain behaviour. He offers a pragmatic solution to the appeal for legitimation, which rejects 'objectivity' in an appeal to 'solidarity'. His arguments have implications for the role of the observer/key informant/researcher in examining other cultures, or social and economic scenarios of which s/he is not a direct and constant part.

Rorty offers a distinction between the approaches taken by realists and those followed by pragmatists in the search for 'truth' and legitimation. He suggests that those who wish to ground solidarity in objectivity can be described as realists. 'They construct an epistemology in which there is room for justification which is not merely social but natural, that is intrinsically part of human nature' (1996: 575). Realists will not accept that various cultural rationalities are in fact rational, for to be rational it must lead to the truth. They make a sharp distinction between knowledge, opinion, appearance and reality. To gain knowledge of reality (as opposed to opinions about appearances) we must be able to step outside our own community and comprehend it in the light of something which transcends it, namely that which it has in common with every other actual and possible human community.

Pragmatists on the other hand reduce objectivity to solidarity. 'From a pragmatist point of view, to say that what is rational for us now to believe may not be true, is simply to say that somebody may come up with a better idea. It is to say that there is always room for improved belief, since new evidence, or new hypotheses, or a whole new vocabulary may come along. For pragmatists the desire of objectivity is not the desire to escape the limitations of ones community, but the desire for as much intersubjective agreement as possible, the desire to extend the reference of "us" as far as we can' (1996: 575).

The pragmatist does not therefore have a theory of truth. 'As a partisan of solidarity, his account of the value of cooperative human enquiry has only an ethical base, not an epistemological or a metaphysical one' (1996: 576). Rorty suggests that 'an inquiry into the nature of knowledge can only be a socio-historical account of how various people have tried to reach agreement on what to believe' (1996: 577).

## 2.6 Conclusion

The implications for PDR and the generation and exchange of knowledge which can be obtained from the approaches above differ not only in content but also in perspective. From the inter-subjective view of Habermas, communication between participants will have within it the potential for subversion of 'the system' and the establishment through cooperation of an ideal community. For Luhmann, from the perspective of 'the system', any PDR will contribute information about the local situation to the system and thus contribute towards the stability of the system. Lyotard stresses that communication is essentially a power game. In considering the relation between the production of knowledge and the ultimate goal of justice he suggests that we can reach this by allowing for local plurality, rules and prescriptions. Finally Rorty, the only theorist reviewed who addresses the notion of the observer being from another culture, suggests that as we cannot be objective, our goal should be solidarity.

### **3. Knowledge in Development Methodologies**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The notion of knowledge, what it is and how it can be acquired, have evolved from a positivist approach, based on the assumption that it is possible to be certain of what is known and that there is only one reality, towards an approach which maintains that things exist independently of our ability to perceive them. The criticism that social theorists have levelled at western positivist approaches to knowledge, some examples of which were explored in chapter 2, have been applied to development theory and practice. The essence of the emerging new approaches is that 'the process of knowing should be seen as interactive, value-bound and context-determined, rather than detached, value-free and independent of context' (Scoones and Thompson, 1993: 9). The recognition of this fragmentary, context and time bound nature of knowledge, has led to the emergence of different participatory methodologies designed to capture, learn and build development on this diversity.

What are the arguments for and against the existence of different 'knowledges' and how might these affect a PDR scenario in which the participants (government, north/south NGOs and beneficiaries) have to communicate across this potential knowledge divide? A brief overview of some of these issues may prove useful for PDR as they pose some fundamental questions for the ability for actors operating in different 'realities' to communicate effectively.

#### **3.2 Epistemology and 'Ways of Knowing'**

There has been a post-positivist suggestion that not only are there different realities, but that different people have different epistemologies or 'ways of knowing'. The distinctions usually made in this respect are between indigenous knowledge and western scientific knowledge, and between different gender epistemologies (Chambers, 1992; Harding, 1996). The focus on indigenous knowledge is the result of several convergent trends in social science and development practice. One of these is that the declining faith in grand theories – or narratives – in mainstream development practice has favoured theories that are time-bound and context specific. Another is the general retreat of the state which has led to a focus on building partnerships between different institutions in civil society. In the construction of these, the agency of the subaltern against the strategies of the powerful have been given a central role, with a concentration on how the oppressed withstand and appropriate external interventions (Scott, 1985; Pigg, 1992).

There are several reasons that indigenous/women's knowledge and western knowledge is argued to be different. Using a 'systems of knowledge' framework, Banuri and Apfell-Marglin (1993) argue that these are: 1) indigenous knowledge is embedded in a particular community and contextually bound; 2) it is not based on a subject/object dichotomy, and; 3) it is not individualistic and is based on a commitment to a local context. The claim about the absence of a subject/object dichotomy in particular

is often brought forward as distinguishing women's epistemologies (Harding, 1996). These arguments were first applied to rural, especially women's, technical knowledge which was deemed to be in 'harmony' with the environment because it was based on the exploitation of diversity in the local context. The arguments have since been extended to include local ideologies, cosmologies, perceptions, innovative capabilities and power relations (Norgaard, 1984). The notion of the difference between the knowledge systems of the 'West' and the 'East' has gained great currency. In India this notion has been supported by Bahuguna (1982), Nandy (1987) and Shiva (1988: 1991).

Shiva has argued that 'it is science and not politics that is used as an explicit justification and legitimation of destruction in the name of progress' (Shiva, 1991: 50). She argues that 'third world women and those tribals and peasants who have been left out of the process of maldevelopment are today acting as intellectual gene pools of ecological categories of thought and action' (Shiva, 1988: 46). For Shiva, the gulf between western/male epistemologies and eastern/female epistemologies is absolute and cannot be bridged without a complete reversal of western patterns of production and the epistemologies which have justified it. In other words there can not be a 'learning process' across the divide which is not accompanied by a complete change in patterns of production.

These opinions are still current, but they have also been subjected to thorough criticism. Some of this has sought to refute the notion that different epistemologies operate in western and indigenous knowledge (Agarwal, 1996; Nanda, 1992). Nanda argues that in their depiction of the way in which western science has conspired to subjugate Third World people, populists come close to resembling orientalist myths that deny people any history or creativity. The root of her critique is that this populist identification of different types of knowledge removes the need for critically examining the material underpinnings and social context of either.

Much of the criticism has been directed at tempering, rather than overthrowing notions of the difference of the philosophy of knowledge in the two systems (Long and Long, 1992). As section 3.3 will show, this is reflected in the development of different participatory methodologies to understand and act on the information contained in these knowledge systems. Proponents argue that knowledge cannot be considered to be bound in time and place and that attention needs to focus on the way in which it is generated and transmitted. These transmissions are based on communication channels which involve human agency operating within politically and socially constituted networks of actors and institutions. Knowledge is constructed with differential access to public discourse so it makes more sense 'to talk about multiple domains and types of knowledges, with differing logics and epistemologies. Somewhat contradictorily, but inescapably so, the same knowledge can be classified one way or another depending on the interests it serves, the purposes for which it is harnessed, or the manner in which it is generated' (Agarwal, 1996: 433).

The conclusion that seems most promising in the PDR context, for an analysis of information and knowledge from different sources is provided by Agarwal (1994). She recommends that since concepts are socially and historically constructed 'we need a theoretical understanding of what could be termed the "political economy of ideological construction" that is, of the interplay between conflicting discourses, the groups promoting particular discourses, and the measures used to entrench views embodied in these discourses' (1994: 6).

### 3.3 Participatory Development Methodologies

Scoones and Thompson (1993) identify three methodological developments within participatory approaches to knowledge advocated for use in development planning. The transfer of technology approach which has been operating since the late 1970s 'sees the starting point of development as an active and equitable partnership between rural people, researchers and extensionists (1993: 3). Outsiders are merely the catalysts facilitating the exchange of information. Proponents emphasise the 'rational nature and sophistication of rural people's knowledge and believe that knowledge can be blended with or incorporated into formal scientific knowledge system' (1993: 3). The second development in participatory methodology identified by Scoones and Thompson is the Farmer First approach which moves the focus beyond narrow technical knowledge and agricultural production. This approach suggests that indigenous knowledge is not narrowly technical but also cultural knowledge (Moock and Rhoades, 1992).

The emerging Beyond Farmer First perspective – the 'perspective of the moment' – argues that 'knowledge, which emerges as a product of the discontinuous, inequitable, discursive and non-discursive interactions between different "actors" and "networks" through which different types of information are communicated and legitimated, and between which there is often serious lack of understanding, is seen as being fragmentary and diffuse' (Scoones and Thompson, 1993: 6). Pretty (1994) argues that although this methodology for enquiry will reveal multiple perspectives, this will lead to less conflict in objectives than the attempt to impose a single reality would. He suggests that the validity of the information which is gathered can be judged by a series of truth criteria (1994: 44). Many of those listed appear already to be incorporated into the PDR philosophy of enquiry.

These ideas are not new; what is new is the legitimacy of the information which is gathered. Realists criticise the new paradigms for allowing a permissive approach to knowledge wherein anything is acceptable. Greeley, for example, defends conventional measures of poverty (based on nutrition/minimum income etc.) against criticisms that these fail to capture subjective perceptions of well-being. His point is that this criticism is misdirected because it confuses poverty with well-being and that 'an absolute and objective poverty line is a form of information that empowers the poverty reduction agenda and encourages appropriate resource allocations' (1994: 57).

Realists also suggest that advocates of these new paradigms are ignorant of the way in which people will manipulate information. They provide no analysis of the power structures which influence particular world views or of the relationship between power and knowledge in general. As Foucault has noted 'the criteria of what constitutes knowledge, what is to be excluded and who is designated as qualified to know involve acts of power' (Foucault, 1971 cited in Scoones and Thompson, 1993). Inevitably the debates over different knowledge systems have to acknowledge that it is the outsider – us – the observer who is gathering the information about 'them'. As De Kadt (1994) has argued, no matter at what level information systems operate, they tend to be arranged to meet the requirements of the most central authority involved.

Different types of discourse evolve, survive and decline, depending on the agency of the people – needs re-wording who use them in dynamic interplay with one another. The problem is not only one of

understanding how power structures shape different realities, but of encouraging a consensus between different perspectives for the purpose of development action. The following section will describe how ‘development narratives’ influence the agenda for gathering and acting on knowledge that has become ‘received wisdom’.

### 3.4 Development Narratives

Mearns and Leach (1996) provide an overview of the operation and construction of ‘received wisdoms’ in development planning. The ones that they focus on relate to ‘wisdom’ about the natural environment which obscure other explanations. Received wisdom is however also applied to behavioural characteristics; the most well-known probably being that people will be selfish and short-sighted in the use of common property resources (Hardin, 1968). Roe (1991) has described these as development narratives which provide a blue-print for development projects. These narratives are partly self-reinforcing because ‘development scenarios tell stories not so much about what should happen as about what will happen – according to their tellers – if the events or positions are carried out as described’ (1991: 288). They provide donors with a guide for action and for negotiating uncertainty and thus receive heavy support from the financial and bureaucratic structures of development aid, assuming a momentum which is difficult to counteract. As Mearns and Leach note ‘it is possible to show that the interests of various actors in development – government agents, officials of donor agencies, the staff of northern and southern non-governmental organisations, and independent “experts” are served by the perpetuation of orthodox views’ (1996: 19).

The interesting question, in the PDR context, is to consider the role of various organisations in engendering these wisdoms, how they are contested, and how they can be changed. As Leach and Mearns note ‘it is important to be explicit about the degree of intentionality at work in producing and reproducing received wisdom and its actual consequences once put into policy’ (1996: 9). This is not easy. The increasingly rapid flow of information may actually lead to a convergence and simplification of development narratives.<sup>3</sup> Further, as Giddens observes ‘there is no way from keeping the conceptual apparatus of the observer...from appropriation by lay actors’ (1987: 19). Knowledge and received wisdom thus become reflexive and circular ‘new knowledge...does not simply render the social world more transparent, but alters its nature, spinning it off in novel directions’ (Giddens, 1990: 153, cited in Davies, 1994: 5).

---

<sup>3</sup> In this perspective the force of the connection that Lyotard makes between power-speed-legitimation, and his reluctance to accept consensus as an objective in working towards justice, is very apparent.

## **4. Structures, Actors and Agency**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The interaction between structures and actors, and the relative value of structure and human agency as explanations for social phenomenon, is an ongoing debate. Most social theorists recognise the importance of both, but prefer a methodological and theoretical concentration on one or the other. PDR is situated at a cross-roads; it aims to explore power structures, but to do this through the perceptions of the actors themselves. This chapter provides an overview of some of the theoretical issues involved in this approach.

### **4.2 The Actor Approach and Human Agency**

Methodological and theoretical approaches which prioritise the actor over the structure have found recent currency in social theory. Structuralists had rejected the earlier focus on the 'self' and emphasised the importance of structures such as language, ritual and kinship in shaping human conduct. An understanding of these systems, gained through 'scientific' enquiry was thought to provide the best route for an analysis of human behaviour. Post-structuralists accept the structuralist rejection of the 'self' and the attempt to identify universal characteristics of the individual. This was an attempt made by early actor-oriented approaches in anthropology and still informs economics as 'methodological individualism'. However, post-structuralists do not consider it possible to understand human conduct in any 'objective' way, particularly not through an analysis of structures which are themselves social constructs. Instead, post-structuralists have emphasised the importance of understanding power and knowledge as it is constituted at the margins.

These developments in social theory have contributed to new actor-oriented approaches which emphasise the importance of regarding the actor as a 'social actor' with human agency. Giddens (1984) observes, in considering the relation between structures and actors, that they have both a constraining and an enabling effect on social behaviour and cannot be comprehended without allowing for human agency. The two principal elements of agency that Giddens identifies are knowledgeability and capability. He notes that even those in a subordinate position can influence the activities of those above them. Actors can therefore 'actively engage (although not always at the level of discursive consciousness), in the construction of their own social worlds' (Long and Long, 1992: 24). Hindess (1986) points out that decision-making takes the implicit or explicit use of 'discursive means' which draws on a differentiated stock of knowledge and resources available to actors of different types. Since social life is never built on one discourse, it follows that however restricted their choice, actors always face some alternative way of formulating their objectives, and deploying specific modes of action.

These notions can be related to the generation and exchange of information in development projects in the following way. Latour has described the ability to exercise effective agency as the ability to

influence ‘a chain of agents each of whom “translates” it in accordance with his and her own projects...power is composed here and now by enrolling many actors in a given political and social scheme’ (Latour, 1986: 264, cited in Long and Long, 1992). It therefore becomes essential for actors to win the struggles that take place over the attribution of specific social meanings to particular events, action and ideas. Looked at in this way particular development intervention models can become strategic weapons in the hands of those charged with promoting them. In the exploration of how different actors may do this, Giddens (1984) suggests that we translate these notions culturally because one cannot assume a universal agency. In other words, we must incorporate cultural perceptions of agency and personhood. In the field of rural development this means analysing how different conceptions of power, knowledge, and influence may shape the responses and strategies of the different actors.

Actor-oriented approaches, with their emphasis on the possibility of subversion by the actor, offer a generally optimistic outlook for the likelihood that actors will put information in the public realm. They acknowledge the role that power structures play in the generation and exchange of information. However the actor-oriented approach stresses the ability of human agency to express dissent by drawing on other means in the discourse. Post-modernists have said ‘there is nothing outside the text’, meaning that there is no real world, and we can only encounter it through representations. In the context of actor-oriented approaches we can extend the same to mean that everything can be represented in the ‘text/discourse/communication’ between actors. The task at hand would therefore be both an interpretation of what may be ‘hidden text’ and the development of institutional capacity on the basis of this. Scott (1985) has already illustrated the potential of this approach for an understanding of patron-client relations.

### **4.3 The Interface: Long and Long (eds.) 1992**

Long and Long (1992) have combined these theoretical notions of agency and structure in an attempt to use it for the practical purpose of rural development. Their central argument is that ‘a sociology of the everyday life of actors involved in shaping the processes and outcomes of rural development programmes is needed if we are to develop a more adequate understanding of the significance of human agency in such situations’ (1992: 224). They accept that we are dealing with ‘multiple realities’ and ‘potentially conflicting social and normative interests’, (1992: 27) and that power structures are important in determining whose realities will prevail. Their argument is that the production, reproduction and transformation of knowledge can best be understood not through an analysis of the structures themselves, but through the ‘life-worlds’ of those individuals and groups involved.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Note here the reference to life-worlds has many similarities to the way in which Habermas used this term. Habermas suggested that ‘participants draw from this life-world not just consensual patterns of interpretations (the background knowledge from which propositional contents are fed) but also normatively reliable social patterns of social relations (the tacitly presupposed solidarities on which background of a speakers intentions)’ (1996: 605). The life-world is therefore akin to a prototype for communication on which actors may or may not draw.

Long and Long suggest that the place in which to gain an understanding of this process is the project interface. They do not make an ontological distinction between 'everyday knowledge' and 'scientific knowledge', but concentrate on building an 'acute awareness of the ways in which different, possibly conflicting, forms of knowledge intersect and interact' (1992: 214). For an understanding of this process we require an analysis of people's cognitive map; the way in which they categorise the world into different phenomenon. We also need to have a cultural understanding of agency, or what Strathern calls an 'indigenous theory of agency' (1985, cited in Long and Long, 1992). This is important in the context of exploring the 'interface' between different groups because the construct of a social actor might differ in the mind of the researcher and the local community.

Long and Long (1992) draw out the central parallels that exist between power and knowledge processes. Cognition is a consequence of the processes whereby social actors interact, negotiate and accommodate to each other's life worlds, leading to the reinforcement, or transformation of existing knowledge. Both power and knowledge become reified in social life. This process of reification is an essential part of the ongoing struggles over meaning and control of strategic relationships and resources. Long and Long (1992) argue that it is at this juncture that the 'battlefield' over both knowledge and power should take place. They juxtapose this to systems models (Röling, 1988) which emphasise information, suggesting that 'our guiding notions are discontinuity not linkage, and transformation, not transfer of meaning' (Long and Long, 1992: 274).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The actor-oriented perspective, and the analysis provided by Long and Long on how this can be used for the purpose of rural development, offer positive prospects for PDR. What they are saying, in a sense, is that it does not matter whether actors will put information in the public realm or how they express themselves, because as long as they all participate the potential for a 'transformation' will be realised. This perspective has much in common with Rorty's suggestion that rather than a false objectivity, which we cannot obtain, we need solidarity in the analysis of other cultures and peoples. In the context of developing this information into knowledge, Leach and Mearns have suggested that the point is to expose 'the hidden social and cultural assumptions underlying apparently incommensurable world views' (1996: 33).

Predictively, the drawbacks of this perspective, are best made from a more 'structuralist' vantage point. The identification of multiple power structures, without any prioritisation of importance in how these operate, makes it difficult to establish any pattern in the transmission/operation of knowledge. Ultimately the struggle is still one over material resources. If we approach each interface with a blank sheet of expectations it may be difficult to construct an understanding of the connections which exist between power, material resources and knowledge, an awareness of which might in fact help us to read the 'hidden' text.

## 5. Transaction Costs and Collective Action

### 5.1 Introduction

There is extensive economic literature on the market value of information in decision-making in the private sphere. The flow of information in the public realm has not usually been considered in terms of its market value and it was often implicitly assumed that there was free access to public information. This assumption has been questioned by the new institutional economics. As Baland and Platteau describe 'a major revolution occurred in recent economic thinking when economists questioned their standard assumption that information is public and perfectly (symmetrically) distributed amongst agents' (1993: 15). The new institutional economics views information as part of transaction costs, 'that is supervision and policy costs arising from asymmetrical information' (1993: 14). As a result 'information, now understood as a private good, becomes part of the agents' private endowment and an important source and instrument of power in economic transactions: for their own benefits, agents seek to influence the others decision by hiding, partially revealing, distorting or manipulating the pieces of information relevant to them' (1993: 16).

These assumptions have significant consequences for PDR and the likelihood that participants will put information in the public realm. The Indian state plays a central role in the allocation of resources for development planning. Decision-makers therefore need information and associated knowledge to plan, but they may also seek to exclude others from having access to that information if free-riding on available information brings them rewards. Information then becomes a means of exercising power.

### 5.2 A Brief Overview of the New Institutional Economics

New institutional economics has sought to expand the limits of traditional micro-economics, and demonstrate that economic coordination is not only dependent on price but on economic and political institutions as well. The central arguments of NIE are that wherever uncertainty and risk raise transaction costs and the likelihood of opportunistic behaviour, it is rational for economic agents to draw on whatever social arrangements to reduce some of the costs of exchange. The choice of institutional arrangements will depend on the price-technology structure which defines the comparative advantage of different contracts and the social/institutional environment which defines the range of feasible contracts. Institutions evolve as relative prices, technology and population growth changes the cost of maintaining existing institutional arrangements. Rational individuals will adjust their arrangements in response to this in a direction which restores economic and social equilibrium (Evans, 1993: 21). Institutional economics has involved a focus on strategic behaviour of individuals and organised groups in the context of incomplete markets. Institutions are instruments which reduce transaction costs with a Darwinian selection process leading to the survival of those institutions most able to give their participants maximum gain (De Janvry et al., 1993: 566).

NIE has been subject to much criticism. One of the central charges is that this approach continues to analyse economic behaviour with conventional theoretical tools in a social power vacuum. The analogy of competitive market equilibrium is applied to the social choice of institutions, with the main conclusion that any institution which persists over time must have a comparative advantage. Objections to these assumptions are made on several grounds. Granovetter (1985), a sociologist, has observed of the failure to consider the ‘social embeddedness’ of institutions, and behavioural characteristics like trust and duty. Objections along the same lines have emphasised the importance of local and national power structures and the role of extra-economic coercion in shaping preferences and bargaining systems (Bardhan, 1993). Once one moves beyond the assumption of a dyadic principal-agent relationship, it is entirely possible to conceive of transactions that leave one party worse off.

Evans (1993) provides a critique of NIE from the perspective of gender relations in rural labour markets which offers an informative insight into the shortcomings of NIE. She shows that a weakness of NIE is the assumption that ‘individuals and groups behave according to a universally applicable set of maximising rules and principles’ (1993: 25). The volume and depth of research on gender has provided ample evidence that ‘gender differences in resource endowments are not simply given but are themselves the product of deeply rooted asymmetries in status and bargaining power’ (1993: 25). The role of ideological positions about women in constructing these is not sufficiently accounted for in NIE. ‘Ideology and ideologically-motivated behaviour can be accommodated within the rational-choice paradigm by treating ideological beliefs as if they were tastes...whether ideas, ideologies or dogmas influence people’s actual choices will depend ultimately on the price of doing so’ (North, 1990: 22, cited in Evans, 1993). The weakness of this argument is that whilst individuals may choose between goods, it is difficult to imagine them choosing between institutions, customs or ideological norms (Platteau, 1992, cited in Evans, 1993).

### **5.3 Institutions in the Public Realm**

Although the analysis and criticisms above have been developed in the context of agricultural labour markets, they can be applied to institutions in the public realm. De Janvry (1993) has argued that state, market and civil organisations can be contrasted by the type of compliance/cooperation mechanism that each imply. Three reasons are commonly identified for why dysfunctional institutions exist:

- Path dependency where high sunken costs induced by past institutions make transitions socially unprofitable;
- A ‘prisoners dilemma’ where the cost of breaking an existing rule may be too high on individuals so it is individually rational to continue, and;
- Asymmetrical information and uncertainty about the distribution of benefits from a change.

NIE provides a neat framework with which to analyse PDR because it suggests that if the details of the dyadic contract are right, then institutions will evolve towards a more optimal social and economic

equilibrium. In fact, in the NIE framework a PDR situation would be ideal because it would provide an opportunity to bargain and negotiate over the three constraints to institutional change identified above. However, if we take on board the criticisms above then the likely success of this, and of individuals putting information into the public realm has to incorporate several factors into the analysis. First there is the conceptualisation of contractual arrangements as ‘voluntary’ when in fact these may be embedded in power relations. Exchanges which are made under the threat of coercion will affect the information provided. Second is the importance of ideology in shaping preferences and perceptions. Even when these are developed at a level of discursive consciousness, individual agency may be constrained by wider power structures within the family or community. The objective in a PDR scenario may be to locate the balance between these constraining structures and the agency of the individuals involved. The following case study by Wade (1993) illustrates the importance of taking into account wider social relations in the exploration of this balance.

### *5.3.1 Case Study of the Weakness of NIE as an Explanation for Institutional Conduct: Wade (1993)*

Wade (1993) investigates the ability of NIE to explain why the irrigation department in Korea operates more effectively than the irrigation department in India. NIE assumes that:

- All bureaucracies can be treated as arenas in which the occupants of particular roles create networks of contractual arrangements which allow each to maximise self-interest;
- These individuals have no lasting commitments to goals other than the maximisation of their own self-interest, and;
- They relate to each other as agents or principals (a principal in relation to a subordinate, and a superior in relation to an agent).

In NIE the likelihood that information will be put in the public realm will depend entirely on the details of the dyadic contracts. This will determine whether the agent, out of self-interest, will cooperate or not.

Irrigation departments are representative of what Lipsky (1980) has termed ‘street level bureaucracies’. The operators of these departments: 1) interact daily with citizens-clients in the course of their jobs; 2) have substantial discretion in the execution of their work; 3) use their discretion in ways which are not closely monitorable, in the sense that it is difficult to identify precisely what they do. They are therefore typical of the sort of departments, and officials, who will be taking part in a PDR.

Wade explores the extent to which organisational behaviour can in fact be determined by the structure of the organisation and by the details of these contracts. His focus is on the role of the patroller (the person in charge of the water gates, reading water gauges, light maintenance) and the structure of incentives in the two national departments. The Indian patroller is a full-time employee, appointed to the area by the engineer in charge, rotated every six years and not allowed to work in his native area.

The thrust of these rules is to minimise contact with the locality and maximise that with the bureaucracy. The Korean incentives are the reverse; the patroller is a part-time employee who must farm in the area in which he works. He is appointed by the headman and must be renominated every year.

The supervision arrangements in the two departments differ as dramatically as the incentive structure. In the Indian department supervision proceeds up to the central level in a strict geographical hierarchy. This hierarchy means that at each level the 'in-charge' will have some control over the information which is given to the higher level. This power over information provision allows staff at each level to benefit from being in charge of a vital resource and use their discretion to make large amounts of illicit money. By contrast, the supervision arrangements in Korea operate in a much flatter hierarchy with interesting consequences for the movement of information. The supervisor travels up and down the command area, observing the operations and stopping to chat with the patroller and farmers. In this way information enters the canal organisation at all levels, instead of travelling up and down the hierarchy and being distorted.

The different performance of the two departments cannot be reduced to the details of the contract. The essential difference is that 'the Korean type of irrigation structure itself maximises the spillover of community social capital into the irrigation organisation and then generates more inside the organisation, while the Indian structure minimises it' (1993: 53). An attempt to build institutional capacity would most probably miss the mark if it did not recognise the importance of these wider relations in organisational behaviour. A recognition of these is also important for an understanding of the movement of information about irrigation within the department, and the factors which constrain the willingness of actors to put information in the public realm. The Indian system, with a high cost of moving information, a single tall hierarchy and no downward accountability permits opportunistic behaviour between principals and agents towards each other.

PDR, although it does not appear to be modelled in accordance with any of the principles of NIE, could fall into many of the traps that NIE critics such as Evans and Wade have noted. A central objective of PDR is to analyse local power relations – but without a theoretical perspective on how these operate – and with a faith in building capacity, and consensus. Like NIE there is a recognition of power relations between principal-agent (patron-client etc.) but the approach is to get the terms of the interaction right (by talking it through) in order to build effective institutions. The expositions of PDR in process I have read emphasise institutional linkage, learning and training (Thompson, 1995; Veneracion, 1988). Conflict is described largely in behavioural terms.<sup>5</sup>

Chambers et al. (1989), although generally positive about the potential of learning processes and paradigm 'reversals' to change power relations, has pointed to the conflicts that cannot be talked through in his examination of the Irrigation Department and Forest Department in India. His broad

---

<sup>5</sup> Thompson lists some of these in his exploration of PDR in a public bureaucracy in the Phillipines. 'There is still a tendency among government staff to view the non-government "outsiders" with a degree of suspicion ("They are a bunch of leftists, so what do you think their agenda is?"), envy ("They are just like us, only they get paid more") and even disdain ("Its easy for them, they get plenty of money from donors, are not accountable to the people and are not responsible for servicing the entire country")' (1995: 1546).

prognosis is that in a re-orientation of these departments towards community based management provisions, the lower level staff will be losers. We can theorise that they would not be willing to put information in the public realm if this would cause a loss of control. An ODI team engaged in PDR in Udaipur has noted the conflict of interest (grounded entirely in the potential threat of material loss) that arose between the public sector extension workers and NGO extension workers over proposals to contract work out to the latter. Situating these local power conflicts in the context of the wider political economy might assist in building a broader picture of the factors which influence the movement of information and the likelihood that information will be placed in the public realm.

## 5.4 Determinants of Cooperative Behaviour

NIE and the emphasis in development planning on building complementary roles for state, market and civil institutions has renewed a focus on the determinants of cooperative behaviour. Some of the literature has examined this using Game Theory. Most of the applied literature in Game Theory has focused on collective action in natural resource management, with a particular emphasis on common property. No work that I know of has tried to apply Game Theory to an evaluation of different development methodologies. The lessons, both from Game Theory and criticisms of its shortcomings can however be applied to a PDR scenario.

The literature on collective action has been generally negative about the potential for cooperation in the generation, evolution and protection of common and public goods. As Uphoff (1993) notes, Game Theory analysis has been preoccupied with zero sum analysis, wherein the gains of some equal the losses to others. Interest in positive sum games has not been evident in recent years. The game best known for illustrating the likelihood that actors will fail to act collectively is the standard one-shot prisoners dilemma game. In this game communication between the prisoners, and the evolution of cooperative strategies over time, is denied. Defection is the dominant strategy of each player no matter what the other players do.

Recent literature has shown that when the restrictive assumptions of the one-shot game are relaxed, there is reason for a degree of optimism in the likelihood of cooperation and collective action (Bardhan, 1993; Nugent, 1993; Mearns, 1995). In the management of common resources, two of the restrictions of the one-shot game are in fact typically relaxed. Actors will normally have some information about the resource, about the strategies of other actors, and the 'game' is recurring. It is possible therefore, for actors to learn from past actions and develop norms of cooperation for future action. These conditions do not dispel the possibility of free-riding but it has been theorised that assurance will be the most rational strategy (Runge, 1986; Sen, 1987).

Some of these strategies have been modelled as 'assurance' or 'tit-for-tat' games where if cooperation gets started, it will probably continue. This game represents a widely observed phenomenon in field studies 'nobody wants to be "suckered" but one tends to be cooperative when others are (at least a critical mass of others, in a multi-person game), something that prisoners dilemma fails to capture' (Bardhan, 1993: 634). Bardhan notes that even in prisoners dilemma games the room for cooperation

improves in repeated games, especially if there are punishments which can be meted out to reduce the immediate benefits of free-riding.

Seabright (1990) has argued that past behaviour shapes players expectations and will thus influence the strategies which they may take. The degree of trust that players have in each other will affect the strategies taken even when the costs and benefits of cooperation are equal. It has also been noted that pre-game communication can improve cooperative behaviour and that credible threats and punishments can play an important role in deterring non-cooperative behaviour.

In the case of larger groups, there may be members who differ in their respective attitudes to the pay-offs in cooperating or not cooperating, and in their expectations of the likelihood that others will cooperate. In 'assurance game' situations, this may lead to the formation of subgroups. Each of these will be formed around a different threshold value of the expected probability of cooperation for others in determining their own strategy (Margolis, 1991). Because expectations are subject to revisions as behaviour evolves, and the decisions of subgroups are interdependent and can have a demonstrative effect, even small changes in expectations can have a chain effect, leading to new patterns of non-cooperation as well as cooperation. Nugent (1993) has suggested that 'one-step-at-a-time, sequential changes in rules are generally more cost-effective than abrupt, multifaceted ones. This is because it is easier to learn from such changes, the information costs are lower, and the risks are smaller' (1993: 627). Further, as cooperative norms evolve, the costs of the relevant information to group members are reduced.

As Bardhan (1993) points out, game-theoretic formulations of cooperation among self-interested agents provide ordered insights but are too rigid to incorporate the complexities of real individuals or group dynamics. For example, it is difficult to model on-going interaction among agents, the evolution of endogenous preference changes, or the importance of leaders in acting as catalysts. Game theory also does not account for the possibility, even the likelihood, that repeated cooperation may lead to behaviour and norms that are genuinely altruistic, or work towards the enhancement of the benefits of the group (Sen, 1987).

#### *5.4.1 Application of these Principles to PDR*

The games provide a generally positive outlook for cooperation. One can theorise that this is especially so in a PDR situation in which the emphasis is specifically on 'pre-game, during-game and after-game' communication. However the game theoretic formulations of cooperative behaviour, and the lessons drawn from it in the literature, are all based on the analysis of actors in a situation of strategic interdependence with a given structure of pay-offs. A PDR scenario also involves actors in strategic certain types of activities over an indefinite period of time' (Korten, 1988: 13). However, game-theoretic tools could be used more effectively in a PDR scenario where the structure of pay-offs and the incentives that actors have to cooperate or not are better known.

### **Box 1 A Possible PDR Scenario?**

A Project to improve a local irrigation system aims to improve relations between the recipients of irrigation, the patroller and his supervisor using PDR tools. What would they have to lose by putting information in the public realm? We can theorise that the recipients would be unwilling to risk exposing the patroller for taking bribes in case he will extract retribution by restricting their water supply. The patroller holds a monopoly on information in his command area which he will be unwilling to reveal because it is the source of his rents. The supervisor, who is aware of this system although perhaps not the details, may not want to expose its operation because his position is politically maintained as long as he channels some of the rents upwards. The result of this may be that the information volunteered is 'all is well with the irrigation system'. No one dares to volunteer information in case others free-ride or don't cooperate in making the complaints effective. This could be a prisoners dilemma. But the game is not a 'one-shot' and the players can communicate. The other game-theoretic formulations can thus be brought to bear, for example, cooperation amongst sub-groups (Margolis, 1991) with different threshold values of the expected probability of cooperation by others.

In the conceptualisation of the dynamics which might exist in such a group Hirschman's (1970) formulation of exit, voice and loyalty are useful. The first option, breaking all relations, is preferred when the game outcomes are negative, although exit may have high costs (defamation, loss of livelihood etc.). Loyalty represents a situation where the interests of all members are integrated and the rules are not contested. Voice stands for a bargaining situation. Loyalty and rudimentary forms of cooperation have been sustained over the years by traditional authority structures. Although the behavioural norm was loyalty these were often unequal patron-client relations, within a community as well as in relation to the state. These relations are breaking up with the advent of participatory politics and eroding traditional authority structures in myriad ways.

Bardhan (1993) argues that whatever the final effect, they improve the options that common people have for 'voice', 'exit' and the construction of new social relations. He notes that there are 'appeals to supralocal authorities for conflict resolution and arbitration' and that 'with increased social and political awareness villagers are, however, increasingly able to differentiate between domains of relationships which formerly used to be lumped together in a dense all-encompassing network' (1993: 638).

## **5.5 Conclusion**

NIE has some fairly straightforward conclusions for the likelihood of actors putting information in the public realm. If the details of the dyadic contract are right (assist actors in fulfilling self-interest), then actors will volunteer information, if not, then there is no point in trying to find other ways to build patterns of cooperation. The operation of these principles will lead to institutions that involve in the direction of greater efficiency. PDR could play a positive role as a forum which allows actors to

overcome transaction costs, sunken costs and prisoners dilemma in making these moves towards greater efficiency.

Evans (1993) has shown that bargaining situations are open to extra-economic coercion and that these can be reinforced by ideologies which do not allow actors to exercise their agency. Wade (1993) illustrates that institutions do not necessarily evolve in the direction of greater efficiency and that the behaviour of those operating within institutions cannot be explained by examining the details of the contract between principal and agent. Together the authors make a strong case for examining the social embeddedness of institutions and their social capital in an understanding of their operation. Their combined evidence suggests that without an explicit focus on these structures and wider social relations, it is unlikely that participants in a PDR will put information in the public realm, or that the significance of this will be correctly interpreted if they do.

## 6. Governance, NGOs and the State

### 6.1 Introduction

There is inevitably a strong connection between the methodologies used in development practice to assess and implement projects, and the ideology and problem definitions which inform the development agenda as a whole. Since 1992 the political ideology of donor governments has been based on notions of ‘good governance’. This chapter will review the good governance agenda and how it conceptualises state–society relations.

There are three reasons that I hope this will be useful. First, the assumptions made in the good governance agenda (about the nature of institutions, pluralism and the state), are similar to those which underlie PDR. Secondly, PDR will probably operate within the broad framework of the good governance agenda in the near future. Finally, if we accept the argument made by Giddens (1984) about the circularity of knowledge, then the principles of good governance will enter the development dialogue and form part of the agency of different actors. This will be reflected in the information generated and exchanged in PDR.

### 6.2 The Good Governance Agenda

The good governance agenda emerged officially in 1992 with the publication of the World Bank Report *Governance and Development* 1992. The concept of governance is defined ‘as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources’ (1992: 1). Governance has become a tool used to reach decisions on which countries will receive aid with all major donors now insisting that ‘good government’ is important.<sup>6</sup>

Good governance has two objectives – one is encouraging greater transparency, accountability and administrative efficiency, the other related concern is with democracy, human rights and participation. The Report describes the main components of good government as developing: 1) public sector management; 2) accountability; 3) the legal framework for development, and; 4) information and transparency. The governance agenda assumes that the four main components of the agenda are complementary, that is an increase in political pluralism (through participation, decentralisation and democracy) will lead to administrative accountability and reduced corruption.

Although few commentators doubt that good governance is a desirable objective, there is considerable

---

<sup>6</sup> Moore (1995b) argues that good governance can in fact be tied to a liberal democratic agenda which originates from the west and reflects in part an attempt to recreate a domestic political base for foreign aid. The World Bank does not have a mandate which allows it to make judgements or influence the political institutions in any country. Good governance is an attempt to influence political institutions and make political judgements through apparently apolitical demands.

disagreement over how to recognise what good governance is, and how pluralism/participation/information exchange relate to improved development performance (Hawthorn, 1995). Critics of the good government agenda maintain that the treatment of power and politics in society is too superficial to allow any concrete guidelines for implementation. Further whilst democracy and the strengthening of civil sector institutions are laudable goals, the consequences of this for promoting development are not evident. Three of the charges which are made about the governance agenda could be generalised to PDR.

### *Institutions and Capacity Building*

The good governance agenda does not have a working definition of institutions. As 'institution building' is a key component of recent development agendas this lack of clarity is problematic. Goldsmith notes that 'behind the confusion is the fact that the term institution has two principal meanings in social science. In management and organisation theory, an institution usually refers to a role or organization; in economics and sociology, an institution is a rule or convention. There are major divergences between these two definitions...The first type of institution resides in deliberately constructed human groupings, the second is diffused among a multitude of people. Roles have concrete reality, rules are mental conceptions' (Goldsmith, 1992: 582, cited in Moore, 1995a).

Institution building has come to mean any attempt to improve the functioning of specific organisations, both through the provision of finance etc., and through activities oriented to 'developing' certain behaviour patterns and codes of conduct. Institution building has evolved to 'capacity building' in the governance agenda. Capacity building describes 'the capacities of nations, communities, groups and citizens to promote development objectives and solve their own problems' (Cohen, 1993: 1). The emphasis in PDR is inclined towards the second of Goldsmith's (1992) definitions; the development of rules/attitudes rather than roles. Nevertheless the two are partly intertwined, as Wade's (1993) exploration of organisational behaviour and structure in Street Level Bureaucracies indicated. The danger, as Moore suggests is that 'the term becomes practically and analytically useless, because it tries to include everything' (1995b: 93). He proceeds to suggest that the inability to define 'capacity building' may expose 'the fact that talk of "institutional failure" in developing countries comes perilously close to an admission that there is some fundamental problem that we can neither understand, nor effectively confront, but simply label' (1995b: 93).

### *Accountability and Monitoring*

Accountability is considered to be a crucial component of governance, increasing the flow of information between state and civil society, and providing the 'transparency' that will decrease corruption. There are four main components of 'accountability' in the governance agenda; accounting/auditing, decentralisation, micro-level accountability of public agencies to the direct consumers of locally provided services, and government and NGOs. As Moore notes, these are listed without any statement of priority, or more fundamentally, without answering the questions; 'accountability to whom? through what mechanisms? and to what degree?' (1995b: 42). It is not at all clear, for example, why there should be a connection between NGOs and accountability. Moore points

out that accountability 'is a highly abstract concept, sometimes interpreted in formalistic and legalistic terms, and sometimes used in a more concrete way to refer to the social, economic, political, etc. mechanisms through which some agents become responsive to other agents' (1995b: 42).

Moore suggests that the obscurity in which accountability is enshrouded prevents an examination of the mechanisms through which it could operate. Even worse, accountability operates in diverse ways in the real world, and some of these may be in contradiction with each other. For example, accountability to clients may involve short cuts which mean less accountability to bureaucratic superiors. Not all types of accountability are good, for example, the accountability of public agencies to powerful and self-interested pressure groups. Further, accountability can disable governments, if, for example, senior public servants did not feel free to give advice on sensitive issues. The effectiveness of traditional intra-bureaucracy mechanisms are derided in favour of an undefined micro-level accountability to 'the people'.

### *Information, Transparency and Corruption*

Corruption has come into explicit focus again with the emergence of the good governance agenda, the spread of neo-liberal economics and liberal democratic politics. Corruption has been identified on the economic side as one of the consequences of excessive state intervention and the bureaucratic rents thereby created; on the political side it has been considered a consequence of monopoly power of various kinds of authoritative regimes. Policy implications has been to role back the state through privatisation and deregulation and by introducing more competition, transparency and accountability into the political process (Harriss-White and White, 1996).

The causal link between increased transparency and a decrease in corrupt activity drawn in the governance agenda has been the subject of much debate (White, 1995). So, for that matter, is the inevitability of the link which is drawn between democracy and development (Hawthorn, 1995). Proponents point to the success of East Asian countries in which democracy is still in a nascent stage. South Korea, for example, has had large and infamous corruption scandals without an apparently disastrous effect on development (Khan, 1996). Jenkins (1995) examines structural adjustment in India and argues that the government has been able to sustain the momentum of economic reforms not through a transparent and accountable government, but through political manipulation. This has been based on the capacity of the central government to involve state governments in mediating conflicts of interest caused by liberalisation at the local level. A lack of transparency has been a fundamental condition of this Macchiavellan manouvering.

The objective of a democratic developmental state itself is not being overthrown by these authors. White suggests that the goal should however be a long term deepening of institutions and that 'there is effectively a "settling in" process like ships in the mud, whereby evolving institutions become increasingly embedded in the deeper structures of power and interest in society and become harder to change in consequence' (1995: 34). This in fact is the aim of the learning process approach and of PDR. However an effective crafting of such institutions requires us 'to think systematically about the political dynamics of democracies in developing societies' (White, 1995: 35). As far as corruption is concerned this means developing an understanding which goes beyond an economically rooted explanation to

consider the political economy, and beyond the narrow focus on the state to an understanding of how it is situated in the relations between state and civil society (Harris-White and White, 1996).<sup>7</sup>

### 6.3 The State and Civil Society

PDR appears to be situated within a liberal-pluralist paradigm by default. The faith in negotiated compromises, in development from below, and in the beneficial effects of information transfer are all hallmarks of this paradigm, unless more precise objectives and definitions of power and politics are outlined. A definition of what relations are assumed to exist between state and civil society would go some way towards clarifying the definitional vacuum in which PDR may be located. As Robinson notes, these interpretations of civil society ‘have significant operational implications, since most aid donors are inclined towards the liberal interpretation’ (1995: 71).

The liberal and the Marxist definition provide two broad spectrums. The liberal tradition has defined civil society as a public realm, comprised of a plurality of civic associations, situated between the state and the family. In Dasgupta’s words civil society is ‘the sphere of autonomous institutions, protected by the rule of law, in which men and women may conduct their business freely and independently of the state’ (1993: 105). Marx has defined it as a conflictual realm which developed and is governed by a sphere of market relations under capitalism, and in which civic institutions reproduce and disseminate the hegemonic ideas and values associated with capitalism (Robinson, 1995). Following one or other interpretations has vastly different consequences for the conceptualisation of how to develop institutions in civil society, and for the role of information (liberating/hegemonic) in this process.

There has been a considerable theoretical convergence between these two extreme views. For many commentators, civil society and the state can only be defined in relation to each other. Poulantzas (1973) has defined these relations as one of ‘relative autonomy’. The particularities of the balance of power which determine this relative autonomy have been variously interpreted with different operational implications for development. As White (1995) points out while civil society has the potential to influence the process of decentralised democratic development, its role in any given context will depend on the specific character and power of the state.

#### 6.3.1 *The State in India*

Chatterjee (1994) has remarked that ‘although it is a virtual truism that the state is a central actor in any programme for planned economic development, its role in planning is not for that reason any less problematical’ (1994: 51). There have been numerous attempts to define the state in India, despite of

---

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 7 will provide some evidence about the operation and conceptualisation of corruption in India.

which a recent review of these concludes that ‘no fully satisfactory representation of the nature of the post-colonial Indian state exists in the available literature’ (1994: 44). Most of the recent formulations of the nature of the State in India have approached the issue from the point of view of trying to explain state failure in development planning (Roy, 1994).

There are four broad interpretations of the role the Indian state plays in development planning.<sup>8</sup> The liberal-pluralist conception of the state identifies it as an impartial agent which mediates between interest groups, its political neutrality assured by the political process of a democratic society in which all interests can exert pressure for their demands (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1987). State failure is characterised by excessive pressure being placed on this essentially neutral state by interest groups in society. The traditional Marxist position suggests that the state is an agent for the dominant ruling classes, with no room for autonomous action. State failure is characterised by the difficulty in furthering capitalist accumulation. The New Political Economy perspective has come to dominate analysis of the Indian state in both academic and official circles (Krueger, 1974). ‘The picture of the Indian state that emerges in the NPE paradigm is a generalized one: a predatory state, debilitating society by generating rent-seeking impulses, (Roy, 1996: 22).

A fourth position maintains that the state is neither neutral (as in the liberal-pluralist position) or dominated by a single dominant class. Rather, the state is dominated by a group of dominant classes, and state–society relations can best be understood as a balance between these (Bardhan, 1994). There have been many interpretations of which groups (and how they constitute ‘classes’) have been part of the dominant coalition, and the effect that this has had on state–society relations. A recent formulation of state–society relations developed by Khan (in the context of Bangladesh but developed by Roy (1994) for India) offers a new perspective on these dynamics. Khan develops the notion of a ‘clientilist’ state in which property rights are weakly defined, and are contested by organised groups who are able to challenge the state<sup>9</sup>.

The schematic outline of some typologies of state–society relations illustrate that the particular view of state–society relations adopted will have a fundamental affect about the assumptions made about the strategies needed to build on institutions in civil society.

### 6.3.2 *Non-Governmental Organisations*

In the last two decades there has been an emergence of new social movements based on ethnicity, gender and locality. Their participants and leaders have begun to demand citizenship rights from the state and to exercise resistance to the ways in which the state has dominated popular sectors. These movements have been explained in several ways. For some they represent the apparent failure of class and class action (Kothari, 1986). Other commentators still consider class analysis as central to an

---

<sup>8</sup> This description is greatly simplified. For an overview of some of the other formulations see Byres (1994); Roy (1994).

<sup>9</sup> Khan’s clientilist interpretation of corruption will be outlined in chapter 7.

explanation (Brass, 1994). Farrington et al. (1993) suggest that these movements generate a view of civil society as a 'complex mosaic of different interest groups'. Chandhoke (1990) argues that the movements can only be understood as a consequence of state–society relations, and that the movements are directed not only at gaining autonomy from the state through expanding 'civil space', but at demanding patronage from the state in order to get access to state resources.

Whatever the explanation for these movements in civil society have been, the role of NGOs (in all but the Marxist explanation) is seen as playing a support role, and acting as a go-between for these movements in civil society and the state. How to understand the role of the NGOs themselves in relation to the state is however unclear. It is widely believed that one of the reasons that NGOs and organisations in what is variously called the third sector, civil society the voluntary sector are so effective is precisely because of their effectiveness in trading, pooling and conveying information (Uphoff, 1993). Farrington et al. refer to this as part of 'NGO-lore' (1993: 180). Before proceeding to some explanations for the role of NGOs in civil society, it might be useful to consider the overview Edwards (1994) provides of NGOs and information transfer.

Edwards (1994) poses the central question; 'is there anything distinctive about NGOs and their approach which allows them to link information, knowledge and action in a more coherent, effective and relevant way, when compared to other organisations or institutions?' (1994: 117). Not only have NGOs grown in size and influence, but they have also changed substantially, moving away from a focus on small-scale projects, towards an involvement in the broader processes of development – a focus on people rather than things, awareness and organisation. These changes are leading towards what Clark (1991) has called the 'age of information' an age in which access to, and use of information will be every bit as important as concrete actions in fulfilling organisational objectives. Information no longer refers strictly to the written word but refers also to human memory, audio-visual material, verbal messages and electronic data.

Edwards concludes that there are three reasons which might lead us to the conclusion that NGOs have a comparative advantage in transferring information for development:

- They are embedded simultaneously in the world of action and understanding. Therefore there is a synthesis of action and understanding;
- They are present simultaneously at different levels of the global system. Information can flow quickly between the different sectors from grassroots to decision-making authorities at the top;
- Most NGOs, at least in theory, have a non-hierarchical structure, openness to communication and sharing of information as central principles (1994: 116).

Edwards proceeds to consider whether these comparative advantages are relevant or operational in practice. NGOs convert information into knowledge, and knowledge into action, for: a) management and planning; b) learning and discovery, and c) advocacy and accountability. The potential barriers to the transfer of information for these purposes are outlined below (1994: 120–123):

- There are aspects of NGO structure which are not conducive to the free flow of information, nor he

linking of information with knowledge and action. Staff may be dispersed, information tends to get lodged in particular parts of the organisation, or with particular individuals and is guarded for its value to them.

- There is no reason that NGOs should not be vulnerable to blockages of information, distortions and manipulations which affect other bureaucracies. NGOs are also susceptible to complacency, territoriality and inertia. They also have their sacred cows. The closer to more deeply held convictions that this information is, the more difficult it is to link information, knowledge and action in an objective way.
- NGOs use information from situations on the ground for different purposes. In some cases the information is used directly at source, in other cases the information is taken from the field and used by the organisation at other levels. This may be the case with PDPM. In this instance it is important to be clear about whose interpretation of the information counts. The agency has to choose and it is tempting to impose the view of the centre. What is a disaster at the local level may be represented as a learning experience to donors. The transparency and empowerment which is needed to reveal and prevent this misuse actually implies a transfer of power relations so that NGOs promote information use by others.
- Raw data has to be synthesised into information and knowledge. This is time consuming and costly and therefore, NGOs may draw premature conclusions or distort the data.

Edwards' analysis is informative insofar as it summarises some of the institutional/structural features which influence information flow within and between NGOs. However like many of the articles which consider the ways in which NGOs are embedded in society, the solutions to the constraints are not conflictual and are thought to lie in increased accountability, trust, communication etc., (see World Development Special Issue (1987) and Drabek (1987) in particular). Whaites (1996) goes some way to trying to pinpoint NGO's role in 'civil society'. He notes that since the issue of the democratising function of civil society assumed a higher profile among multilateral agencies, NGOs were identified as a possible point of contact with the building blocks of society, namely civil associations. NGOs began to think of the larger economic and social ramifications that their work could have and focused on how to 'scale up' their activities. This was spurred by the UN which actively promoted civil society as a development issue, and which introduced procedures to give voluntary associations greater access to their systems.

All these initiatives have strengthened what Whaites has termed the 'civil society grab'. NGOs believe that they are inherently bound to strengthen civil society. The UN-NGO liaison service has produced an impressive paper emphasising the place for NGOs at UN tables. NGOs are given observer status and other special recognitions by the World Bank and the UN which has enhanced their ability to effect policy, even if this is not through the direct exercise of power. This greatly increases information flow and gives NGOs considerable informal power. In the UNDP 1993 position on civil society, all associations, no matter how primordially or patronage based, are seen as civil-society organisations. But, as Whaites asks, what are the nature of civil associations, and what is their relationship to the state? What if their main effect is to develop the comparative advantage of a small primordial group in relation to other groups? If one accepts Khan's clientelist interpretation of the political settlement then

this could be the case.

Elliott (1987) goes some way to exploring the conflicts which may arise between northern and southern NGOs and the consequences this could have for information flow. He points to the different political and institutional context of Northern and Southern NGOs. There is a great emphasis on dialogue, but the dialogue is likely to be unequal because: 1) an asymmetry of power; and 2) many local institutions have developed a capacity to absorb the pressures from the donor in a way that leaves the micropolitics of the local institutions intact. This is partly because local institutions know how to dress up their activities in a way which their donors like, 3) the dialogue will be further constrained by the clients of local organisations. Elliott concludes that the ontological transformation of NGOs from the technocratic to the enabling are curtailed by the dynamics of the NGO sector and the communities with which they work as well the political environment and culture of the country concerned.

Farrington et al. (1993) examine the relations between the state and NGOs in agricultural development on the basis of 70 case studies. They concentrate more on the larger ones, noting about the smaller NGOs that 'many of these are unable to bear the transaction costs involved in coping with the inflexibilities and caprices of government bureaucracy' (1993: 178). The larger NGOs may in fact be acting as brokers for the smaller ones with which they collaborate, or as pioneers in making government easier to access, and so reducing transaction costs in the longer term. This observation has possible implications for the generation and exchange of information when considered through clientelist interpretations of the Indian state.

Montgomery has suggested that the state will attempt to co-opt NGOs so as to counteract public mistrust in its operations and has termed this process 'bureaucratic populism' (1988, in Farrington et al., 1993: 50). Esman and Uphoff warn against accepting the image of a 'monolithic regime conspiring with the rural elites in the systematic exploitation and repression of the rural poor' because most states are far too poor to be monolithic and because they can become weaker still in the face of adjustment led measures to reform the public sector. Both these explanations may have an element of truth in them. Farrington et al. (1993) describe the reasons people join NGOs (personal commitment to a political conviction, financial security and career etc.) and point to the 'relevance of these individual and institutional histories to NGO's policy with regard to the state' (1993: 47). 'NGO links to the state are not only institutional – they are also mediated by the social networks of individuals – which can often cut across the state–NGO boundary, particularly for those individuals who have moved from the state to NGO, or vice versa' (1993: 47).

These insights call for a closer consideration of the effect that reforms have had on local political and economic structures, and the balance of power between state and civil society. In India the desirability of cooperation with voluntary organisations was emphasised from the Seventh Five-Year Plan onwards. There was a massive increase in the funds assigned to them for use in rural development programmes. Most of this allocation was for NGOs to work in government programmes. The notion of 'partnerships' became common. The forest policy for example was for the first time drawn up with considerable collaboration by NGOs. A constraint of the interaction between the NGOs and the GO is given in the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act of 1976. This was established in response to allegations that foreign funds were financing subversive activities and compels all organisations to register funds with the Home Ministry. The provisions of the FRCA were tightened in 1984 and a number of NGOs had

their registrations suspended.

The final analysis of the relation between NGOs and the GO remains open to interpretation and investigation. It is clear that many NGO workers, especially in the MSOs described by Farrington et al., are middle class. There is therefore a great potential communication between their members, and the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). This is evident for example in the close relations between NGO Conservationists and the Central Government/MOeF (Guha, 1989) in the movement of retired IAS officers into NGOs, and in the close personal links that exist for example between the NWDB and the SPWD. Navlakha (1989) has provided a statistical survey of over 9,000 respondents in managerial positions in the government, academia and industry. An analysis of this data by Roy (1994) reveals the remarkable intergenerational and interspatial ability of the middle class and their domination in public policy. Whether the links to NGOs represent 'bureaucratic populism', or whether NGOs are part of the 'dominant coalition' remains a matter for empirical investigation.

## 7. Some Empirical Evidence

### 7.1 Introduction

Chapters 2 and 4 revealed that recent theory about information generation and exchange has moved from an analysis based on social and economic structures to an actor-oriented focus on how it is constituted at 'the margins'. A concomitant shift has occurred from the view of administration as a technical instrument to one which sees it as an economy of knowledges, of human techniques, and of social relationships. White describes elements of this view as 'a concern with administrative practices rather than institutions and with strategies rather than holistic plans. This includes the theme of knowledge; its multiplicities, architectures; technologies and means of circulation' (1995: 5).

This chapter will explore 5 case studies which offer different insights into this 'theme of knowledge' and what motivates the movement of information. As a comprehensive overview of any one issue/sector/theme is impossible in the time-space available, this chapter aims to provide a diversity in perspective on the subject.

### 7.2 Chatterjee: Development Planning in the Indian State

*An interpretation of the role of development planning in India and the consequences of this for the movement of information.*

Chatterjee provides an original (not strictly in any of the three categories outlined in chapter 6) explanation of the role of development planning in India. He maintains that from Independence onwards planning was 'a bureaucratic function, to be operated at a level above the particular interests of civil society' (1994: 59) and legitimised as a domain outside of politics. An acceptance that the planning process is actually situated outside the political domain has led to an analysis of plan failure as caused by inefficient information gathering, changing circumstances in the economy which renders particular plans less efficient, and logistical problems in plan implementation (Chakravarty, 1987). These are all the characteristics with which information systems analysis would classically treat planning failure. The solution is usually sought in better and faster information gathering.

Chatterjee argues that the apparently apolitical character of planning has facilitated its use as a political tool. The operation of this can be seen in the collection of information and the construction of knowledge. The planner, representing the rational consciousness of the state, has to produce a knowledge of the objects of planning. 'This knowledge would enable him to work upon the total configuration of power itself, use the legal powers of the state to produce signals and thereby affect the actions of agents, play off one power against another to produce a general result in which everybody would be better off' (1994: 59). Chatterjee argues that the assumption of the rational state permits a

self-deception to occur, for ‘the state is also existent as a site at which the subjects of power in society interact, ally and contend with one another in the political process. The specific configuration of power that is constituted within the state is the result of this process’ (1994: 60). Chatterjee notes that ‘even the best efforts to secure “adequate information” leave behind an unestimated residue, which works imperceptibly and often perversely to upset the implementation of plans’ (1994: 60).

This residue is politics, and the operation of power on planning and knowledge construction. Chatterjee has a particular interpretation of how this operates in India. He argues that planning has become an instrument for legitimating accumulation by the state and resolving the conflict that arose from state accumulation. As protests and demands from different ‘interest groups’ arose for access to state resources, planning was a means by which these could be contained and benefits allotted to them. This interpretation is borne out by the increasingly ‘populist’ style of national politics in which benefits are handed out from the centre. This, says Chatterjee, is because ‘a developmental state operating within the framework of representative politics would necessarily require the state to assume the role of central allocator if it has to legitimise its authority in the political domain’ (1994: 68). Development projects, as part of this central allocation, should thus be analysed as a part of this process of legitimation.

Chatterjee is insightful in his illustration of how the claim that planning as a rational apolitical activity allows the operation of power on the construction of knowledge. Chatterjee interprets the source of that power as the ‘modern sector’ which is ‘specified in terms of a variety of criteria encompassing the domains of industrial production, the professional, educational and service sectors connected with industrial production, and agricultural production outside the subsistence sector, and also embracing the effective demographic boundaries of the market for the products of the modern sector’ (1994: 69). The objective of planning is to maintain the unity of the modern sector, and to legitimate the modern sector as representative of the nation. Chatterjee suggests that Bardhan’s analysis of competition between privileged pressure groups within the ‘dominant coalition’ for power is one-sided. So is the importance that Rudolph and Rudolph (1987) place on the weight of the public sector and state monopolies in determining priorities in planning. They miss the fundamental ambiguity of the planning process which attempts to maintain an ‘acceptable parity’ between the groups in the modern sector as a necessary precondition for further accumulation.

This version of planning, the constitution of knowledge, and of the operation of power in the Indian political economy has particular implications for PDR. The GO and NGO participants in a PDR will inevitably be part of the modern sector. Chatterjee directs us to view the dynamics of the relationship between them in terms of their relations to those outside of the modern sector. His suggestion is that the chief objective, although as an implicit ‘self-deception’, will be to manage conflict and to maintain unity within the modern sector. This perspective has some aspects in common with Luhmann’s (1969) view of the use of information in planning outlined in chapter 2. The information contributed in a PDR will not and cannot be used subversively to change power structures, but will be used in planning to establish weak links and promote the stability of the system. ‘The wielders of power can constrain, mould and distort the strategies of planning in order to produce political consent for their rule’ (Chatterjee, 1971).

### 7.3 Corruption<sup>10</sup>

Corruption in India has been the subject of much intellectual theorising and forms what Harriss-White and White (1996) have called part of the ‘corridor and canteen conversations of development practitioners’ (1996: 1). Although it is routinely blamed for the ‘failure’ of plans and projects there is little evidence of how it can best be analysed and combatted. Certain assumptions about corruption have emerged with the spreading doctrine of liberal-democratic politics and neo-liberal economics. In the Indian context this paradigm has been termed the new political economy (NPE). On the economic side corruption is considered to be a consequence of excessive state intervention and rent-seeking. On the political side it has been seen as a consequence of the unaccountable monopoly power of the state (Harriss-White and White, 1996). Policy implications are to roll back the state, build up civil society, and involve third sector organisations. In this respect PDR, which has the exploration of local power relations as an objective, could be a dynamic part of this process.

Other interpretations of corruption are less optimistic about the success which such a strategy would have. The contributors to an IDS Bulletin *Liberalization and the New Corruption* (1996) argue that the liberal-democratic interpretation of corruption does not adequately explain its persistence or operation. They have reached a broad consensus that liberalisation, rather than reducing corruption, may simply redefine its nature and operation. In this the main shift is from corruption controlled by state actors to corruption controlled by the actors in civil society.

As Wade (1985) discusses, very little effort has been made to understand the exact mechanisms of corruption. For example, whilst it is accepted that government organisations have monopoly power (Banfield, 1975), there is little effort to see what happens with the money. Krueger, well known for her exposition of rent-seeking theory, does not explain how and where competition over these rents take place, what happens to the bribes which constitute a share of the rents, and how efforts might be made to secure a position which generates large rents. Scott draws a distinction between parochial and market corruption. The second is open to those who pay the most regardless of who they are and are typically (although parochial factors often play a role) in those areas which involve frequent small transactions. But Scott also does not question what happens to the money and how those officers get into positions where they can earn lots of money. Wade (1985) argues that the failure to explore this represents a continuing inability to recognise the connections between ‘high’ and ‘low’ corruption, and the integral connection between the administration and politics in corruption.

The following two sections provide some initial answers to some of these questions. They consider corruption as it is located in state–society relations and in the administrative as well as the political structure of the state. The authors provide an insight into how corruption might affect the flow of information about development projects and contracts, and therefore how it might influence the likelihood that participants in a PDR will volunteer information in a non-strategic manner.

---

<sup>10</sup> Khan (1996) defines corrupt behaviour as ‘behaviour which deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in a position of public authority because of private-regarding motives such as wealth, power or status’ (1996: 12).

### 7.3.1 Khan: Clientelist Corruption

#### **An analysis of corruption in the context of the balance of power between state and civil society and the influence this may have on the strategies of participants in a PDR.**

Khan (1996) develops a comprehensive alternative explanation of corruption from that given in the conventional rent-seeking explanations. He argues that corruption should be analysed in the context of a particular political settlement. ‘The balance of power determines what is demanded, by whom, and on what terms. It also determines the feasible responses of the state to such demands, given the structure of supply. We will refer to a particular balance of power as a *political settlement*’ (1996: 18). Khan goes on to argue that most analysis of corruption assumes that the bargaining between agents in the state and civil society take place on the basis of well-defined property rights. It is implicitly assumed that the state is effective in defining and protecting these rights.

Khan argues that these foundational assumptions are a misnomer, and that this has serious repercussions for the explanation of corruption based on them. In fact, the political settlement in most countries, India included, places the state in a weak position for the protection and enforcement of rights. The economic bargaining between the state and its clients takes place in the context of continual political challenges to the existing allocation of rights to those excluded from their benefits. Khan argues further that the notion of the state as the ‘patron’ that distributes benefits to its clients to get a share of rents or political support (which he terms the patrimonial political settlement) does not in fact depict the reality of the operational constraints on the state. He proposes an alternative depiction – the clientelist political settlement – which recognises that states often lack legitimacy. The main characteristic of the clientelist political settlement is that ‘the property rights defined by the state are weakly defined and are contested by well-organized social groups who are able to challenge the rights being enforced by the state’ (1996: 18).

This alternative conceptualisation of the dynamics underlying corrupt transactions has some other consequences for the distribution of rights between the state and civil society. One consequence is that ‘the effective demand for rights is distributed not just by the distribution of purchasing power but by the distribution of political power’ (1996: 19). Another is that because existing rights are likely to have been negotiated politically in the past, it will be difficult for a weak state to withdraw and transfer these, because the political costs will be too steep. The state may thus prefer to create new rights than transfer existing ones. Yet another feature of the clientelist political settlement is that agents granted rights by the state may have to make further pay-offs to prevent a contestation over their access to the incomes generated by their assets. All these characteristics have economic consequences in excessive employment creation, protection of industry etc.

If we accept Khan’s interpretation of corruption, then corruption is a phenomenon which also occurs in civil society, and which poses a challenge to specific political settlements. The standard remedies proposed by the liberalisation agenda would not apply. This has implications when translated into the likely environment for a PDR, and the factors which might influence the information which is placed in the public realm. In the context of building ‘capacity’ and developing institutions, agents in the GO may be constrained by interest groups in civil society from volunteering any information which affects

existing rights. The GO and other agents in civil society may also be constrained by the need to make pay-offs such as creating employment for organisationally powerful groups and bribes to lower level functionaries who are able to contest pay-offs to local mafia. The salient point is, that if we accept that agents will compete over resources (such as development projects) allocated by the state, and that this competition involves corrupt transactions (as defined by Khan), then we can expect that a PDR scenario will not remain immune to this process.

### *7.3.2 Wade: The Market for Public Office*

#### **An analysis of the operation of high and low corruption, and the integral connection between the administrative and political system in corruption.**

Wade (1985) and his analysis of ‘why the Indian State is not better at Development’ illustrates how Transfer Sanctioning Authorities (TSAs) are an integral part of the development structure of the Indian system and how politics and administration are linked in the everyday practice of ‘development’. Wade illustrates the operation of the ‘market for public office’ and explains how and why officials are transferred. His analysis applies especially to those Departments (of Irrigation, Forest, Agriculture, Social and Water Conservation) which are most likely to be involved in PDR. He illustrates the consequences which the ‘market for public office’ has on the effectiveness of public service organisations and the pressure brought to bear on officers which often lead them to take measures which work against the ostensible aims of their department. This has been referred to by Chambers (1994) as the ‘slipping clutch’ of development. Wade provides an insight into how it operates.

#### *The Operation of the Market for Public Office*

Wade argues that the usual distinctions made between low level and high level corruption, and administrative and political corruption, are misplaced because these ostensibly different ‘corruptions’ are in fact part of the same system. The assumption that political and administrative corruption are different has prevented a focus on what happens to the income generated by corruption, or when there are discussions about politics influencing the bureaucracy, an analysis of why bureaucrats respond to that influence.

Wade addresses these issues through an examination of the role of the Transfer Sanctioning Authority (TSA). Posts in public administration have different preference rankings, many of which are shared. These preferences are based on factors such as proximity to different amenities (towns, hospitals etc.) and the potential rents which can be collected from the post. The TSA is responsible for sanctioning transfers between posts, and is accountable for his decision only to his immediate superior. The main means to influence him is through price: ‘the price offered for each post will reflect the amount expected to be earned in the post’ (1985: 469). Information about the amount of revenue that can be earned in each post is exchanged fairly freely. The illicit revenue has to be above a minimum level of revenue which is demanded from above (as will be explained) and below a level which raises too many

complaints from local people.

This operation of the transfer system has to be considered as situated within the context of a representative political system. Politicians can be thrown out of office by voters, and voters will expect politicians to be able to secure favours and avoid penalties from the bureaucracy. When a prospective purchaser of a post calls on a local politician for help in securing a transfer, the revenue seeking politician will ask for payment. The TSA, who varies with the rank of the transferee, will also collect money from the transferee and channel it upward. The transferee may have certain conditions attached to his transfer, such as sharing revenue with seniors, which can be backed up by threat of transfer. In addition, influential citizens can place extra burdens on revenue seeking officials to donate to their causes (examples could be charities, caste associations, NGOs), and use their ability to influence transfer as a threat.

Most significantly perhaps, politicians need resources to fight elections and most have personal clientele whom they need to nurse during the elections and maintain between elections. At election time candidates depend heavily on money passed down from the central party fund, and between elections the politicians ability to influence the allocation of state services may be dependent on how close he is to a powerful patron at state level. But his success is more closely related to his own capability to influence state resources and to ensure that officials use their discretion to favour, or not to disfavour, important constituents and to divert a proportion of revenue into his own pocket. The rent-seeking impulses thus generated in the system extend all the way to the Chief Minister.<sup>11</sup>

### *The Effect of the System on Development Planning*

The effects of the TSA system on departmental operation follow from two distinguishable components: the rapidity of transfers and the officials concern to raise black money. The effects are not only economic, by lowering the productivity of capital in many infrastructural projects, the effects are also undermining the workable authority of the government. There is less authority over the bureaucratic centre than is assumed because the most important allocative parts of the state have been rented out. On the other hand rural areas are producing more 'surplus' than has been assumed and this is flowing upwards through channels controlled by public office holders but is unavailable for development. Some examples of the effect of this system are that canal managers will be under pressure to reduce certainty about water supply so as to maximise revenue from bribes, the forest department will be under pressure to give illicit contracts for trees, and the seed sold by private dealers will receive certification in exchange for payment by the agricultural department.

The principles of these power relations can be generalised for development projects. Politicians will have the power to influence the way that bureaucrats respond to the agenda of a project. They can do this by channelling the projects to certain areas, as well as by transferring the bureaucrat who does not fall in with the agenda. Adherence to the requirements of the 'good governance' agenda is likely to be vulnerable to influence of this sort. Wade (1985) provides an example of how an expert was advised not

---

<sup>11</sup> Wade clearly states that although this system is the main explanation for institutionalised corruption, he does not mean to imply that all bureaucrats are part of it.

to pass on his knowledge of corruption in the Soil and Water Conservation Department to the World Bank.

If TSA is accepted as a plausible explanation for the operation of the bureaucracy, the generation of revenue, and the political allocation of funds, then it is unlikely that department officials who are involved in PDR will place information in the 'public realm'. Also if this system remains the main means by which funds are allocated by politicians, and procured by bureaucrats, and by which it indirectly filters down to the local level and favoured clients, then the effectiveness of PDR in exposing this is not likely to be greater than any other methodology. It is possible that if the PDR process of a project illustrates clear benefits to participants from exposing corruption, and a degree of security that the risk will be worth taking, then they may be willing to volunteer information. The chances of a PDR being successful in this respect will probably require an understanding of the local political system and a recognition that what are involved are conflicts over scarce resources, not 'misunderstandings' over objectives etc.

#### **7.4 Chambers: All Power Deceives**

*An analysis of the operation of power in development planning and how it contributes towards stable systems of misinformation.*

Chambers isolates four reasons for the persistence of 'phenomenal errors which fly in the face of facts which seem to have been known or knowable' (1994: 15). First development reality changes, for which the solution is seen as better and faster feedback, monitoring and information systems. Secondly, professional norms (beliefs, methods, and technology) cannot be easily applied to an understanding of rural environments. The third related reason is the modes of learning which have been embodied in development methodologies. The solution to both these last two lie in the now well-known approach of changing methods/attitudes/beliefs to those which represent and are driven by the periphery. The fourth reason identified by Chambers for the failure of planning and 'self-sustaining systems of misinformation' is power relations. Chambers puts more emphasis on behavioural aspects of power relations than either Khan (1996) or Wade (1985). Chambers examines power in terms of 'uppers' and 'lowers' and the dimensions of distance, dominance and ego which characterise the relations between them. *Dominance* refers to the conviction on the part of professionals that they are right; *distance* allows an insulation of professional fantasy; and *ego* is the reputation and recognition that professionals want and need which leads them to defend their positions even when they are wrong. Chambers claims that whilst these relations are well known, the manner in which they distort the information which flows upwards and downwards is less well recognised.

Chambers argues that uppers define much of the reality for lowers. The imposition of their version of reality on lowers is managed through induction, socialisation, the transfer of technology and the media. Lowers respond in many ways to this domination and 'upper' version of reality. One is to accept and internalise the ideologies of the uppers, as well as their own lower status. Another is to distort information so that it reflects the reality that is expected by uppers. Yet another is to withhold

information altogether. These strategies of lowers in filtering the information passed upwards can manifest themselves in forms that are reverent, courteous, prudent, deceiving and lying. ‘The outcome of uppers dominance and defences and lowers responses, can be stable systems of power and misinformation’ (1994: 22). Over time both groups can come to share beliefs through mutual self-deception. Chambers notes that his ‘polarisation of actors into dominant uppers and subordinate lowers obscures their many forms of coexistence and the overlays of their multiple shifting realities’ (1994: 23).

The solutions that Chambers offers to these power relations address a reorientation in behaviour rather than structures. In this he differs from Wade (1985), who considers reform of the bureaucratic structure a necessary condition of preventing the corruption he describes. Chambers’ notion of a ‘self-deceiving’ state (described as ‘psychotic’ in an earlier paper (1992)) suggests that the current operation of the state is a deviation from the norm, rather than an outcome of the allocation of rights and the balance of power between the state and civil society. The implications for a PDR are positive; it could provide the forum in which attitudes are reversed, the systems of misinformation are exposed, and the psychotic state is ‘healed’.

## **7.5 Goetz: From Feminist Knowledge to Data for Development**

*An analysis of the way in which information about women collected by development bureaucracies is influenced by gender ideologies and denuded of political content as a consequence.*

Goetz (1994) provides an analysis of how women’s experiences of development have been iterated to the development process. In this connection she makes five points:

First; ‘information about women’s experiences in developing countries has been distilled through the development process in ways which strongly reflect the gender politics and gendered interests of the users of that information’ (1994: 27). A feature of this is the separation of information on gender from issues of power as expressed in issues over women’s control over resources etc.

Secondly; ‘information about women and their relationship to men has been iterated to the development process in ways which reflect dominant development paradigms’ (1994: 27).

Thirdly; ‘bureaucratic procedures for information generation and use impose a particular discipline on information about women which has the effect of stripping away its political content – information related to women’s interests – leaving a set of generalisable needs for development bureaucracies to administer’ (1994: 28).

Fourth; ‘the validity and policy significance given to information about women will depend on the capacity of “informers” to frame their information as a matter of critical urgency’ (1994: 28).

Fifth; ‘information about women tends to receive policy recognition in proportion to the social and

political significance of the informer' (1994: 28). It is usually the information contained in western press and written by western observers that receive recognition. This bias in the importance given to information from different actors is still prevalent in all areas of development research.

Goetz provides an insight into the instrumental use of information in development bureaucracies. 'Bureaucracies convert knowledge into power...(a) particular definition of a problem tends to privilege a set of solutions, and the choice of solutions determines who will set social norms (Jaquette and Staudt, 1988, cited in Goetz, 1994: 31). PDR aims to expose this relation between knowledge and power, and thereby contribute towards solutions which are based on a 'participatory' assessment of problems. Goetz's article, based on extended field research, is especially interesting for that reason. It reveals the persistence and adaptability of power structures within society and how this effects the gathering and interpretation of information. She shows that this bias in development bureaucracies is still there after at least a decade of feminist research which has been politicising women's experience in development in ways which disrupt previous interpretive boundaries. The experience of feminist researchers may provide useful lessons about the ways in which information can be depoliticised for the participants in PDR.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The evidence provides a broad overview of some of the 'multiplicities and architectures' of knowledge and the generation and exchange of knowledge. All the authors reviewed suggest, on the basis of empirical evidence, that the instrumental use of information as a source of power is a routine part of development planning. The authors have noted this in the hegemony of the 'modern sector' in development planning; in clientelist corruption; in the links between administrative and political corruption; in the relations between uppers and lowers; and in the gender bias of development bureaucracies towards feminist political information. The implications for PDR of this diverse evidence is that agents with interests vested in the strategic use of information as a source of power will probably not be prepared to place information in the public realm.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper has examined 'whether there are conceptual frameworks and/or existing empirical work which invalidate the (western liberal) assumption underlying PDR, namely that actors (whether NGO or GO) will be willing to put information in a common pool for access by others from similar or different organisations'. The brief review of the literature has illustrated that there is abundant literature which invalidates the assumption that one can assume that information will automatically be placed in the public realm. Theoretical developments in social theory, anthropology, development methodologies and economics have all pointed to the close relation that exists between knowledge and power. In fact one can assume that actors will not be prepared to reveal the knowledge from which they derive their power; whether this power is the ability to exercise control over large resources, or simply to maintain a margin of survival. Further, the literature suggests that this trend is likely to continue as information generation and exchange become increasingly important components of development projects.

The review of the literature suggests that there is potential for PDR to reveal local 'realities' if one assumes that information will be placed in the public realm. PDR will be most successful if it is used as a tool to interpret local 'discourse' and to explore local power relations with a view to creating situations in which actors can 'take a risk' by placing the information in the public realm. In Habermas' conceptualisation, the ideal community can be achieved through communicative reason. It is unlikely however that there will be a scenario where all participants in a PDR can 'win' from the exchange of information. The literature also cannot solve the problem of how to ensure that the observer/outsider is objective. The solutions proposed to this problem are that we show 'solidarity' (Rorty, 1996), that we are explicit about our methodology and use the project interface as a site for learning (Long and Long, 1992), and that we ensure open access and availability of all information (Lyotard, 1996).

There are two broad approaches to an investigation of knowledge construction in the literature: the actor-oriented and the structuralist. Whilst the actor-oriented approach is currently more popularly used in development methodologies, some of the literature reviewed on power structures reveals the importance of having some non-local conception of how these operate. Chapter 6 discussed how the liberal-pluralist assumptions on which governance is based is unable to address these power structures and the possible repercussions of this. Chapter 7 reviewed some empirical evidence of how power structures operate and the effect that these may have on actors willingness or ability to put information in the public realm. White (1993) has outlined a balance between actor-oriented and structuralist approaches in exploring information generation and exchange. He argues that actors use information in a behavioural sense (gaining as much information as possible from the use of a piece of knowledge, possibly to the detriment of other actors); but also in a structural sense (using knowledge in a way that is possible given their underlying position of dominance or subordination relative to other actors). Incorporating this balance into the way in which information is interpreted in a PDR context, as opposed to assuming that information will be placed in the public realm in a non-strategic manner, seems to offer a productive way forward.

## References

- Agarwal, A. (1996) 'Dismantling the Divide Between Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge', *Development and Change* (26) 3.
- Agarwal, B. (1994) 'Engendering the Development Debate', *Distinguished Speakers Series*. Michigan: University of Michigan.
- Bahuguna, S. (1982) 'Let the Himalayan Forests Live', *Science Today*, March 15.
- Baland, J.M. and Platteau, J.P. (1993) 'Are Economists Concerned with Power?', *IDS Bulletin* (24) 3.
- Banfield, E. (1972) 'Corruption as a Feature of Governmental Organisation', *Journal of Law and Economics* 18.
- Banuri, T. and Apffel-Marglin, F. (eds.) (1993) *Who will Save the Forests? Knowledge, Power and Environmental Destruction*. London: Zed Press.
- Bardhan, P. (1984) *The Political Economy of Development in India*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Bardhan, P. (1993) 'Analytics of the Institutions of Informal Cooperation in Rural Development', *World Development* (21) 4.
- Brass, T. (ed.) (1994) 'Special Issue on New Farmers Movements in India', *Journal of Peasant Studies* (21) 3-4.
- Bobbio, N. (1988) 'Gramsci and the Concept of Civil Society' in Keane, J. (ed.) *Civil Society and the State: New European Perspectives*. London: Verso.
- Byres, T. (1994) 'State, Class and Development Planning' in Byres, T. (ed.) *The State and Development Planning in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Cahoone, L. (ed.) (1996) *From Modernism to Post-Modernism; An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Chakravarty, S. (1987) *Development Planning: The Indian Experience*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Chambers, R. Saxena, N.C. and Shah, T. (1989) *To the Hands of the Poor: Water and Trees*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.
- Chambers, R. (1992) 'Participatory Rural Appraisals: Past, Present and Future', *Wasteland News*, May-July.
- Chambers, R. (1994) 'All Power Deceives', *IDS Bulletin* (25) 2.
- Chandhoke, N. (1990) 'Bringing People Back In: Political and Intellectual Agendas', *Economic and Political Weekly*, August 4
- Chatterjee, P. (1994) 'Development Planning and the Indian State' in Byres, T. (ed.) *The State and Development Planning in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Clark, J. (1991) *Democratising Development*. London: Earthscan.
- Cohen, J. (1993) 'Building Sustainable Public Sector Managerial, Professional and Technical Capacity: A Framework for Analysis and Intervention', *Development Discussion Paper* 473. Harvard: Harvard Institute for International Development.
- Dasgupta, P. (1993) *An Enquiry into Well Being and Destitution*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Davies, S. (1994) 'Information, Knowledge and Power', *IDS Bulletin* (25) 2.
- De Janvry, A., Sadoulet, E. and Thorbecke, E. (1993) 'Introduction to State, Market and Civil Organisations: New Theories, New Practices, and their Implications for Rural Development', *World Development* (21) 4.
- De Kadt, E. (1994) 'Getting and Using Knowledge about the poor', *IDS Bulletin* (25) 2.

- Drabek, A. (1987) 'Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs – An Overview of the Issues', *World Development*, Special Issue on Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs, 15, Autumn.
- Edwards, M. (1994) 'NGOs in the Age of Information', *IDS Bulletin* (25) 2.
- Elliott, C. (1987) 'Some Aspects of the Relations Between the North and the South in the NGO Sector', *World Development*, Special Issue on Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs, 15, Autumn.
- Esman, M.J. and Uphoff, N. (1984) *Local Organisations: Intermediaries in Rural Development*, New York: Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- Evans, A. (1993) 'Contracted-Out: Some Reflections on Gender, Power and Agrarian Institutions', *IDS Bulletin* (24) 3.
- Farrington, J. Bebbington, T. with Wellard, K. and Lewis, D. (1993) *Reluctant Partners? Non-Governmental Organisations, The State and Sustainable Agricultural Development*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1971) 'The Order of Discourse' in Young, R. (ed.) *Untying the Text; A Post-Structuralist Reader*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society: An Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1987) *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Goetz, A. (1994) 'From Feminist Knowledge to Data for Development: the Bureaucratic Management of Information on Women and Development', *IDS Bulletin* (25) 2.
- Goldsmith, A. (1992) 'Institutions and Planned Socio-economic Change: Four Approaches', *Public Administration Review* (52) 6.
- Granovetter, M. (1985) 'Economic Action and Social Structure: the Problem of Embeddedness', *American Journal of Sociology* (91) 3.
- Greeley, M. (1994) 'Measurement of Poverty and Poverty of Measurement', *IDS Bulletin* (25) 2.
- Guha, R. (1989) *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Indian Himalayas*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Habermas, J. (1984) *Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1996) 'An Alternative Way out of the Philosophy of the Subject: Communicative Reason versus Subject-Centred Reason' in Cahoone, L. (ed.) *From Modernism to Post-Modernism; An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Hardin, G. (1968) 'The Tragedy of the Commons', *Science* 162.
- Harding, S. (1996) 'From Feminist Empiricism to Feminist Standpoint Epistemologies' in Cahoone, L. (ed.) *From Modernism to Post-Modernism; An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Harriss-White, B. and White, G. (1996) 'Corruption, Liberalisation and Democracy', *IDS Bulletin* (27) 2.
- Hawthorn, G. (1995) 'How to Ask for Good Government', *IDS Bulletin* (26) 2.
- Hindess, B. (1986) 'Actors and Social Relations' in Waldell, M.I. and Turner, S.P. (eds.) *Sociological Theory in Transition*. Boston: Allen and Unwin.
- Hirschman, A.O. (1970) - correct spelling of name? *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organisations and States*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hoben, A. (1995) 'Paradigms and Politics: The Cultural Construction of Environmental Policy in Ethiopia', *World Development* (23) 6.

- Jenkins, S. (1995) 'Liberal Democracy and the Political Management of Structural Adjustment in India: Conceptual Tensions in the Good Government Agenda', *IDS Bulletin* (26) 2.
- Khan, M. (1996) 'A Typology of Corrupt Transactions in Developing Countries', *IDS Bulletin* (27) 2.
- Korten, D. (1988) 'Social Science in the Service of Social Transformation' in Veneracion, C. (1988) *A Decade of Process Documentation Research: Reflections and Synthesis*, Based on the Proceedings of the Seminar-Workshop on Process Documentation Research held on 21–24 January in Tagatay City: Philippines.
- Kothari, R. (1986) 'Masses, Classes and the State', *Alternatives* (1) 6.
- Krueger, A. (1974) 'The Political Economy of the Rent-Seeking Society', *American Economic Review* 64.
- Lacoone, C. (ed.) (1996) *From Modernism to Post modernism: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Latour, B. (1986) 'The Powers of Association', in Law, J. (ed.) *Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge?* London: Routledge.
- Leach, M. and Mearns, R. (1996) 'Challenging Received Wisdom in African Environmental Change and Policy' in Leach, M. and Mearns, R. (eds.) *The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom in African Environmental Change and Policy*. London: James Curry.
- Lipsky, M. (1980) *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Sage.
- Long, N. and Long, A. (eds.) (1992) *Battlefields of Knowledge: The Interlocking of Theory and Practice in Social Research and Development* Routledge: London
- Lucas, H. (1994) 'New Information Technology – Old Information Habits?', *IDS Bulletin* (25) 2.
- Luhmann, N. (1969) *Legitimation durch Verfahren*. Neuweid: Luchterhand.
- Lytard, J.F. (1996) 'The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge' in Cahoone, L. (ed.) *From Modernism to Post-Modernism; An Antholog*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Machlup, F. (1979) 'Uses, Value and Benefits of Knowledge' in King, D.W. et al. (eds.) *Key Papers in the Economics of Information, Knowledge for Industry*. New York: Publications.
- Marglin, F. and Marglin, S. (eds.) (1990) *Dominating Knowledge: Development Culture and Resistance*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Margolis, H. (1991) 'Free Riding versus Cooperation' in R.Zeckhauser (ed.) *The Strategy of Choice*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Mearns, R. (1995) 'Community, Collective Action and Common Grazing: The Case of Post-Socialist Mongolia', *IDS Discussion Paper* 350.
- Montgomery, J. (1988) *Bureaucrats and People: Grassroots Participation in Third World Development*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Moock, J. and Rhoades, R. (eds.) (1992) *Diversity, Farmer Knowledge and Sustainability*. New York: Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- Moore, M. (1995a) 'Promoting Good Government by Supporting Institutional Development?', *IDS Bulletin* (26) 2.
- Moore, M. (1995b) 'The Emergence of the "Good Government" Agenda: Some Milestones', *IDS Bulletin* (26) 2.
- Nanda, M. (1992) 'Is Modern Science a Western Patriarchal Myth? A Critique of Populist Orthodoxy' *South Asia Bulletin* (XI) 1–2.
- Nandy, A. (1987) *Traditions, Tyrannies and Utopias*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Navlakha, S. (1989) *Elite and Social Change: A Study of Elite Formation in India*. New Delhi: Institute of Economic Growth.

- Norgaard, R. (1984) 'Traditional Agricultural Knowledge: Past Performance, Future Prospects, and Institutional Implications', *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 66.
- North, D. (1990) *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance: Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nugent, J.B. (1993) 'Between State, Markets and Households: A Neo-Institutional Analysis of Local Organisations and Institutions', *World Development* (21) 4.
- Pigg, S. (1992) 'Inventing Social Category Through Place: Social Representations and Development in Nepal', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (34) 3.
- Platteau, J.P. (1992) 'The Free Market is not readily transferable: Reflections on the Links between Market, Social Relations and Moral Norms', paper presented at the *Silver Jubilee Conference*, University of Sussex.
- Poulantzas, N. (1973) *Political Power and Social Classes*. London: Routledge.
- Pretty, J. (1994) 'Alternative Systems of Inquiry for Sustainable Agriculture', *IDS Bulletin* (25) 8.
- Richards, P. (1994) 'Videos and Violence on the Periphery', *IDS Bulletin* (25) 2.
- Robinson, M. (1995) 'Strengthening Civil Society in Africa: The Role of Foreign Political Aid', *IDS Bulletin* (26) 2.
- Roe, E. (1991) 'Development Narratives: or, Making the Best Out of Blue Print Development', *World Development* (19) 4.
- Röling, N. (1988) Knowledge Management and Information Technology: Brief on Concepts and Issues, Paper for the *European Seminar on Knowledge, Management and Information Technology*, International Agricultural Centre: Wageningen.
- Rorty, R. (1996) 'Solidarity or Objectivity' in Cahoone, L. (ed.) *From Modernism to Post-Modernism: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Roy, R. (1994) *The Political Economy of Indian Fiscal Policy: Towards a Wider Hypothesis of State Failure?* Working Paper. Manchester: Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester.
- Roy, R. (1996) 'State Failure in India: Political-Fiscal Implications of the Black Economy', *IDS Bulletin* (27) 2.
- Rudolph, L. and Rudolph, S. (1987) *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State* Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Runge, F.(1986) 'Common Property and Collective Action in Economic Development', *World Development* (14) 5.
- Seabright, A. (1990) 'Is Cooperation Habit-Forming?', Mimeo. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Sen, A. (1987) *On Ethics and Economics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Scoones, I. and Thompson, J. (1993) 'Challenging the Populist Perspective: Rural People's Knowledge, Agricultural Research and Extension Practice', *IDS Discussion Paper* 332, December.
- Scott, J.(1972) *Comparative Political Corruption*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Scott, J. (1985) *Weapons of the Weak*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Shiva, V. (1988) *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. London: Zed Press.
- Shiva, V. (1991) *Ecology and the Politics of Survival*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Strathern, M. (1985) 'Knowing Power and Being Equivocal: Three Melanesian Contexts' in Fardon, R. (ed.) *Power and Knowledge: Anthropological and Sociological Approaches*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- Thompson, J. (1995) 'Participatory Approaches in Government Bureaucracies: Facilitating the Process of Institutional Change', *World Development* (23) 9.

- Uphoff, N. (1993) 'Grassroots Organisations and NGOs in Rural Development: Opportunities with Diminishing States and Expanding Markets', *World Development* (21) 4.
- Veneracion, C. (1988) *A Decade of Process Documentation Research: Reflections and Synthesis*, Based on the Proceedings of the Seminar-Workshop on Process Documentation Research held on 21–24 January in Tagatay City: Philippines
- Wade, R. (1985) 'The Market for Public Office: Why the Indian State is not Better at Development', *World Development* (13) 4.
- Wade, R. (1993) 'How to Make "Street Level" Bureaucracies Work Better: India and Korea', *IDS Bulletin* (23) 4.
- Whaites, A. (1996) 'Let's Get Civil Society Straight: NGOs and Political Theory', *Development Dialogue* (6) 3.
- White, G. (1993) 'Towards A Political Analysis of Markets', *IDS Bulletin* (24) 3.
- White, G. (1995) 'Towards a Democratic Developmental State', *IDS Bulletin* (26,) 2.
- World Bank (1992) *Governance and Development*. Washington D.C: World Bank.