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Travelling knowledges: urban poverty and slum/shack dwellers international

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Figures and Images

Tables

Declaration and copyright

Declaration

No part of this thesis has previously been submitted by the candidate for a degree in this or any other university.

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between knowledge and development is of growing importance in development theory and practice. Despite the growth in interest, there are significant issues that have not been explored in detail. I will focus on some of these issues, including: the ways in which knowledge and learning are conceived and created in development; the ways in which knowledge travels; the opportunities for learning between 'North' and 'South'; and the political spaces that are created through different kinds of knowledge.

To explore these issues, I examine a network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) called *Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI)*. This network seeks to reconfigure the governance of urban poverty reduction strategies and encourage 'poor' people to re-think their own capacities and potentials. In particular, I draw on interview-based fieldwork conducted on one key member of this group, the *Indian Alliance* based in Mumbai. I critically examine some of the possibilities and challenges of various forms of 'travelling knowledges'. These are strategies that have travelled through exchanges, wherein groups of poor people travel from one settlement to another to share stories and experiences with other poor people in what amounts to an informal 'training' process. By examining exchanges between SDI and groups in the UK, I critically discuss the broader potential in development to move beyond barriers of North and South that limit learning.

I adopt a broadly post-rationalist approach to the concerns in the thesis. Through this, I argue the importance of considering knowledge and learning as produced through relations of near and far, social and material, and as driven by routines and practices. A post-rationalist approach helps us to understand and appreciate the importance of geography for knowledge and learning in the SDI network. This approach draws attention to power. It encourages a critical consciousness that is alert to the kinds of knowledge conceived for development, and that recognizes the various ways in which different knowledges help create different types of politics.

A post-rationalist approach also cautions against conceptions of knowledge and learning that risk marginalizing geography and power in development more

generally. The thesis demonstrates the need to give further consideration of how knowledge is conceived as a development strategy, and what the potential possibilities and pitfalls of travelling knowledges are.

Abbreviations

ACHR	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
ARC	Area Resource Centre
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
GDN	Global Development Network
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MM	Mahila Milan (Women Together)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSDF	National Slum Dwellers Federation
SAHPF	South African Homeless People's Housing Federation
SDI	Slum / Shack Dwellers International
SPARC	Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres
SRA	Slum Rehabilitation Authority
WTI	We, the Invisible

Chapter 1

Knowledge, travel and urban poverty

The relations between knowledge, learning and development are of growing importance in development (see special issue of *Development in Practice*, 2002; DFID, 2000; Hovland, 2003; K. King, 2001; Wilson, 2002; World Bank, 1999). This thesis interrogates how these relations are conceived and what their possibilities and difficulties are.

1.1   Research Aims

Despite the growth of interest during the 1990s in knowledge and development, key issues have yet to be explored. Most of the recent literature on knowledge and development is concerned with how organisations can and should manage knowledge (BOND 2002, 2003; Edwards, 1994), what organisations can do to enhance innovation and knowledge creation (DFID, 2000), how organisations can become 'learning organisations' (Hailey and James, 2002; Roper and Pettit, 2002), and how knowledge can be made more available to people for development purposes (K. King, 2001) (often through Information Communication Technologies [ICTs] – see Chapman and Slaymaker, 2002; Wilson, 2002; World Bank, 1999). The focus, then, has been on how knowledge is managed, created and shared. While this thesis explores questions of knowledge creation and sharing, it does so with a critical perspective on the nature of knowledge and learning in development. This includes attention to how knowledge is conceived in development and how it is produced through organisations.

1.2   Purpose of the thesis

My research questions are aimed at what I believe to be significant gaps in the knowledge and development literature:

o How are knowledge and learning conceived and created in development?

o How does knowledge travel?

o What are the opportunities for learning about development between 'North' and 'South'?

o What political spaces are created through different kinds of knowledge?

These questions are linked in that they are centrally concerned with geographies of knowledge. If we are to understand how knowledge and learning are conceived and created in development, we must attend to questions of geography. Mainstream conceptions and strategies of 'knowledge for development' are often inclined – whether intentionally or otherwise – to overlook the geography of knowledge. This disjuncture often leads key players such as international development agencies to make claims about 'best practice' for one place based on experiences and data derived from many other places, but without considering the complex geographies of a given place. Such claims, I will argue, are very problematic. In the thesis, I argue in favour not of 'best practice' but of a relational conception of knowledge that brings space and knowledge firmly together.

There is another sense in which geography is important for mainstream conceptions and strategies of 'knowledge for development', and that is that these conceptions and strategies are premised upon and reproduce a global geography that broadly separates the North from the South. In this separation there is an assumption that the South possesses the wrong types of knowledge and that the North possesses the right kinds of knowledge for (neoliberal) development. This is a vertical rather than a horizontal separation, both in terms of the ways in which particular agents characterise knowledge from the North as more important than that in the South, and in the ability of agents such as international development agencies to privilege particular forms of knowledge and trajectories of learning. This, then, draws attention to politics. Here we need also to be attentive to the ways in which the North – South separation seeks to portray 'knowledge' as neutral, and I criticise this prising apart of knowledge from politics by highlighting some of the ways in which mainstream knowledge for development strategies are driven by particular political agendas.

14

In further critiquing this mode of geographical ordering, the thesis considers the possibilities of learning beyond a North – South divide. In addition, I explore the relations between knowledge and politics by considering some of the ways in which particular kinds of knowledge help create particular types of political spaces – a process that characterises World Bank strategies as much as the strategies of a movement of slum dwellers, although clearly with different power relations. The following sections outline why I am posing these four research questions.

1.2.1 Creating and conceiving knowledge and learning

Knowledge creation in development is often viewed as taking place in a political vacuum (see Mehta, 2001 on the World Bank; Stone, 2003; Wilks, 2001). By looking at knowledge creation in both 'mainstream development'[1] and an international network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) called *Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI)*, I will explore some of the ways in which knowledge creation is imbued with different political agendas, and suggest that there may be some lessons for mainstream development from SDI. These issues are important because they make visible the politics that are often implicitly embedded in 'knowledge for development' strategies.

Related to this, conceptions of knowledge and learning are often taken-for-granted in accounts in development studies and mainstream development (for an annotated bibliography, see Hovland 2003). While there has been some problematising of different types of knowledge, and of the relationship between knowledge and information in development studies (see Section 1.5.1), there has been little attention to the ontological and epistemological basis of knowledge. These questions are important because they contain assumptions that affect the imaginations of development strategies.

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[1] By 'mainstream development' I am referring to international development agencies, including (and not withstanding the differences between them) multilaterals like the World Bank and bilaterals like the UK Department for International Development, and states (see Chapter 3).

1.2.2   Knowledge in travel

The way in which knowledge travels and what it can do as it travels is an important concern in the thesis. In development studies and mainstream development, knowledge is conceived as travelling between bounded territories. This is premised on a double geography of two related assumptions. First, that information and knowledge travel in a linear way (highlighted in Section 1.2.1). This view of knowledge transfer is reminiscent of the functionalist resource-based theory of the firm (Gherardi, 2000: 213) which claims that the transfer of knowledge may be accomplished without distortion: "to transfer is not to transform".

The second assumption supports this belief with a spatial ontology informed by an imagination that information and knowledge circulates globally, and can be 'applied to' – with some alteration for local conditions – local places, or can work along side 'local' knowledge. It is an ontological[2] separation between space and place, a Euclidean imagination of the spatiality of globalisation that separates information/knowledge 'out there' from that 'in here'. I challenge this view with a relational conception of knowledge (Section 1.5). This is significant because getting the right kinds of relational knowledges and ensuring that this process is driven by the poor is becoming an increasingly important challenge in development and one for which conceptual tools need to be sharpened. The separation of local 'in here' from global 'out there' undermines the possibilities for considering the potentials (and challenges) of relational knowledge.

1.2.3   Learning between 'North' and 'South'

The question of learning between 'North' and 'South' is important because of the opportunities that now exist for fruitful learning to occur. In development, such possibilities have rarely been explored (Maxwell, 1998). In part, this relates to the histories of binaries that have separated 'First' from 'Third Worlds', 'North'

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[2] In the thesis 'ontology' refers to understandings of what constitutes reality and 'epistemology' refers to understandings of what and how we know.

from 'South', 'core' from 'periphery', and 'developed' from 'underdeveloped'. Commentators are increasingly writing of the untenable nature of these categories, highlighting changing global geographies of wealth and poverty (Kamrava, 1995; Maxwell, 1998; Payne, 2001; Pieterse, 2000). However, notions such as North and South continue to police geographical imaginations.

There have been few attempts to problematise this geopolitical representation. During the 1980s, literature on North / South relations tended to be posited along the lines of what the two 'blocs' have in common: inter-dependencies, trade, aid, imperialism and neo-imperialism, core / peripheries (although not to the extent previously), and the environment (for examples of all of these see the various entries in Hadjor, 1988). Even contemporary keystone development theory texts, while engaging more recent debates ranging from poststructuralism, postcolonialism, subalterns studies and so on, tend not to problematise the notion of First and Third Worlds. The categories emerge intact despite their post-Cold War reconfigurations (see, for example, Preston, 1996). Notions of North and South continue to inform present thinking despite the greater attention to globalisation, convergences, common processes, and so on. Payne (2001: 7) comments: "Some writers still make a positive case for particular formulations; others somewhat lazily inherit and do not question traditional ways of posing these problems."

There is a tendency to ghettoize First and Third Worlds by focusing on (and thereby reproducing) notions such as the 'Western city', the 'Third World city', or 'Third World problems'. This is a tendency found both in urban theory and development studies. A common feature is to homogenize Third World countries, nations, states and problems. Writing about a Northern focused urban theory, Robinson (2002: 533) takes aim at its conceptual organization:

> An analytical focus on the transnational global political economy could ensure that taken-for-granted categorizations of cities (western, third-world, African, Asian, socialist etc.) will no longer be of any relevance...Could this be the basis for a more cosmopolitan account of cities, rather than one that is divided, resting on partial and limited areas of the globe, and quite divergent sets of concerns or subject matter?

Writing about a Southern focused development studies, Maxwell (1998: 24) lays it on the line for the field:

> The argument about the differences between North and South, both the features and tools of analysis, occupies well-trodden and much-loved territory, which goes to the heart of whether 'development studies', or more often 'development economics' is a legitimate area of professional endeavour. Do we believe, with Seers (1963), Sen (1983), or Meier (1989), that developing countries are qualitatively different, and therefore worthy of an independent discipline? Or do we follow Lal (1983), Krueger (1986) and others, in arguing that differences are merely quantitative, and should not preclude similarities in theory or analytical method?[3]

1.2.4 Creating political spaces

Knowledge is imbued with geography and politics. Certain forms of knowledge and politics work together as discourses about how space should and could be. I will show how different forms of knowledge inflect different forms of politics. To study knowledge and development without attention to space and politics would be to ignore important ways in which development is contested and knowledge acts as a strategy in development. I will show how knowledge in SDI – and in particular how one member, the Indian Alliance – helps create spaces of political engagement.

In raising questions about the relationship between knowledge and space, the thesis engages ongoing debates in geography. I will consider how groups in different places produce and reproduce relational knowledge. The fact that knowledge is relational means that to some extent politics in place, and indeed places themselves, are relationally formed. There is no straightforward 'local' / 'global' separation, rather the 'local' is in part constituted by various forms of 'global' and vice-versa. This notion of the local as multi-scalar is "not confined to

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[3] Such divisions extend beyond development and urban studies. Elsewhere, Robinson (2003a: 278) points out that "even as the postcolonial turn has encouraged western scholars to turn to those working on and in other places to diversify the 'voices' and 'contexts' in their academic collaborations, these different contexts have usually been add-on 'case studies'". See also Yeung (2001) writing about the geographical bias in social science knowledge.

moving through a set of nested scales from the local to the national to the international", but is instead "characterized by direct local-global transactions or by a multiplication of local transactions as part of global networks" (Sassen, 2003: 11; Amin, 2002; M.P. Smith, 2001). If we are to account for the role of transnational engagement in SDI, we need to attend to the ways in which knowledge and politics are relational products of the 'near' and 'far', while retaining an awareness of the emphasis on the 'near' as a focus for learning and an object of struggle for SDI member groups.

On a closely related register, the thesis engages with recent debates in geography around the relationship between knowledge, space and the material (see Bingham, 1996; Thrift, 1998; Whatmore, 2002). I seek to demonstrate how the production of knowledge and politics is marked by relations that bring the social and material together, for example by exploring the ways in which documents play a role in knowledge creation and become imbued with political strategies. Attention to the material brings into view some of the important and contingent ways in which the non-human is involved in the creation of spaces of political engagement.

Additional contributions of the thesis

The thesis makes additional contributions related to these four main research questions. First, the groups in this study can be characterised by innovative approaches to urban poverty that are having significant impacts on both the lives of the poor and on various national and international institutions. Learning how these innovations take place and the effects they have allow us to understand how these groups tackle poverty and how their ideas are influencing others. Second, the importance of attending to the ways in which knowledge travels is

important with respect to the emerging literature on 'global civil society'[4] (for example, Kaldor, 2003), which tends to gloss over questions of knowledge production and learning. It is often assumed that knowledge travels straightforwardly between places in, for instance, transnational social movements, and that learning occurs as a necessary consequence of the transfer of information or knowledge. This functionalist assumption of unproblematic knowledge transfer constitutes an important gap in the global civil society literature. This is not just a conceptual issue: the power relations between different groups in a social movement influences what knowledge takes precedence, what knowledge is marginalised, and how learning affects political positions over time.

1.3 The Indian Alliance, Slum/Shack Dwellers International, and connecting the UK

This section will introduce the groups involved in the thesis and with whom I conducted empirical research (more detail on these organisations will follow in Chapter 3).

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[4] Kaldor (2003: 1-14) distinguished between five broad forms of global civil society (GCS). *Societas civilis* refers to the original use of the term as peaceful order, consent, and 'civility'. In its contemporary reworking, it is based on a cosmopolitan order of law through, for instance, human rights law, the establishment of an international criminal court, and the expansion of international peacekeeping and regimes of global governance. *Burgerliche Gesellschaft*, based on the writings of Adam Smith and Karl Marx, conceives GCS as inclusive of the economic and the social, such as transnational corporations, foreign investment, migration, global culture, etc. The *activist* version conceives GCS as a global public sphere were campaigns can be brought to global attention. The *neoliberal* version conceives GCS as a means for instilling neoliberal agendas through, for instance, market-oriented NGOs, and the *postmodern* version conceives GCS as a site of contestation and multiple identities (including, for instance, fundamentalist and nationalist identities).

1.3.1   The Alliance

The majority of the research was conducted on a three-way partnership based in Mumbai (Bombay[5]) that they refer to as the 'Alliance'. This Alliance includes the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), and Mahila Milan (MM). Through a variety of strategies centred on housing and sanitation in slums, they have been trying to reconfigure the nature of the governance of poverty reduction strategies, and encourage poor people to re-think their own capacities and potentials[6]. They seek to explore new forms of governance so that, one, the poor can forge their own initiatives, and, two, the state can be held accountable to the poor (Patel and Mitlin, 2001: 5). Since the early 1990s, they have sought to engage in a

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[5] Bombay was renamed Mumbai in 1996 by the Hindu fundamentalist party Shiv Sena. This renaming has been part of a wide-ranging and politicized debate around the identity of the city, nationalism and ethnicity (Hansen, 2001; Appadurai, 2000).

[6] Slums result from the occupation of open spaces in urban areas by predominantly poor people, and many point to the near extinction of the marginal farmer and increasing numbers of landless labourers in rural areas, coupled with the attractions of new opportunities in the cities, as the root of their existence (Desai, 1995). The dwellings are generally constructed using locally available materials and are of a semi-permanent nature.   They usually lack basic services and infrastructure like drinking water, sanitation, drainage, roads and electricity. Slum dwellers usually reside close to their source of employment in order to reduce transportation costs. I will use the term 'slum' broadly to refer to a wide range of structures, following the definition offered by Desai and Pillai (1970, in Desai, 1995), who, in reference to Mumbai, classify slums into three categories: (i) areas with single or multi-storeyed buildings, built long ago as per standards prevailing then, and which are today in condition of deterioration (chawls); (ii) semi-permanent structures which are of both the authorised and unauthorised types. Some of these areas consist of structures built of corrugated iron sheets, commonly known as patra chawls ('patra' meaning tin sheets); (iii) hutment colonies and squatter colonies called zoppadpattis ('zopda' is a Marathi word for 'hut'). These are built with an assortment of materials; hutments in slum settlements or along pavements are makeshift structures of bamboo, plastic, cloth, wood and tin (Desai, 1995: 20). The authorities have not employed this definition, although over time the places considered as slums has widened (ibid). In Mumbai, 50% of slums are located on private land, 25% on state government land, 20% on municipal corporation lands and 5% on central government lands and housing board lands (SRA, 1997: 1). They are usually located adjacent to developed housing and industries (ibid.). Sheela Patel of SPARC grouped the slum and pavement dwellers of Mumbai into three types: (i) the top 15% who are better off (for example, school teachers, civil servants), occasionally people from this group will be part of the Alliance; (ii) the bottom 30% who barely have enough to eat; and (iii) the majority who are quite stable (for example, most Mahila Milan leaders).

mutually beneficial dialogue with NGOs and CBOs working in a range of different countries.

The Alliance has developed a strong presence in urban politics in Mumbai and has made contacts and expanded nationally and internationally, as Appadurai has written: "Of the six or seven non-state organizations working directly with the urban poor in Mumbai, the Alliance has by far the largest constituency, the highest visibility in the eyes of the state and the most extensive networks in India and elsewhere in the world" (2002: 25). Patel and Mitlin (2001: 15) claim that as a result, "the urban poor are no longer isolated; they work in groups or federations to address needs which cannot be resolved at the level of their settlement" [7]. Latterly, the Alliance has expanded into new domains that many members never foresaw. For instance, members have had to develop a knowledge and understanding of the construction of housing and sanitation.

The work of the Alliance has been driven by a set of strategies, including daily savings and credit schemes (most critically for the Alliance), supporting women in development, enumerations[8] of settlements, mapping of settlements, exchanges of poor people between settlements (locally, nationally and internationally), the forming of a federation across India (and later in different countries), house and toilet exhibitions, land-sharing models[9], and partnerships with authorities. This "box of tricks" (Patel[10], 2002) has travelled through exchanges, wherein groups of poor people travel from one settlement to another

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[7] 'Federation' refers to local or national networks, and sometimes the international SDI network. However, the concept refers to more than just 'network'. It refers to self-organising political collectives pooling resources, lobbying and learning from one another (Appadurai, 2002: 31).

[8] An enumeration in the Indian Alliance refers to a census conducted by poor people on their own and other urban poor areas.

[9] 'Land-sharing' refers to state housing policies that involve housing construction for the poor being subsidised through part private sale.

[10] Interview conducted with Sheela Patel in January 2002.

to share stories and experiences with other poor people (and, often, officials) in what amounts to an informal, 'training' process[11].

1.3.2 Slum/Shack Dwellers International

The Alliance has been integral in the development of a network called *Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI)* that has engaged with these strategies. SDI is a host of civil society groups supported by a range of donors and governments (see Edwards, 1999; Patel and Mitlin, 2002; SDI, 2003). SDI spans 12 countries, including India, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Kenya, Colombia, Thailand, Swaziland, Cambodia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Nepal, and is associated with groups in many more countries[12]. There is a regular program of exchanges internationally that have been ongoing since the late 1980s:

> Meetings take place regularly, almost always around federation events in Asia or Africa. Over the last 18 months, the network has fallen into a rhythm of work that involved international exchanges (mostly between countries within the regions of Africa and Asia rather than between continents), occasional bigger intercontinental events with a high public profile, and international presentations to the donor community (Patel, *et al* 2001: 56).

SDI, following Batliwala (2002: 396) has a 'grassroots' focus. This is to say that the network is predominantly constituted and controlled by those "who are most

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[11] There are two types of exchanges: one in which a core city leadership (for example, NSDF and MM in Mumbai) travels to assist city level groups, the other in which local leaders visit other nearby settlements (Patel and Mitlin, 2002: 129). There are also a number of meetings involving NGO staff, for instance at the Homeless International annual meeting. Exchanges are generally two-way, involving trips to both host countries, but occasionally the trip is only one-way (usually called an 'exposure'). It is difficult to estimate how many core exchanges there are. For instance, SDI document ten between March 1999 and November 2003, but not all exchanges are documented. Local and national exchanges are certainly more regular. In India, on average there are about six or seven exchanges of around seven people between urban areas *per month* (Patel, November 2001).

[12] Given various resource limitations, a degree of understanding of the work of SDI members outside of India was gathered from literature and interviews with people in India and the UK rather than through field visits.

severely affected [by urban poverty] in terms of the material condition of their daily lives".

1.3.3   UK connections

The research has followed two of SDI's UK connections: *Groundswell*, the NGO that took part in an exchange with the Alliance in India and that has since attempted to draw on some of the ideas encountered, and *Homeless International*, an NGO that financially supports SDI activities. These groups are not formally part of SDI as such; SDI is principally a network of grassroots groups and NGOs in 'poorer' countries. Groundswell is not viewed (nor views itself) as a mutual partner in this network. However, Groundswell has engaged with some of the ideas shared among SDI members and there have been some significant explorations around these ideas for Groundswell.

Groundswell is an UK support network for homeless and tenants groups that has drawn much of its "insight and inspiration" from the Alliance (Blume, 2001: no pagination). Members of the groups (and others) visited the Alliance in Mumbai in January 2001 and following this visit Groundswell initiated a programme of exchanges in the UK, "having recognised exchange as a powerful tool in strengthening our network" (Blume, 2001: no pagination). It is my intention to explore the politics of knowledge around these encounters.

1.4   Approach

My approach in the thesis is to conceive knowledge as produced through translation. The process of translation changes to varying extents not just the forms of knowledge but the people and places that come into relation with knowledge. Rather than focussing on the question of whether knowledge remains the same or not, I focus on the multiple forms and effects of knowledge. This section will explain my approach by briefly outlining rationalist and post-rationalist approaches to knowledge, and elaborate on translation as a key concept of the latter.

1.4.1   Rationalism

Rationalism has been traditionally the main framework through which knowledge is understood by 'Western' epistemology (Nonaka *et al*, 2000).   Amin and Cohendet (forthcoming: 301) write:

> Rationalism assumes the existence of an *a priori* knowable external reality that is true at all times and in all places. Knowledge cannot be gained from sensory experience. Absolute truth is deduced from rational reasoning grounded in axioms (which can be assimilated to a 'quest for the truth'). Thus knowledge can be attained deductively, for example, by employing mental constructs such as concepts, laws and theories.

This idealist conception of knowledge envisions knowledge as something that can be sent, received, circulated, transferred, accumulated, converted and stored (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2000).   Here, knowledge is spatially conceived through a realist ontology as 'out there'.   In development, knowledge and learning are commonly viewed through a rational lens that frames learning as a cumulative process of 'adding' new information to existing knowledge 'stacks' in a straightforward way in order to make them more effective.   Often the assumption is that all development agencies, NGOs, and think-tanks have to do is improve their knowledge management strategies, including knowledge capture and sharing.

The rationalist position has been challenged in recent years in a variety of fields emphasising the social and constructive character of knowing and learning (for example Brown and Daguid, 1991; Wenger, 1998), so much so that they have produced a 'quiet revolution' in organisational theory (Bruner and Haste, 1987, cited in Gherardi and Nicolini, 2000: 330).   These alternatives propose that organisational knowledge has the following characteristics (*ibid*):

- It is situated in systems of ongoing practices

- It is relational and mediated by artifacts

- It is always rooted in a context of interaction and it is acquired through some form of participation in a community of practice

- It is continually reproduced and negotiated, and hence it is always dynamic and provisional

For Gherardi and Nicolini (2000: 332), this approach to knowledge prompts new questions - or new approaches to old and often taken-for-granted questions - which both echo the concerns of this thesis and indicate the relevancy of literature on organisational theory:

- How do different forms of knowledge 'travel' in space and time? And how is knowledge transformed by the process of its circulation?

- What form does this circulation take? And who are the agents who circulate knowledge and appropriate it?

- How are local practices shaped by the interaction between situated knowledge and formalized knowledge? And how is knowing constructed and sustained in practice?

1.4.2   Post-rationalism

This thesis builds on work that offers alternatives to a rationalist approach that we might broadly refer to as post-rationalist[13]. Here, 'post-rationalist' emphasizes the socio-material construction of knowledge, the spatial relationality of knowledge, and the importance of practices. The notion of translation is important for this approach. Translation comes originally from the work of Michel Serres (1974) and "involves creating convergences and homologies by relating things that were previously different: it denotes more a perpetuum mobile (Brown and Capdevilla, 1999) than a conveyer belt" (Gherardi

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[13] 'Post' does not refer to a time but to perspectives critical of rationalist approaches over time.

and Nicolini, 2000: 333). Latour uses translation to refer not to "a shift from one vocabulary to another, from one French word to one English word, for instance", but "to mean displacement, drift, invention, mediation, the creation of a link that did not exist before and that to some degree modifies the original two" (1999: 179). A "chain of translation" refers to the many steps through which knowledge is produced (Latour, 1999: 311).

Translation challenges the diffusion model (of epidemiological origin) that traces movement as innovation[14] (Alter, 2002; Brown, 2002; Latour, 1986). While the diffusion model focuses on travel as the product of the action of an authoritative force transmitting knowledge, translation focuses on travel as the product of what different actors do with objects (statements, orders, artefacts, products, goods, etc.) (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2000: 335). This promotes two relational ontologies: one, the importance of the 'near' and 'far' in producing knowledge; two, the importance of the material in producing knowledge. Different actors have different reasons for performing actions with objects as objects travel, and as a result translation "creates the network and the actors just as much as the object" (*ibid*). This draws attention to the importance of various forms of 'intermediaries'. I will give more detail on this in Section 5.6.2 which looks at the role of documents in travel.

1.5   What is travelling?

This section will provide brief definitions of the different forms of travelling knowledge in the thesis and elaborate on the post-rationalist approach. Some definitions are important at the outset in order to draw distinctions between information, knowledge, learning, discourse, and ideas in organisations. While there is significant and necessary overlap between these concepts, elucidation is important because they point to different processes. I will draw mainly but not exclusively on literature exploring situated knowledges and social learning in organizations.

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[14] See, for example, Hagerstand's (1968) influential formal and instrumental model of innovation diffusion (Agnew, 1979).

1.5.1   Information and knowledge

Information refers to data or facts which can be readily communicated. Knowledge can be distinguished from information as "the sense that people make of information" (Hovland, 2003: 20). This section will pursue this distinction by highlighting three initial ways in which knowledge in organizations can be understood: as formed through *interaction*, as *situated*, and as two broad forms – *tacit and codified (or explicit)*.

First, knowledge is socially produced in organizations. Various forms of interaction amongst individuals and organizations, from formal meetings to chats over coffee and emails, contribute to making sense of information. Second, knowledge is situated. For Nonaka *et al* (2000: 7), this means knowledge is context-specific. It is always dependent on particular times and spaces. It is, then, associated with identity and belief: "Information becomes knowledge when it is interpreted by individuals and given a context and anchored in the beliefs and commitments of individuals" (Nonaka *et al*, 2000: 7). This is not to imply that 'context' is pre-given or static. Encounters with information are practices that do not just take place *in* a setting – they also always *produce* space (Thrift, 1999). Places are (re)produced through mixtures of relations of varying stability and flux; both sites and knowledge change.

This draws attention to the spatialities of knowledge: knowledge is always situated and because of this partiality is always multiple. It is also territorialized through various forms of inclusion and exclusion, meaning that it can be to varying intensities in or out of the 'proper' spaces (Law, 2000b). The notion of 'situated knowledge' has been developed most notably by Haraway (1991). She underlined partiality by focusing on the embodied nature and contingencies of knowledge production. Thrift (1999: 303) writes of the need for an irreducible ontology that thinks not of 'Knowledge' but of "an archipelago of situated knowledges". While situated, this knowledge is also mobile (De Laet and Mol, 2000): it is formed not simply *in* place but through multiple knowledges and informations that run *through* various spaces and pathways.

Third, knowledge is of two broad forms: tacit and codified. Codified or explicit knowledge "can be expressed in formal and systemic language and shared in the form of data, scientific formulae, specifications, manuals and such like", (Nonaka *et al*, 2000: 7). Tacit knowledge "is deeply rooted in action, procedures, routines, commitment, ideals, values and emotions": it is difficult to communicate and does not travel well (*ibid*). Just as information can be converted into knowledge, so tacit knowledge can be converted to explicit knowledge, "although [tacit] knowledge sometimes resists" (Gherardi, 2000: 213) and becomes "sticky" (von Hippel, 1994). Knowledge is primarily tacit (as often 'unknown' and pre-cognitive competence-to-act [Gherardi and Nicolini, 2000: 331]). Both forms are complementary and essential in knowledge creation (Nonaka *et al*, 2000: 8; Amin and Cohendet, 1999, 2000).

1.5.2   Knowledge as practice

Gherardi (2000: 212) argues that "among the manifold conversations [from Marxist inspired perspectives to actor network theory] now in progress on the theme of knowing and organizing, there is one that has an emergent identity centering on the *idea* of practice". The attention to practice collapses traditional dichotomies that separate, for example, knowing from acting, mental from manual, and abstract from concrete, that continue to contour ontologies of knowledge (Wenger, 1998: 48).

Practice connects 'knowledge' with 'doing', pointing to the work, or fabrication, involved in knowing (Gherardi, 2000). If we reject the functionalist view of knowledge as static, bounded and fixed historically found in the sociology of knowledge and in organisational studies, and argue instead for a view of knowledge as social, then the practices through which knowledge is formed are brought into view. This fabrication is not 'social' in the sense of just consisting of people, but always already social and material. Knowledge production is a process of heterogeneous engineering (Law and Hassard, 1999; Thrift, 2000) and requires an ontological relational materialism. Knowledge (and learning) must be understood through practices that combine the material and spatiality in organisations.

A post-rationalist approach involves collapsing modernist ontological and epistemological divisions of knowledge. One example here is the attempt by Nonaka *et al* (2000: 6-7) to bring the ontological and epistemological dimensions together in a 'spiral model' of knowledge creation which insists that the process is dialectic. The spiral goes through seemingly antithetical concepts such as order and chaos, micro and macro, part and whole, mind and body, tacit and explicit, self and other, deduction and induction, creativity and control, body and mind, emotion and logic, and action and cognition (Figure 1)[15]. To this spiral we should add the 'human' and the 'material'.

Figure 1: Knowledge created through a spiral (Nonaka, *et al* 2000:6)

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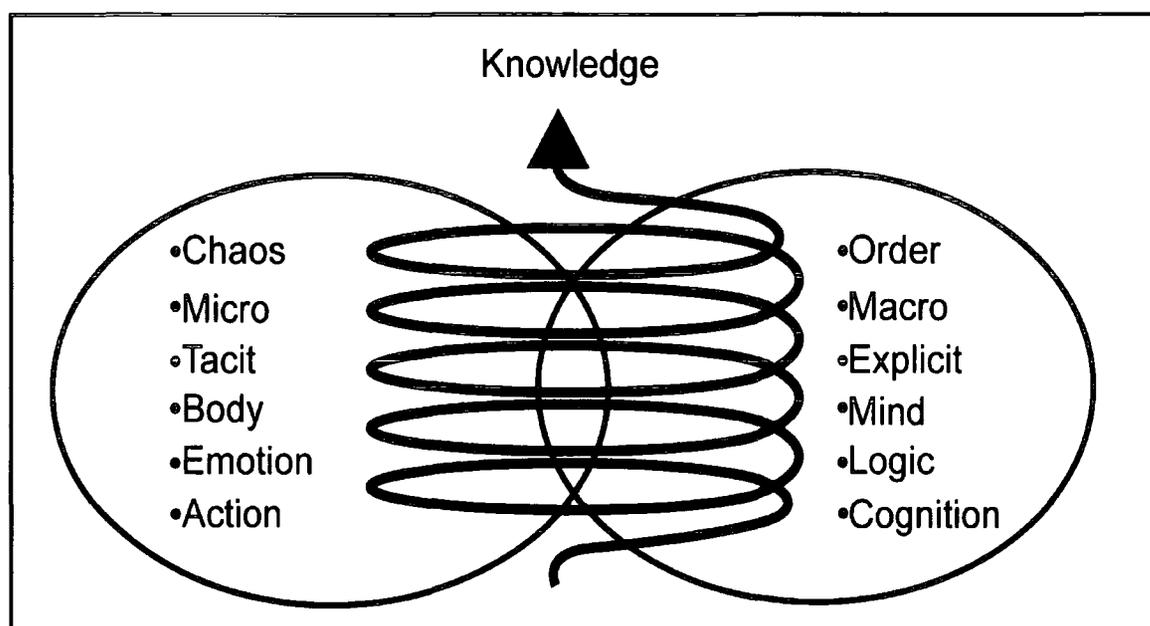
[15] Amin and Cohendet (forthcoming) add to this schema the important relationship between two other dimensions of knowledge: knowledge that is 'possessed' (in different parts of an organization, for example in written or electronic form) and knowledge that is 'practised' (in the daily interactions and practices of like-minded people within an organisation). This latter form of knowledge is referred to by the authors as *knowing*.

1.5.3   Learning as participation in practices

Learning at the organisational level is often portrayed using three feedback loops known as single-, double- and triple-loop learning (Figure 2). Wilson (2002: 220), writing in reference to mainstream development, elaborates:

> In single-loop learning, only the practical tasks might be modified in light of knowledge capture. In double-loop learning the definition of what the practical tasks should be is challenged. In triple-loop learning, the knowledge captured is used to improve the effectiveness of how it might be captured in future, via the evaluation of the appraisal process. This last is often referred to as 'learning how to learn'.

Figure 2: Single-, double- and triple- loop learning (Wilson, 2002:221)
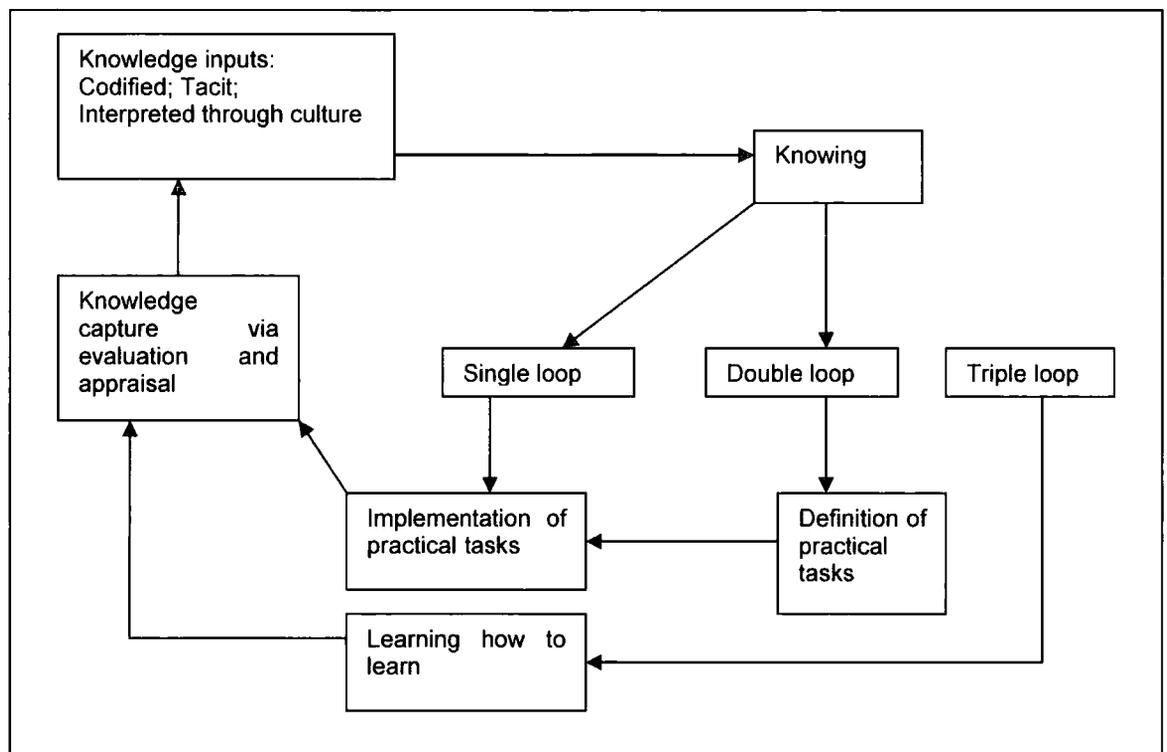
However, such accounts have been challenged as instrumental and for not being able to adequately appreciate learning as situated and social, despite the reference to 'interpreted through culture'. Wenger (1998), in his influential study of firms entitled *Communities of Practice*, focuses on learning as social participation: "[A] process of being active participants in the practices of social

31

communities and constituting identities in relation to these communities" (p. 4). For Wenger (1998), 'knowing' is the ability to competently participate in the practices of a community. Learning as a practice has two aspects for Wenger: *experience* and *regimes of competence*. New experiences can lead to new competences and vice-versa. Group members have to 'catch-up' to get to grips with new skills introduced by new members (competences driving experience), and changing events may require the development of new skills (experience driving competences). This view defines learning not as a linear addition of information or knowledge but as a "transformation of knowing" (1998: 139): learning "can be characterized as a change in the alignment between experience and competence, whichever one of the two takes the lead in causing realignment at any given moment".

For Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998, 2000) learning is about strengthening the practices of communities and the abilities of individuals to participate in those practices. It is evident in the work of SDI and is the notion of learning used in this thesis. Contu and Willmott (2000: 274) point to this focus as an important shift from the question 'what knowledge is objectively true?' to 'what understanding is intersubjectively valuable?' This brings into view the situatedness of particular kinds of knowledge and learning, and the ways in which the privileging of particular types of knowledge and learning is inflected by and produces certain types of politics. Participation in practices, then, is important in learning, and this process is mutually constitutive with the formation of social collectives.

Learning is influenced through the formation of a *constellation* of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998: 127; Section 5.7) such as SDI. Using translation, Amin and Cohendet (forthcoming) have described this process as a distanciated sociology of learning which asserts that relational or social proximity involves more than simply physically 'being there', and that indeed there are increasingly new ways of 'being there' (including through email). They elaborate on this:

> The translation of ideas and practices, as opposed to their transmission, are likely to involve people moving to and through 'local' contexts, to which they bring their own blend of tacit and codified knowledges, ways of doing and ways of judging things. There is no one spatial template through which associational

32

> understanding or active comprehension takes place. Rather, knowledge translation involves mobile, distanciated forms of information as much as it does proximate relationships (Amin and Cohendet, forthcoming: 28).

More broadly, and following (Urry, 2004), we need to be attentive to a whole range of mobilities in knowledge creation, including those that produce 'face-to-face' interaction – that most potent and powerful medium of communication – and other inter-related modes of communication including mail, phone calls, faxes, and the Internet. For the urban poor in SDI, the spatial extent of such modes of communication, while varied, is highly restricted. Membership of SDI, of constellations of communities of practice, offers possibilities for stretching and refiguring these spatialities, and for subverting in one small way the dominance of domains of national and transnational learning by corporate and professional elites.

1.5.4   Ideas

Latterly, one trend in both the anthropology (Eickelman, 2002) and sociology (Camic, 2002) of knowledge has been the concern with the production and communication of ideas, a move that, in the former, "transforms the field into a sociology of ideas" (Camic, 2002: 8164). In both these approaches, there is a concern with the power relations around various forms of innovation. What these approaches do is allow us to position ideas as different from information and knowledge insofar as they have to be *inventive*. Following Barry (2001: 211-212), invention does not necessarily refer to something new but to those objects or devices "that are aligned with inventive ways of thinking and doing and configuring and reconfiguring relations with other actors". Barry elaborates: "What is inventive is not the novelty of artefacts and devices in themselves, but the novelty of the arrangements with other objects and activities within which artefacts and instruments are situated, and might be situated in the future". Latour (1999: 53) has similarly stated: "Invention almost always follows the new handle offered by a new translation or transportation". Enumeration and exhibitions, for instance, are common occurrences, but in the hands of the urban

poor in SDI, as we shall see in the thesis, they are used in very different ways from their conventional usage[16].

1.5.5   Discourse

Following Gregory (2000: 180), discourse is "a specific series of representations, practices and performances through which meanings are produced, connected into networks and legitimized."   Gregory (*ibid*) argues that discourses are heterogeneous,   regulated,   embedded,   situated   and   performative. *Heterogeneous* because they "travel through different domains and registers and carry multiple meanings and implications"; *regulated* because they are marked through their own 'regimes of truth' that legislate inclusions and exclusions; *embedded* because they are not free-floating but "materially implicated in the conduct of social life"; *situated* because they are "always characterized by particular constellations of power and knowledge and are always open to contestation and negotiation"; and *performative* because they have variable meaning, force and effect.   It is a view of discourse that is not simply about words but about ways of doing.

If knowledge is 'justified belief' (Nonaka, *et al* 2000: 7), then discourses are ways of thinking and doing that provide that justification.   They are world-views that are central to the knowledge conversion process and as such are themselves examples of learning: in the production of discourse, "people learn how to select and process information into knowledge" (Comor, 2000: 392). Discourse is the legislation of knowledge and information.   Discourses are power laden because they are frames through which we learn to sort out what information and knowledge is 'rational' and 'irrational', 'realistic' or 'unrealistic'

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[16] There are clear overlaps between ideas and learning.   New information and knowledge can be said to be to varying extents inventive.   Indeed, Nonaka and Takeuchi's seminal (1995) work argues that innovation is predicated on a continuous dialogue between tacit and codified knowledge, whereas Amin and Cohendet (forthcoming) emphasise the 'generative dance' between possessed knowledge and everyday practices that produce knowledge.   The difference is the subjective question of extent: an idea is information or knowledge that appears immediately inventive to a potential user.

(Comor, 2000: 394). However, this process is not straightforwardly rational or instrumental: "[O]ur mediating conceptual systems are shaped by lifestyles, work experiences, customs, language, mythologies – by cultures [and sub-cultures]" (Comor, 2000: 395).

The justification of knowledge as belief comes from the regulation of information and knowledge through enrolment into *regimes of truth*[17]. An example from SDI is the discourse of daily savings, which is constructed as the most important foundation for development. The notion of regimes of truth is closely related to the useful idea of *framing*[18]. Discourses establish "frames of meaning by the recounting and interpreting of events and situation" (Apter, 2002: 11644). Regimes of truth have the affects of framing problems, which involves defining what are problems and what are not. Development issues are constructed, regulated and interpreted through discourses. In SDI, discourses frame how to 'do' development, and they are situated in relation to other development strategies. As such, SDI seeks to engage with how development problems are framed. Given that they construct, regulate and interpret, discourses underpin communities of practice because participation in groups requires a measure of commitment to ways of thinking and doing. Discourses relate to individual and collective identities and are formed through and result in information, knowledge, learning and ideas[19].

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[17] "Regimes of truth can be said to operate when discursive systems regulate relations of power and knowledge (Hall, 1996). The traditional gender belief system, which regulates the power relations between men and women in this ['Western'] culture is such a regime. In these ways discursive systems affect lives" (Denzin, 2000: 3122).

[18] One example comes from Hajer (1995). He argues that ecological problems are discursively created, rendering what can be meaningfully stated about the environmental problematique and what cannot, and consequently which issues become political and which do not.

[19] There is an overlap between discourse and idea: a discourse can be a new way of doing things, and shares with 'idea' this inventive aspect. The difference is that an idea generally travels with greater speed. A new idea like an enumeration of the urban poor can travel quickly and may be immediately appealing; a new discourse like that of 'self-management' over that of 'state-dependency' (Chapter 3), may take longer to travel because it involves to some extent a change in world-view. When this change occurs (and by a sufficient amount of people), the idea becomes framed by the discourse. Furthermore, ideas become enrolled in discourses, and are produced through discourses as ways of thinking.

All of the features defined above are driven by translation. Information is converted to knowledge though translation, as is knowledge to learning, and the communication of ideas is a process of translation. Framing is a process of translation. However, given that discourses render knowledge, events and institutions in a particular way, they militate against translation to some extent. Discourses hold stability and flux in a constant tension. This creates a paradox for those committed to learning.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the definitions in this section. While the table simplifies rationalist and post-rationalist approaches and gives the misleading impression of a straightforward binary, it provides a useful overview.

	Rationalist				Post-rationalist			
	Ontology	Epistemology	Form	Travel	Ontology	Epistemology	Form	Travel
Information	Objective	Universal	Facts / data	Functionalist	Partial	Particular	Facts / data	Translation
Knowledge	Individual; mental	'Truth' deduced through reasoning	Bounded; territorial; Tacit / codified binary	Linear diffusion	Situated; Social; relational	Knowledge formed through practices	Spiral; Relational	Translation; Myriad and variable relations.
Learning	Learning to understand the world as an *a priori* knowable external reality	Learning through formal teaching	Feedback loops	Direct knowledge transfer;	Learning ways of being in the world	Experiences and competences	Communities of practice	Constellations of communities of practice
Ideas	Singular; new additions to organised bodies of knowledge	Universal	Static; rule-bound; hypothesis building.	Instrumental; functionalist in effect in diffusion.	Invention	Made through practices in new sites (translation)	Multiple; many different forms and affects	Novel arrangements
Discourse	Paradigms (not discourses); positivist.	What can be known scientifically?	Modelling.	Universal rules; facts; instrumental and functionalist	Embedded	Ways of thinking and doing; different stories	Regimes of truth; framing	Dialectics of stability and flux; multiple

37

1.6   Thesis Structure

The thesis is written according to theme rather than geographical area in order to reflect the (re)production of knowledge through space. Chapter 2 will discuss the methodology used in the production of the thesis. This chapter traces the steps in knowledge production, attending to the role of the material in the process, and explains the approach I took to the research as one marked more by *connections* than by *comparisons*. Chapter 3 makes two interwoven surveys of development, one that locates SDI in relation to mainstream and alternative development, and another that locates the links between SDI and the UK groups by exploring the ways in which mainstream development has been historically produced through a North-South binary. In order to show the connections between the politics of mainstream development and the ways in which they have produced global geographies of North and South, it is important that these two surveys are written together. By examining the conceptual territories of both SDI and the SDI – UK links in relation to development, the chapter provides a basis for building further arguments in the thesis that need to be rooted in an understanding both of what I mean by development and of how SDI relates to development. This allows the development of a discussion around mainstream 'knowledge for development' strategies as they relate to SDI (Chapters 4 and 5), and around SDI, politics and development (most explicitly in Chapter 7).

In critically engaging with the geographies of North and South, Chapter 3 also allows for consideration of learning beyond a North – South divide, and of how that learning might be conceived. In doing so, it signposts specific sites that could be fruitful, including the potential for 'richer' countries to learn about, for instance, the geographical distribution of food stores, from 'poorer' countries, as well as more general potential sites of engagement that could assist those working in both 'rich' and 'poor' countries to understand and seek to improve development initiatives, such as the restructuring of the state, urbanization, poverty reduction and livelihood, social exclusion, or participation and partnership. In thinking through these and other possibilities, we need always to remain attentive to the different power relations that structure such debates between academics, policy makers, and civil society organisations working in

'rich' or 'poor' countries. These possibilities are further explored in Chapters 6 and 8.

Chapter 4 examines how knowledge is conceived in mainstream development and provides a critique of these conceptions and strategies. This chapter argues – *contra* mainstream development agencies – that knowledge for development conceptions and strategies are always already political. The chapter will examine the discursive production of 'knowledge for development' through analysis of documents such as the World Bank's 1998/9 World Development Report, *Knowledge for Development*, as well as strategies that focus on the role of Information Communication Technologies, and transnational networks such as the Global Development Network and the Development Gateway, both networks launched by the World Bank. In opposition to the rationalism than marks mainstream accounts and initiatives, the chapter further develops the broad post-rationalist framework outlined in Chapter 1, and in particular through Haraway's (1991) notion of 'situated knowledge'. In doing so, the chapter argues the need to consider the role of the material in knowledge production as a further basis for placing the knowledge of the poor at the centre of development interventions. The material is critical for what the poor know about poverty, how they experience poverty, and how they construct notions of 'development'. The chapter, then, explores alternative ways of conceiving knowledge and learning in development, and argues in favour of placing the knowledge of the poor at the centre of development initiatives.

Building on these alternatives, Chapter 5 examines how knowledge is conceived and created in SDI. This chapter explores some of the ways in which SDI members draw on, create and communicate knowledge. Further developing a broad post-rationalist framework, the chapter deploys several concepts from organisational theory. This includes a schema for analysing the relationship between tacit and explicit knowledge, following the work of Nonaka *et al* (2000). This schema is useful for analysing the creation of knowledge in SDI because it draws attention to the socialisation of knowledge in groups, the different ways in which knowledge is articulated or externalised, and the creative processes through which knowledge is internalised. I add to this schema consideration of the role of the material for knowledge creation in SDI, and explore one of the

ways in which this role occurs through the production of documents in SDI. The chapter, then, offers consideration of conceptions of knowledge and modes of knowledge creation that differ from mainstream rationalist accounts.

The chapter examines the concept of learning, and draws on Wenger's (1998) notion of 'communities of practice', which is useful for analysing the nature of learning as occurring in groups, occurring in practice, and occurring in part through transnational engagement. Both Nonaka *et al's* (2001) schema and Wenger's (1998) 'communities of practice' are useful conceptual frameworks for developing a post-rationalist framework, in distinction to the rationalist conception of knowledge explored in Chapter 4. This framework is, then, developed in dialogue with empirical material from SDI. In particular, the chapter draws on examples from enumerations, exhibitions, and exchanges. There are implications here for how we conceive the role of poor people's knowledge in development. For SDI, privileging the knowledge of the poor need not involve excluding knowledge from 'outside' the immediate settlement or city: indeed, it actively seeks to engage in 'outside' knowledge, while simultaneously arguing that this knowledge must be driven by other groups of the urban poor in other settlements rather than by professional 'experts'. For example, technical knowledge – such as that around housing construction – is believed by SDI to travel most effectively through exchanges of poor people nationally and internationally, rather than through technicians. One consequence of this discussion is that mainstream development and development studies should seriously consider the possibilities of learning through exchanges of the poor locally, nationally, and even internationally (although clearly here there are important constraints of budget). The contrasts between Chapters 4 and 5 provide a basis for a consideration of the nature and possibilities of knowledge in development.

Following on from the question of exchange explored in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 considers the opportunities and obstacles around travelling knowledges, including the question of North and South. The relationship between knowledge, learning and power is important in SDI, and the chapter explores the ways in which SDI seeks to manage (or not manage) some of the challenges here. This requires consideration of the ways in which SDI conceives of its

40

engagement between SDI members, and in particular SDI's conceptions of the role of exchanges in assisting emerging SDI group members. Most of the discussion in this chapter revolves around tensions between attempts to copy (direct learning) and attempts to remain open to, as Said (1983) has put it, 'creative misreadings' (indirect learning). This is a tension exacerbated in the links between India and the UK. Attempts to consider civil society interactions across a North – South divide are rare in geography and development studies, and this discussion makes a contribution to the literature here through the specific example of urban poverty. While this example is contingent, there is scope for some general comments from this discussion, such as around the possibilities of 'indirect learning'.

Chapter 7 examines the political spaces created though knowledge and learning. Building on Cox's (1998) work, this chapter explores ways of conceiving spaces of political engagement in SDI – that is, those spaces that bring together local SDI members and local authorities – as relational formations combing the 'near' and the 'far'. For SDI members, 'local' knowledge and politics are informed in part through exchanges, and this chapter begins by offering a way of conceiving this national and transnational engagement. From this, the discussion considers how this relational space is ordered by SDI leaders - that is, produced through hierarchies that Law (2000a, 2004) has referred to as 'transitivities'. These hierarchies reflect political priorities. The chapter goes on to analyse the production of spaces of political engagement in the Indian Alliance through the lens of citizenship, because Alliance members often articulate their political project in terms of gaining a variety of rights based around housing. Here, I characterise Alliance strategies of knowledge creation and mobilisation as sites of 'insurgent citizenship', building on Holston (1999). These strategies are involved in the creation and alteration of spaces of political engagement. The chapter ends by problematising the kinds of political spaces that the Alliance is involved with in Mumbai. Finally, Chapter 8 offers some conclusions and reflections on the thesis, and considers some implications of the research for academia, policy-makers, and civil society.

Chapter 2

Research Methodology: Steps in Knowledge Production

2.1   Introduction

This chapter will discuss methodological issues relating to the research. It is important to explore these issues in light of the role that the relationship between the individual researcher and the researched (people, documents, places) plays in the production of knowledge, for as Crang (1998: 109) puts it: "Our knowledge about places is not independent of how we go about getting it." My own travels, as a young, white, male, through India and the UK, and through 'cyberspace' (on the Internet, email, and the telephone) and 'grey' literature, are critical ingredients in the constitution of knowledge presented in this thesis.

The chapter will reflect on the networks that produce knowledge, drawing attention to knowledge as a product of the many steps in a research process that produces a thesis, its claims and discussions. It will begin with a discussion of how I consider knowledge to be reproduced through my methodology. The next sections will discuss the selection of case studies and the places of research, and the approach to transnational research. I will then explore the methods used and why they were used. A discussion of my positionality follows, before some final reflective comments on the research.

2.2   Methodology and knowledge production

> What happens if we begin from the premise not that we know reality because we are separate from it (traditional objectivity), but that we can know the world because we are connected with it? (Hayles, 1995: 48, cited in Whatmore, 2002: 1).

Traditionally, social science methodologies have often been written as a 'scientific piece', that is, a rationalist survey that constructs the research, and

indeed the world, as independent of the observer, and attempts to show how the researcher reaches conclusions through observation and experience of the world 'out there'. Such a conceptualisation has its origins in the 17th century and, in particular, with the writings of Rene Descartes (for example, his [1637] *Discourse on method*), and was underpinned particularly by positivist and realist philosophies (Unwin, 1992). The methodology structure reflected this rationalist approach: write about the 'field', write about how 'data' was collected from it, and write about the practical and ethical difficulties of getting to this data. This approach has been underpinned by a separation between 'mind' and 'world' (world as an a priori knowable external reality) (Latour, 1999). Latour argues that this separation has produced the "modernist settlement", which he depicts as separate categories in Figure 3:

Figure 3: The Modernist Settlement (Latour, 1999:14)
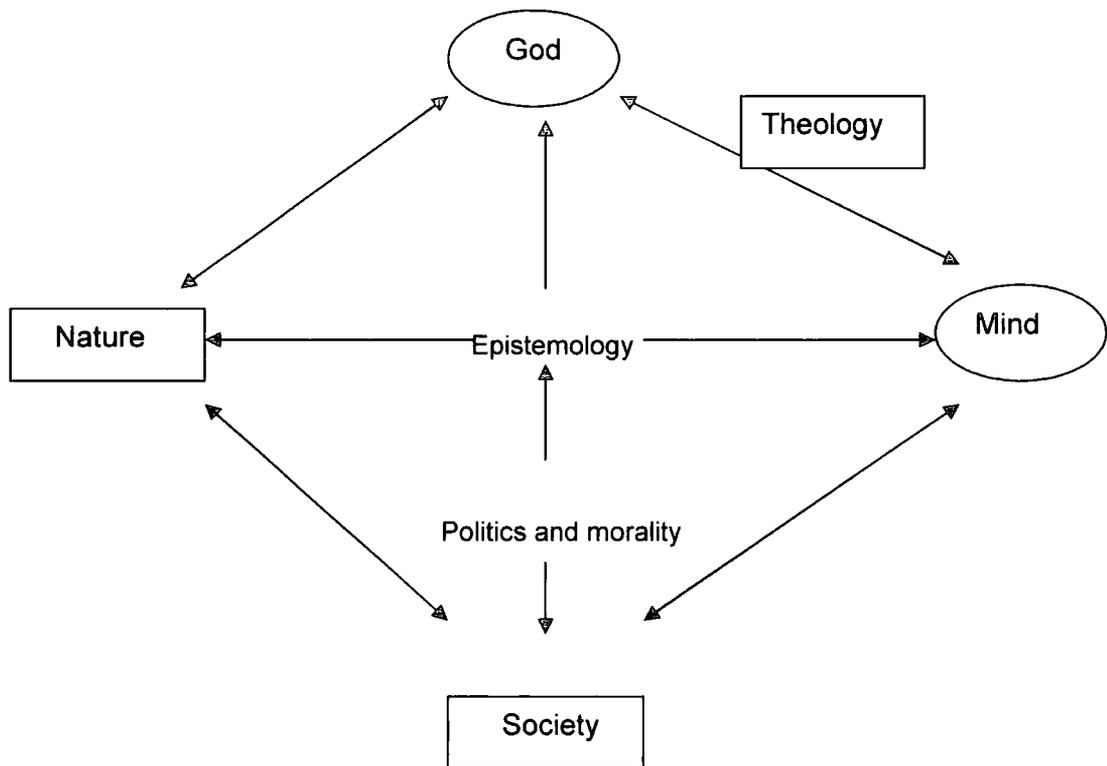
This schema is underlined by the belief that the disconnected 'mind-in-a-vat' can gain absolute truth about the world 'out there'. The settlement commands a

43

wide gap between word and world: the word is an abstraction that seeks certainty in what goes on in the world.

In recent years, social scientists, including geographers, have rallied against such rationalist approaches[20], and in response methodologies have, in various ways, been radically reassessed. More broadly, influential thinkers such as Foucault (see, for example, 1977, 1979; Philo, 2000) and Said (1978) have drawn attention to how knowledge and 'truth' are (re)produced through historical networks of power. More recently, similar perspectives have emerged from science studies, such as actor-network theory (Law and Hassard, 1999; Latour, 1989; 1999). Whereas Foucault sought to show the enmeshing of discourses, practices, knowledge and power in the genealogy of the subject (Rabinow, 1991: 7), actor-network theory is concerned with how humans and non-humans enrol and become enrolled in multiple ways in more 'micro' networks (although see Law, 2000a, 2004 on rethinking size).

2.2.1   Translation and the research process

Latour does not find solutions to the problems presented by the modernist settlement in postmodernism. He argues that all that postmodernism has offered is that "it has stopped [us] believing it is possible to carry out this impossible programme successfully" (1999: 21). Instead, Latour points to the importance of the 'politics of things' and hopes to avoid altogether the "bygone dispute about whether or not words refer to the world" (which he believes is postmodernism's main concern) (1999: 22). Instead of a science concerned with possessing "certainty, coldness, aloofness, objectivity, distance, and necessity", Latour argues in favour of an understanding of research as "uncertain; open-ended; immersed in many lowly problems of money, instruments, and know-how; unable to differentiate as yet between hot and cold, subjective and objective, human and non-human" (*ibid.* 20).

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[20] See, for instance, Rose (1997) on positionality, Whatmore (2002) and see Thrift (2000) on the question of representation.

This brings into view a whole range of 'things' that are enrolled in networks that produce research. For instance, at first sight there appears to be a yawning gap between the slums and NGO offices in India that much of the research was conducted in, and the thesis that finally emerges thousands of kilometres away. But when we examine the steps between the work in India and the thesis itself, we see how interviews, interpretations of slums, or NGO activity, are made to travel in numerous steps of translation. Each step is itself small, from conducting an interview and recording it on a dictaphone, to transcribing in an Indian hotel room, to packing the tapes for the flight back to the UK, to interpreting the transcription notes over and over with reference to particular kinds of academic literature, to being prompted to make certain arguments and claims in the chapters of a thesis, to making revisions and finalising the final product.

Each step of translation represents an "ontological hybrid": "The translators at work are ontological hybrids in the sense that they are simultaneously *object*, that is belonging to the world, and *concept*, that is belonging to the word" (Stalder, 1999: 3; emphasis added). This means that the gap between 'word' and 'world' is not as great as has been assumed (Latour, 1999). The dictaphone tape, for instance, is both an object and a concept, in that it contains the product of an encounter between myself and someone I have interviewed. While the dictaphone was not essential for my research – in the way, for instance, a plane, train, bus or car might be essential for long-distance movement – it certainly was a significant aid during interviews. Its presence meant I was not always forced take notes of everything said, and could more readily move with the pace of the interview[21]. It reveals one role for the non-human, and points to the roles played by other materials such as computers, cameras, printers, the internet, or documents (see Chapter 5). In recent years, such issues have been addressed by geographers such as Sarah Whatmore in her (2002) *Hybrid Geographies*.

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[21] Although in some cases, as with some slum dwellers, I felt it inappropriate to use a dictaphone because the instrument – rather than the interview – could become a focus of attention. In these cases, the dictaphone had an effect on the research through its absence.

This methodology chapter is, then, a *reviewing* of the steps in knowledge production, not a narrative about how the researcher extracted data in order to represent an *a priori* external reality in a thesis. The thesis represents what the researcher *thinks about* the knowledges and objects encountered through literature, interviews, observation, and travelling – that is, what the researcher made of these encounters. The thesis is situated (Haraway, 1991) and partial; it is not the 'final word', but is the product of a series of translations in a particular network. This is not a linear process, but a reflexive process marked my multiple hermeneutics between researcher and research. As Latour contends: "One should never speak of 'data' – what is given – but rather of *sublata*, that is, of 'achievements'" (1999: 42).

2.3 Selection of case studies and informants

The reason I wanted to research on transnationalism was primarily because I viewed transnational movements to be of growing significance in contemporary political change. My interest in a network working with urban poverty emerged from my long-standing concerns about urban development and poverty in both 'rich' and 'poor' countries. The research emerged from a visit to India in February 2001 in which a member of the Ford Foundation brought SPARC to my attention. He had argued that it was an example of an NGO involved in transnational explorations - including groups in the UK - and that as such it could provide an example of the ways in which ideas change as they move. Furthermore, SPARC was an NGO, he suggested, that had a radically different view of people's 'participation' from the 'mainstream' strategies, and were involved in an innovative approach to urban poverty and politics. I contacted SPARC and this project emerged.

2.4 Places of research

The Indian research was based in five cities in southern India: Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Bangalore. The first trip involved research in Delhi and Lucknow in northern India. These cities are shown in the map below.

Figure 4: Map of India showing places of research
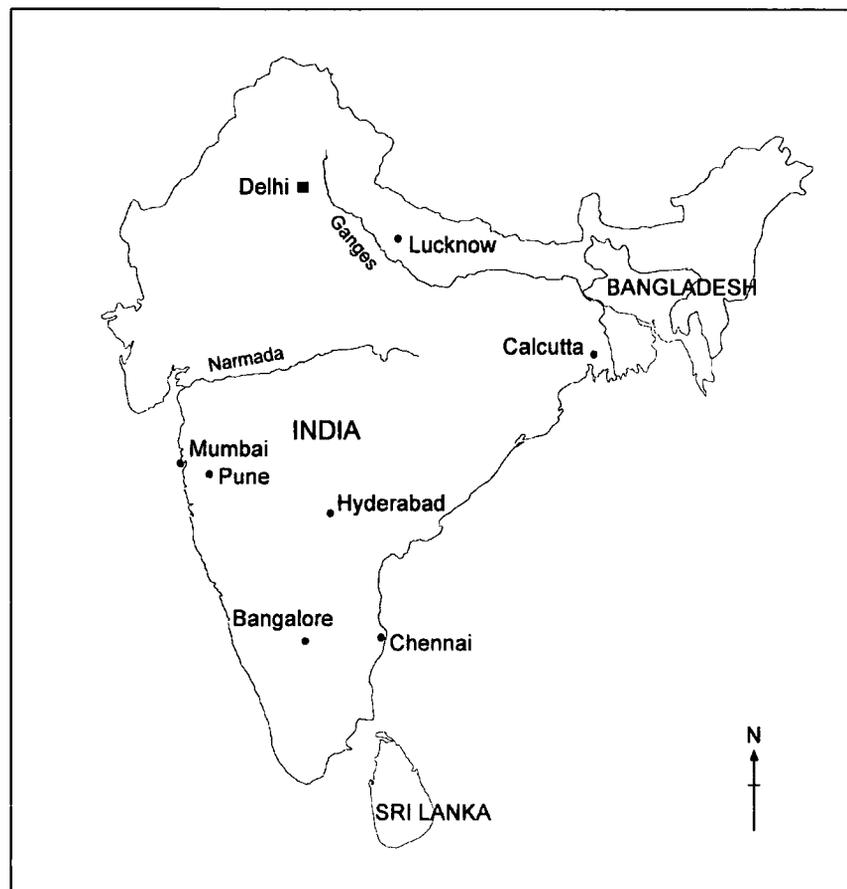
Mumbai

Given that I conducted the majority of the research in Mumbai, it is useful to give a brief introduction to the city and research areas. Mumbai is India's main economic city, and is the home of its famous Bollywood cinema. It has an estimated population of 14 million, 8 million of which are slum or pavement dwellers. A former British colonial city, contemporary Mumbai has no obvious fit with the stories that "link late capitalism, globalization, post-Fordism, and the growing dematerialization of capital" (Appadurai, 2000a: 627). It articulates a "growing contradiction" between global wealth and local poverty (Appadurai, 2000a: 630), and has been marked by ethno-political conflict between Hindus and Muslims (Appadurai, 2000a; Blom Hansen; Masselos, 1995) that have recently been framed by discourses of 'terror' and city-centre bombings and arrests (witness, for instance, the 2003 bombing at the Gateway to India, a key site on the national and international tourist map).

The research in Mumbai revolved around two key sites: the Area Resource Centre (ARC) in Byculla, central Mumbai, and SPARC's office a few miles nearby in Khet Wadi. Byculla is a residential area and the ARC is the base of activities for the National Slum Dwellers Federation, Mahila Milan, and Sadak Chaap, a children's organisation[22]. Khet Wadi is a business district and the SPARC office is situated above a school (see Figure 5). It is the base of activities for the NGO. The division of labour in the Alliance is reflected in the geography of these two sites.

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[22] Sadak Chaap translates as 'Street Imprint'. These are children who have run from home and now work, for example, as garbage pickers or carpenters assistants. I spent little time looking at the Alliance's links with street children, but this is an important part of their work and has been since 1986. About 30% of the people working or hanging around the ARC in Byculla are street children. Often, they are set with tasks such as making chai (tea) or buying train tickets, and many of the adult NSDF workers are former street children. The children run their own savings scheme, although due to limited funds this is rarely a daily occurrence. A similar street children's organisation has grown-up in Hyderabad, and has encountered Sadak Chaap in exchanges. Following the exchange, the children in Hyderabad told me they were developing their own savings system, had become inspired to attain their own ration cards (many Sadak Chaap members hold ration cards), and were attempting to negotiate with police and municipal authorities for an ARC.

Figure 5: SPARC offices, Khet Wadi, Mumbai

Source: Author's collection.

The International Landscape

Ideally, I would have attended an international exchange during the research, but due to the fact no international exchanges to India took place during the time I spent there and the financial cost of going to an exchange in, say, South Africa, this was not possible. I did, however, attend an exchange between groups in the UK. The choice to conduct UK research on Homeless International and Groundswell and its network followed the decision to research the Alliance.

In the UK, my research took place through interviews in a variety of settings – including Homeless International in Coventry, Groundswell in London, and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in London - and through attendance at events and meetings in a variety of places, including an exchange in Glasgow and events in London and Coventry. I gained some insight into the activities and places of other SDI members through 'grey' literature, the Internet, and interviews. However, this is clearly no substitute for experience, and I approach making generalisation about SDI - and, indeed,

India - with caution. Given that generalisations occur in the thesis, it is important to be clear on the basis and ways in which I do this.

2.5   Conceiving transnational research: making generalisations?

> What is it that constitutes a privileged claim to knowledge and how can we judge, understand, adjudicate, and perhaps negotiate through different knowledges constructed at very different levels of abstraction under radically different material conditions? (Harvey, 1996: 23).

There is an ongoing debate in geography and in other disciplines about what our case studies constitute and the extent to which we can generalise from them (see, for example, Harvey, 1996). Gregory has referred to the way academics "see themselves as legislators: as dealers in generalities rather than brokers in particulars" (1994: 13). More broadly, through Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Mill, following a general rationalist approach to intellectual inquiry, there has been a tendency for researchers to attempt universal statements or generalisations from specific circumstances (Unwin, 1992: 22). This pattern is associated with *nomothetic* thinking in geography, a term which gained currency in the discipline in the wake of the famous critique of Hartshornian (1939, 1959) geography, and in particular exceptionalism, by Schaefer in 1953. Schaefer rejected Hartshorne's *ideographic* (concern with the unique) approach to regional geography, and instead argued that the elucidation of laws should be geography's main concern. This period witnessed the formalization of positivism within geography and precipitated the dominance of spatial science, associated with quantitative modelling, mapping and equations. Today, geography has a more self-reflexive approach to knowledge production and what can be said about the world, informed mainly through debates on the philosophy of realism, constructivism, postmodernism, and the advancement of thinking in terms of situated knowledges and the politics of location. However, the debate about what case studies constitute and the viability of generalisations continues.

Harvey (1996) has explored some of the difficulties of making generalisations in the context of Williams' work on 'militant particularisms' and the global ambitions of socialism. Williams, argues Harvey, appears to have thought that all forms of

politics are grounded in some form of specific set of local conditions that are used to forge out generalisations and universals. These are militant particularisms, and they can be progressive or conservative (Routledge, 2000). This raises a question: what are the difficulties and dangers of making generalisations based on specific case studies? How can I make comments about, for instance, savings and loans in SDI based on experience in India?

My strategy for dealing with this is to say that there are different forms and levels of generalisation. For instance, it has become clear through interviews, Internet research, and grey literature, that the South African SDI members have in common with the Indian members a commitment to daily savings, exchanges, enumerations, and exhibitions. These are shared knowledges, and are knowledges that travel in various forms. All SDI members are involved in daily savings. This is a generalisation that can be made in an unproblematic way. A deeper level of generalisation, and one that I do not make in the thesis, could be, for instance, a claim that the *impact* of daily savings is similar throughout SDI. To say that the effect of daily savings is the same throughout SDI as it is in India would be to assign an unfounded militant particularism to the network.

2.6   Doing transnational research: tracing connections

Early on in the research design, I was prompted to ask whether the research topic should be considered as a comparative research process, or as research on points in an inter-connected network that does not seek to compare. Comparative research is an integral and fundamental element in social research (Mackie and Marsh, 1995: 173). However, clearly there are vast differences in, for example, the nature of poverty within and between high and low income countries. The differences in the political, economic and cultural make-up of countries as different as India and the UK make comparisons between the two a conceptual quagmire. This is not, however, to say that comparative research between such places is not legitimate or worthwhile. It depends what issue the comparison is based on. For instance, in the context of increasing governance connections in the expanding European Union, we might look to federalism in India – as opposed to the 'usual suspect' of the USA – in attempts to learn ways

of coping (or not coping) with the increasing integration of independent and linguistically and culturally varied states in Europe. However, in the case of my research much more was to be gained from an emphasis not on *comparisons* but on *connections*.

While this involved attention to similarities and differences between, for instance, India and the UK, or India and South Africa, this was not the focus of the analysis. If it had been, I would have first gained an understanding of, for example, sites in India and the UK as separate places. I would then have asked whether knowledge had travelled, asking, for instance, 'did place A act as a barrier to knowledge from place B or not?' Instead, I focused on a methodology that avoided this instrumental conception of travel. In a given place, I asked 'how was knowledge formed?' A geography of knowledge that includes places, encounters, travels, and inspirational moments is revealed. A comparative framework could have made it more difficult to trace this kind of geography. Thus, the topic required a methodology focused on tracing connections rather than making comparisons. It is the difference between a methodology that asks 'where did knowledge come from?' (my methodology) and one that asks 'where was knowledge going to?'

2.7   Methods

This section will describe the specific research methods employed. The research draws almost exclusively on qualitative methods, and in particular on interviews, observation, and the use of grey literature and the Internet. A focus on knowledge and learning required qualitative methods. In one sense, qualitative methods have "arrived and been accepted as established processes" in the social sciences, and within geography "the last decade has undoubtedly

seen an expansion in qualitative work both in terms of the types of work and the topics addressed" (Crang, 2002: 647)[23].

2.7.1   Preliminary research

In late January 2001, I made my first trip to India. This was a month long trip aimed at exploring possible research topics and I engaged with a host of contacts[24] at donors, the state, and NGOs, concentrating mainly on New Delhi and Lucknow, the state capital of the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. By the end of this trip, I had developed a broad plan for a research project and had conducted background interviews on the changing relationships between the Indian state, international donors, NGOs, and voluntary organisations. This trip represented a steep learning curve for me, not least because it was my first time in India, but also because it was an excellent opportunity and challenge to develop my abilities in interviewing. In this sense, it was something akin to a pilot trip, although not pilot research. There had been no scope for pilot research because it was envisioned that I would interview relatively few people. Appendix 1 provides both a list of the main interviews I conducted during this first trip.

2.7.2   Interviews

The main means for researching this topic was through loosely structured qualitative interviews. In addition to my first trip to India, I had developed some interview skills and confidence during my three years as a student journalist at Glasgow University. My second trip to India, which took place between October 2001 and February 2002, also employed qualitative methods, as did the

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[23] Crang does, however, open his piece with the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) assertion that quantitative methods are being side-lined, drawing on reports that appear to "imply that qualitative research has not only arrived but gone too far" (2002: 647).

[24] Mainly provided by one of my supervisors, Dr Emma Mawdsley.

research I conducted in the UK between March and September 2001[25], and in the remaining UK interviews that took place between March and July 2002.

Given that I was investigating broad areas and people's attitudes to them rather than, say, the frequency of pre-determined things, I believed that non-standardised interviews were more appropriate than standardised interviews. The differences in the contexts of interviews in India and the UK meant that many questions were not relevant to both places, although broad topics such as exchange, 'partnership' or 'participation' were. My research involved personal and group case histories – supported by documentary research - in order to analyse how knowledges and discourses had travelled and how they were situated with other knowledges and discourses of poverty alleviation, such as those of the World Bank. The interviews were therefore as open-ended as possible in order to get to information about attitudes and actions beyond rehearsed positions (that is, less formal than a structured interview) (Fielding, 1993), and they were ideally frank, and usually seemed to be so. This was limited because of the difficulties in building relationships with people in places where I spent a short time, such as Bangalore or Hyderabad (just over one week in each)[26]. My interviews focussed on how activities in a given group and place emerged, how they came into contact with other groups, what occurred as a result of that contact, which knowledges travelled, what those knowledges did as they travelled, and the nature and strength of the relationship between different individuals and groups in the network(s)[27].

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[25] I took these months to research in the UK in order to avoid the Indian summer and monsoon.

[26] The number of people interviewed and who they were in the second India trip is listed in Appendix 1.

[27] Appendix 2 provides a brief interview guide that I used in India and the UK.

Interpreters

Interviews with people who were not proficient in English took place using an interpreter. I decided against language training given that my research was based throughout southern India and the languages vary greatly – in Mumbai, Marathi and Hindi would have been useful, in Chennai Tamil, in Bangalore Kannada. While I would have probably got by with Hindi, it is unlikely that substantial numbers of interviewees would have been fluent in Hindi. As a result, I picked up what little I could of local languages and used an interpreter where needed. All the interpreters I used were volunteers who worked for the organisations I visited. This meant there was no financial cost and that the interpreters had a deep level of knowledge about the work going on and had often developed relationships with the people interviewed. It also meant, of course, that I had to be careful to not get taken by the interpreter just to the people and places the organisation wanted to show me. I was also worried at the extent to which interpreters were changing what was said by interviewees, and tried to ensure interpreters were aware of the importance of fully straightforward translations, as much as is possible. I tried to cross-reference with other people throughout local organisations, or with other organisations altogether. While this potential problem was compounded by the fact I was unable to build-up relationships with interpreters, given that I was moving from place to place, on the whole interviews appeared full and detailed.

Concerns such as these raise the question of whether I should have spent more time in each place in India (outside Mumbai) in order to get to know the people and places better. However, my overall aim was to concentrate in Mumbai as much as possible because this was such an obviously important place for the Alliance's and SDI's work – much information and knowledge passes through Mumbai. On the other hand, I wanted to get a flavour for how knowledge is produced in different places, and whether and how knowledges travel. I travelled through four cities, spending around a week to ten days in each – Pune, Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Chennai. With hindsight, it could be argued that it would have been better to go for depth in one or two places rather than more shallow coverage of a handful of places, but in any case Mumbai became

the main Indian case study. Furthermore, time in India was pressed because of time needed to research in the UK. In the UK, I interviewed twenty people, briefly detailed in Appendix 1, all varying – as in India – in duration of interview.

Why interviews?

I decided to use interviews over ethnography because I had to conduct research in two countries. There was not the time to conduct ethnographies in both countries. More broadly, I sought to explore the notion of travel as a means of researching travelling knowledges, and to consider how knowledge and space become imbued in complex and ongoing 'flowmations'. Just as knowledges travelled between the UK and India, so did I. I believe my research shows that interviews are an effective way to conduct such research. That said, ethnographic research would have helped in exploring in greater detail the role of a whole range of social differentials in knowledge creation and management in SDI including those of gender, caste, class, religion, ethnicity or age, and interrogation of these social differentials could form the basis of future research.

One regret that I have from the interviews I conducted is that while I engaged interviewees on what knowledge was travelling, I rarely explicitly asked interviewees whether they felt knowledges *should* change when they moved. This is because I approached the research wanting to investigate how knowledges change (or don't change) and what they do, rather that whether or not people thought knowledge should change. In addition, SDI's own literature often made it clear that SDI believed knowledge should change in travel (Section 5.4). In focussing on the geography of knowledges as they travel, questions of whether people felt knowledges should change or stay the same – which could have revealed more detail, for example, on how groups approach new knowlegdes, or on what is viewed as 'successful' – could have been useful. I often asked interviewees about whether they felt knowledges should travel – for example between India and the UK - but not so much about whether knowledges should change as they travel. In retrospect, it would have been useful to ask about this more explicitly.

2.7.3 Participant observation

In India, I often spent part of a day sitting in the Area Resource Centre in Byculla and watching what was going on. Alliance leaders were eager for me to do this, and made the suggestion even before I did. I was privy to the everyday activities in the centre and able to see, for instance, how tasks such as daily savings or enumerations progressed through their individual 'stages', and I witnessed a range of meetings. I also attended meetings at the SPARC office a few miles from the ARC, including one annual meeting with key SPARC staff and members of the Ford Foundation on funding and progress, a progress meeting held by engineers working on Alliance projects throughout Mumbai, and a public meeting held by the Mumbai Municipal Corporation on the progress of the Maharashtran Urban Transport Programme (MUTP), which included SPARC's advisor Sundar Burra and illuminated much on Mumbai's politics of public space. In the UK, I attended several Homeless International and Groundswell events that sought to bring groups across the UK and / or the world together. On all of these kinds of occasions, I participated only in presence and did not actively take part in discussions.

2.7.4 Data Analysis

I transcribed interviews within one or two days of having conducted them. This transcription process provoked a whole range of ideas for further interviews and for reading. As I transcribed, I wrote comments on literature that the interview provoked on one side of the margin, and on the other side I wrote further questions to ask either the interviewee concerned or other potential interviewees. One strategy for coding broad themes that I used was to group data, along with data gathered through participant observation, in tables. These main themes then formed the basis of exploration in the thesis. The writing process was also a part of the analysis, provoking new thoughts and ideas over time. Thus the analysis process was an ongoing activity and not something confined to one phase of the research.

2.8   Positionality

There are challenges posed by my own 'positionality' (for example Rose, 1997) in conducting this research, particularly as a white 'Westerner' in India. It is undoubted that these and other issues impact upon the research process: "[A]s well as race, characteristics such as age, sex, social class, and religion have proven to have an impact which has to be allowed for" (Fielding, 1993: 145). The research provoked searching questions that I was compelled to answer concerning my relationship with the research and the people I met as it unfolded, and to some extent my own identity. This was and remains an ongoing process of reflection.

2.8.1   Negotiating positions

All research is characterised by varying natures and degrees of insider / outsider relations, what Bowker and Starr (1999: 302) refer to as 'borderlands'. However, conducting research in environments as diverse as India and the UK presents a range of different challenges and experiences of the research process that can profoundly affect the nature of the results. My research involved a constant and profound shifting in research contexts. How does the researcher shift from, for instance, interviewing in English a middle-class bureaucrat or NGO worker in central Mumbai, in an office that might resemble any office across the globe, to a mat on a floor with a group of women slum dwellers and an interpreter, and then in the UK to a circle at a Groundswell event in a large hall in London, listening to often quite passionate appraisals of the role of organisations like the UK government's Social Exclusion Unit, or Rough Sleepers Initiative? On one hand, these shifts in environment are not necessarily problematic, making as we do shifts in our environment on a regular basis. On the other hand, though, the extent to which a researcher feels confident and / or comfortable working in a slum versus interviewing in an office has an influence over the 'data' that results. In slums in India, people were less familiar with the sight of a large white man roaming around chatting to people and looking at houses, and I often got a lot of attention. Generally, the more relaxed I was, the more likely I was to concentrate on an interview and the more

pleased I was with the outcome. Challenges such as these become more prescient when research is conducted in two very different countries, particularly those as diverse as India and the UK.

One way in which I sought to negotiate this was to attempt to create a role for me beyond simply the by-standing researcher. From the very start, it was agreed between me and some key Indian Alliance members that my research should be of benefit to the groups involved in some way, which is how I wanted it to be. For instance, it was envisioned that I would help write a report to be sent to a donor. On another occasion, I escorted some NGO staff from overseas around a couple of sites in Mumbai on SPARC's behalf. The research was to be as collaborative as possible, and I tried to offer as much to the people I interviewed as they did to me. However, this was rarely the case, and the biggest beneficiary was certainly myself[28]. The general atmosphere of collaboration helped put myself and some of the more key people at the Alliance at ease with the research. With Groundswell, there were less opportunities to volunteer to help because of the amount of volunteers already present and the fact that I built up a stronger relationship with Alliance leaders during the time leading up to and including my research.

2.8.2   Relationship with Interviewees

My relationship with the people I interviewed was influenced by a variety of factors, most obviously by race, gender, wealth, and the baggage of being not just a 'Westerner' but from a former colonial power. There were a host of other differences that created different reactions in different people. For instance, some people were surprised that I was not married, given that men generally marry from a young age in India, although differences such as these did not appear to influence the interviews significantly. During interviews, the relationship with people fluxed according to circumstances, such as how time-

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[28] Partly because of this, but mainly because I believe the Alliance's work to be, while problematic, highly valuable, I ran a sponsored half-marathon one year after my time in India to raise money for the Alliance.

pressed the interviewee was, background noise and activity - often reaching levels in slums that made conversation challenging and / or broken - and the course of the interview itself. Recent literature has sought to show how 'sameness' and 'difference' are not fixed or structurally defined but are constantly changing and mutually constituted between researcher and research (for example Delph-Janiurek, 2001; Laurier, 1999). Delph-Janiurek, for instance, shows how laughing along or not with an interviewee can influence levels of trust and interview content. A failure to laugh, for example, may indicate a difference which may then make the interviewee more or less likely to say certain things. While I believe that I generally coped well with these ambivalences and indeed generally related well with interviewees, one can never be sure how much these factors feature and indeed how much of them we are aware of.

2.8.3   Expectations

A common challenge that emerged throughout the research was to do with expectations. In particular, slum dwellers in India very often expected that I was able to influence change, especially by bringing money. In some cases, interviews turned into a 'wish list' or a categorisation of problems, as if I had solutions or was able to deliver theirs. This was difficult to deal with. Researching in a slum with often disturbing poverty – poverty that despite my pre-trip reading I was not quite prepared for – was challenging, and being viewed as someone who could alleviate conditions added to this (although I was very aware that the challenge I was experiencing was little to the challenges of daily life experiences by those living in the slums). I tried to communicate that I was a student doing research, not a donor, and that they were the ones who were helping me and not the other way around, but this proved difficult. Even then, it was clear that many, though by no means all, felt it difficult to talk to me on an equal basis. This was especially true of the women. In this sense, I had to do my best to contend with divisions of sex, race, wealth, and postcolonialism. Speaking with people about both their and my own personal background, particularly family members, generally appeared to ease these difficulties. However, these issues remained significant and on very rare occasions female

slum dwellers would refuse to be interviewed, too embarrassed or self-conscious to do it. On the few occasions I interviewed homeless people in the UK, I found divisions around wealth, or perceptions around what I was doing, to be less skewed and interviews more comfortable; the challenges around positionality were of course there but in a different form and not so extreme.

2.9 Reflections

2.9.1 Representativeness

While I sought to gain the views of as many people as possible during my research in both India and the UK, in India it proved difficult to move beyond the 'core' staff in a given place. Given that I, or one of the Alliance members in Mumbai, contacted one of the key staff members in a given place, such as Bangalore, prior to my arrival, I spent much of my time with the local leaders when I got there. As I was seeking to investigate the Alliance and federation network in India, it seemed fitting that I should be put in contact with people through them. I did, however, attempt to make contacts outside of the Alliance and its network, partly to get a view of the Alliance's work from the perspective of other civil society groups or through donors and officials. Some of these were chance encounters at, for instance, meetings; others occurred through independent investigation.

As outlined in Section 2.2, I am not pretending to present here an accurate and objective representation of the groups in the study, but rather to use the research experience as a means for exploring my own interpretations and ideas through the thesis. However, one issue that does emerge is the extent to which I am basing the interpretations and discussions in this thesis on a few key individuals in the Indian Alliance in particular. The biggest individual input into my research, beside myself, comes from interviews with SPARC Director Sheela Patel.

There are two important and simple points to make here. One, I am not suggesting Patel's views represent SPARC or the Indian Alliance as a whole, even though she frequently voices the Alliance and SDI approach. Much of what she says does indeed appear to reflect much of the Alliance's activities, although I think there are problems with the representations she and other leaders in SDI sometimes make (see discussion in Section 6.3.1). Two, I spoke to many people at SPARC from the group of four or five key individuals to the grassroots workers. Through my research, a range of generally – but not always - shared understandings emerged about the role of the respective partners of the Alliance, why these roles were important, and of how the groups should be broadly operating. The ways in which knowledges and ideas such as daily savings or enumerations were being practised in India, the places through which the different groups operated and multiple issues they worked with, and the relative levels of success, all varied greatly. Indeed, some were completely at odds with the views of individuals like Patel[29]. More broadly, Patel as an individual, and SPARC as an organisation, become less influential in the Alliance triad as one moves from Mumbai, and the NSDF performs a bigger role. In addition, in Mumbai key Alliance staff were often in disagreement. For instance, over the spending of money, or over the delivery of funds for a particular purpose. However, the approach to urban poverty espoused by Patel was generally shared throughout the groups I encountered in Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, and Bangalore. I also tried to some extent to confirm my claims about the Indian Alliance by sending my 'field reports' to people outside of the key informants (although I sent these writings to them also), including Diane Mitlin at the IIED, and Ruth McLeod and Kim Mallard at Homeless International. Indeed, one report (on my second and main trip to India) formed the basis of a brief email discussion and interview with Mitlin.

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[29] Patel and others are also occasionally at odds with other members of the NSDF. For example, many people in the Alliance leadership in Mumbai viewed local NSDF leader in Chennai as out-dated because, it was suggested, he was determined to impinge his views over those of local people. This question of the relations between groups in the Indian national federation could form the basis of future research.

2.9.2   Writing

While writing is the 'end product' of research, it is present in the research process. Bennett (2000) argues that "as an anticipated (or desired) audience, the reader is implicated in fieldwork" (cited in Crang, 2002: 651). In addition, certain academic concepts, terms, and even speech genres can affect the nature of the interview and the research process more generally. This is clearly to some extent inevitable. In my own research I tried to limit this as much as possible by trying to avoid driving interviews and grey literature into particular theories or ideas from academia, to avoid anticipating the writing process and the academic audience.

Pratt (2000) has argued against the division between research performances and text, arguing that writing emerges as just one possible performance. Our view of our research and what we might write about changes as we go through the research and writing process. For example, Pratt remarks upon how she came to the realisation that much of the research performances that took place during research in the Philippine Women Centre exceeded what could be written during the writing process (2000: 650). Many research performances, for example, meetings, interviews, and events, cannot be written down easily, if at all. These moments are transitory and never quite repeated in the same way. They may be marked by role-playing or playfulness. This dilemma resonates with non-representational theory. Thrift (2000) has explored some of these difficulties and argues that performances live only in the present, that events exceed what can be written down. Schieffelin (1998: 198, Thrift, 2000: 233) argues:

> [I]t is precisely the performativity of performances for which there is
> no analogue in text.   Unlike text, performances are ephemeral.
> They create their effects and then are gone – leaving their
> reverberations (fresh insights, reconstituted selves, new structures,
> altered realities) behind them...While they refer to the past and
> plunge towards the future, they exist only in the present.

From this viewpoint, we might view something like writers block as quite often the product of the difficulties of trying to write that which cannot be written. In the case of the groups in this study, trying to write about Groundswell events,

63

such as the large 'Speakout' events that bring NGOs, CBOs and policy makers from around the country together in a one day event, or exchanges between CBOs in different cities, or meetings with large numbers of slum dwellers to discuss strategy and development in the slums of Mumbai, or about enumerations, or exhibitions (often accompanied by music, singing and dancing) is very difficult because of those elements of performance that cannot be written down[30]. The traces of such events are present as dialogues in the thesis; they are not re-created and the performances themselves have disappeared.

Writing is just one product of research[31] – it is one way of viewing what occurred and can never quite recreate things as they occurred. It is a step of translation in the research process. Furthermore, the writing process changes the research performance and, creates a new research performance –interviews and events are reinterpreted now in writing through (in particular) certain academic lenses. For example, the engagements between the Indian Alliance and Groundswell made me reflect on literature and debates around divisions of North and South, and changing notions of 'development'.

2.10   Conclusion

The research process, from planning to the research itself to the writing, is a dialogic and partial process.   My concerns were with issues around urban poverty and the production of knowledge, geographies and politics.   I was particularly concerned with transnational networks, including those encounters that moved beyond divisions of North and South. These conceptual and political concerns were investigated primarily through interviews and documentary research. The issues investigated - many of which have not made their way into

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[30] Pictures or video could help here (Rose, 2001; Latham, 2003). Indeed, SPARC and Homeless International have recorded some events in video, including a toilet exhibition, and targeted them at donors and authorities.

[31] Other products are, for example, the emotions associated with places, events, people and institutions, the influences of conversations on the way people think, and the mental representations that emerge from the recounting of events.

the thesis because of the need to tighten a focus - followed on from my conceptual concerns.

From a personal view, there is much that the experience has taught me about the research process. Most notably, I have come to appreciate how partial and contingent the process is: partial because of the interpretations of the researcher and the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and contingent because so much depends on chance encounters (for example with a staff member of a donor who happens to know of an NGO that might be interesting) and fortunate timing (for example, of an interview, of a trip to a place where an important meeting is occurring). Much depends on what is happening in a particular place at a particular time. Moreover, the thesis is only one possible output from the research performances: it neither encapsulates what has been or simply reports on it; it is a dialogic and reflective encounter. It is a set of situated knowledges (Haraway, 1991) and the research process is a series of translations, or steps in knowledge production.

Chapter 3

Mapping development:

histories, territories, and locating SDI

3.1   Introduction

This chapter will provide a broad view of how SDI and the links between SDI and the UK groups are situated in relation to 'mainstream development'. It will make two interwoven surveys of mainstream development. One survey has the aim of positioning SDI in relation to mainstream and alternative development. The other traces the geographical imaginary of mainstream development. It has the aim of contextualising the links between SDI and UK groups through the tracing of the historical creation of 'geopolitics of development'.

The chapter will begin with a discussion of what I mean by development, and through this discussion position SDI in reference to mainstream and alternative development.   This discussion will trace the broad historical origins of development in three periods: pre-world war two, the First, Second and Third World politics of the Cold War, and the reshaping of development through the North-South dichotomy.   It will do this through a discussion of the forms, strategies, goals and means of development. The chapter will then outline SDI's view of and approach to development, with reference to international development institutions and the state.   The view of the role of the state in particular requires discussion of the geography of SDI, given that the approach to the state is heavily influenced by the political histories of a particular country.

3.2   Forms of mainstream development

The next few sections will clarify what I mean by development and will allow me to situate SDI in relation to mainstream development. I will discuss what I mean by mainstream development with reference to four interrelated areas: forms, broad strategies, goals and means. I will show how the division between

mainstream and alternative development has become increasingly problematic, and through an examination of this I will position SDI in reference to development more broadly. I intend to trace the creation of mainstream development as a geographical imaginary, positioning the links between SDI and the UK as representative of new possibilities across and beyond North-South linking.

By forms of mainstream development I am referring to international development agencies, including multilaterals like the World Bank and bilaterals like the UK Department for International Development (DFID)[32]. I am also referring to the development activities of individual states. Since the late 1990s, when international agencies came to the belief that reinvigorated states are important for effective markets and development (see World Bank, 1997; Allen and Thomas, 2000), local and national states and international agencies sometimes work together, with international agencies often viewing their role in terms of technical advice and managing projects (Jenkins, 2002: 487).

The form of mainstream development also extends to its geography, or more accurately its geopolitics. Development has historically been divided between First and Third Worlds, and North and South. This has meant that there have been few attempts at engaging between the two global 'halves'. For example, in the so-called 'First World', the notion of possibly learning from countries labelled as parts of a 'Third World', 'undeveloped', or 'Southern', has rarely been considered. Generally, in the post-war period, academic, civil society and policy circles in 'rich' and 'poor' countries alike have rarely deemed it relevant to attempt to consider learning across divides because the political, cultural and economic environments are viewed as too different. Often, this is where debate has started and stopped (Hadjor, 1988), even today when it is more possible than in the past to engage in knowledges abroad. Understanding these circumstances requires some attention to the history of mainstream

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[32] This definition separates mainstream development from development studies as a field. However, in practice the two are intimately related. Development studies is and has often been policy driven and influential. Some forms have been more influential than others – neoclassical economists have been and continue to be particularly influential (Harriss, 2002b).

development as geopolitical. Geopolitics of development reflect the creation of areas for development (Escobar, 1995). This has powerful historical antecedents, stretching back through colonial power geometries.

3.2.1   Pre-world war two

In the span of Western colonialism, the expectation of imperialists has often been that the colonized have much to learn from the colonialists (King, 1991), as de Haan and Maxwell (1998: 7) write: "Traditionally, exchanges were mainly in the North – South direction: for example, India's social policies were framed along British traditions". More broadly, Gundara (1997) has argued that Britain has historically constricted its domain of 'world knowledge'. He argues that knowledge (and people) outside of the 'Western' terrain of thought has been characterised as inferior and primitive throughout the history of British imperial encounters, and that the legacy of this divide remains. Even in cases where 'richer' countries have incorporated ideas from abroad, he argues that there has been no readiness to acknowledge this. For instance, Gundara argues that European historiography "denied the earlier understanding that the Greeks in the Classical and Hellenistic periods had acquired as a result of colonization and interaction between Egyptians, Phoenicians and Greeks" (1997: 142). This is to some extent a product of both anti-Semitism and racism, and part of the larger project of constructing a 'modern', civilised and rational 'West' and a barbaric, irrational, metaphysical 'East' – what Gregory (forthcoming) refers to as the "double-headed coin of colonial modernity", and which Said (1978) unpacks in his influential *Orientalism*. This process stretches through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, bound up in the perception of the need for a capitalist, secular, and scientific society that is 'modern' and 'rational'. Gundara draws on Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993: 58) to highlight this historical process as a paradoxical affair, one that has espoused the 'universalism' of knowledge on the one hand while remaining Anglo-centric on the other:

> Without significant exception, the universalizing discourses of modern Europe and the United States assume the silence, willing or otherwise, of the non-European world. There is incorporation; there is inclusion; there is direct rule; there is coercion. But there is only

68

infrequently an acknowledgement that the colonized people should
be heard from, their ideas known (Gundara 1997: 142).

He continues:

This legacy of distortion is based on the assumption that the Greek
heritage predisposed Britain and Europe to rationality and, while
Greece was the founder of rational philosophy, the Orient is still
locked into the metaphysical phase (1997: 145).

These distortions are underpinned by a particular creation of geography and
time. The following diagram illustrates what Gregory (1998: 16-17) refers to as
the Eurocentric absolutisation of time and space that folds together two
distinctions: "one between 'the West' and 'the non-West', and the other between
'History' and what Eric Wolf (1982) called 'the people without History'". It
usefully summarises some of the stereotypes that set the context for and
continue to inform geopolitics of development:

Figure 6: Geography, Time and Eurocentricism (Gregory, 1998:17)
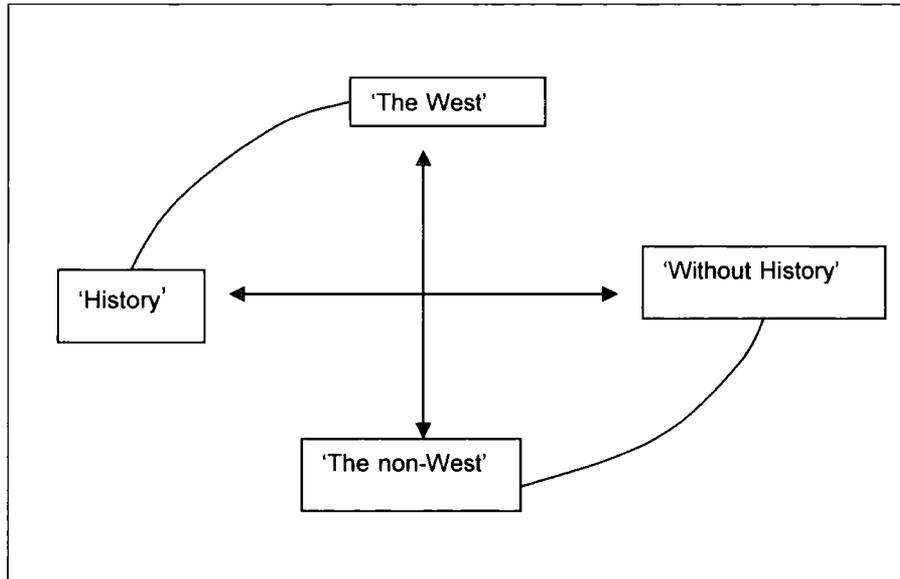
The knowledge divisions and imaginative geographies[33] of the past inform the geopolitical designs of the post-war world[34]. The post-war world was one in which international development was to be rapidly (re)constructed around the Cold War and the dynamics of decolonisation.

3.2.2 Post-war development studies: constructing organisational categories

Comparative research "reflects the basic nature of social science research" (Mackie and Marsh, 1995: 173). Learning from other places allows a questioning of current activities and can be productive of new ways of thinking and working. This, most would argue, is a 'good' thing. However, in post-war development studies international learning has generally taken place within regions crudely labelled and defined as 'First' or 'Third', 'North' or 'South', and 'developed' and 'undeveloped'. Where did these terms come from?

The notion of the 'Third World' was a European conception first used in 1952 by a French demographer, Alfred Sauzy, to refer to the 'third estate' - the 'common people' - before the French Revolution (Lewellen, 1995; Payne, 2001). It became popular as a short hand for those countries whose economic, social and political conditions reflected, relatively, the French 'third estate' (Payne, 2001). Therefore, the notion of the 'Third World' was not originally based on the existence of the 'First' and 'Second World', although it was to become in large

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[33] My notion of imaginative geographies – a notion that features particularly in this chapter and in Chapter 7 - comes from Said (1993: 7), who in various works revealed the power of the imagination in the construction of geography: "Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex an interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings." Despite the overlaps, there is a distinction between 'imaginative geographies' and 'geographical imaginations'. The former refers to the production of conceptions of space through imaginings, and the latter to the use of or deployment of the imagination.

[34] Writing in reference to area studies in the USA, for example, Appadurai (2000: 7) argues that "much traditional thinking about 'areas' has been driven by conceptions of geographical, civilisational, and cultural coherence that rely on some sort of trait list – of values, languages, material practices, ecological adaptations, marriage patterns, and the like". These 'trait geographies' (ibid) assign labels to areas that are depicted as immobile in time, and Appadurai argues that they influence the contemporary architecture of area studies.

part categorised by Cold War geopolitics (see Agnew, 1998: 11-12; Wolf-Phillips, 1987).   The 'Third World' became battlegrounds for the two superpowers, as the post-World War Two US President Harry Truman declared in 1947: "At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life [capitalist or communist]" (cited in O Tuathail, *et al*, 1998).   Hadjor (1988: 47) asserts that development studies was built upon such divisions, reinforcing the conceptual architecture of the 'development industry':

> Even the very creation of 'development studies' and the 'development industry' was the product of superpower rivalries.   It was the obsession with the Red Menace looming on the horizon that informed the literature on the development of the Third World in the 1950s and 1960s.

One notable example here is Rostow's (1962) influential *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto.*   In this period, development studies amounted to development economics.   In 1963, Dudley Seers' classic paper *The Limitations of the Special Case* effectively launched the field of development economics (Maxwell, 1998: 24).   Seers provided a checklist of 20 features, under seven sub-categories of factors of production, sectors of the economy, public finance, foreign trade, households, savings and investment, and dynamic influences (trade, population and aspirations), which distinguished a small group of developed countries from others, and marked them out as a 'special case' (Maxwell, 1998: 29).   While Rostow's work spoke to the geopolitics of the time, Seers' work reinforced an intellectual global categorisation.

Critical accounts of development emerged in the 1960s and 1970s that took issue with development.   For example, dependency theorists (Baran, 1957 Frank, 1967; Amin, 1976) criticised development strategies and policies, and embedded them in global political economy.   Their theoretical orientation was generally neo-Marxist.   Rather than writing in terms of First or Third World, dependency theorists preferred to talk of 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' and – later in its partial morphing into world-systems theory (through Wallerstein's [1974, 1980] work) - 'core', 'peripheries' and 'semi-peripheries' (Payne, 2001: 7). Early dependency theory grew out of Latin American scholarship (much of it

written in Spanish) rather than North American / West European scholarship (Conway and Heynen, 2002). This is one example of development studies being informed by perspectives from 'poorer' countries. However, dependency theorists shared in common an analysis based on simple divisions, binaries, and dualisms.

In both pro- and critical development accounts, the geopolitics of development have been policed by geographical imaginations that limit engagement and learning. As Escobar (1995: 9) has written with reference to post-war development discourse:

> [I]nevitably it contained a geopolitical imagination that has shaped the meaning of development for more than four decades. For some, this will to spatial power is one of the essential features of development...It is implicit in expressions such as First and Third Worlds, North and South, centre and periphery. The social production of space implicit in these terms is bound up with the production of differences, subjectivities and social orders.

The reframing of geopolitics of development from the three worlds approach to the North-South divide, despite stressing the interdependencies between North and South, did little to unsettle the divisory nature of development studies. Payne (2001: 7) describes the geography of the North-South divide:

> This conceptualization drew a wavy line across the world broadly between the northern and southern hemispheres, thus separating North America from South America, Europe from Africa, North Asia from South Asia and so on, deviating only to draw Australia and New Zealand into the economic and political North. As classically formulated by the first report of the [UN] Brandt Commission (1980), which did so much to popularize the term during the 1980s, the idea expressed both the conflict that obviously was deemed to lie at the root of North-South relations [for example, over trade or debt] but, at the same time, and perhaps even more importantly, the essential linkage that bound the fates of the North and the South together in a world economy seen as increasingly interdependent in its functioning.

Figure 7: The North - South divide (from Ould-Mey, 2003:463)
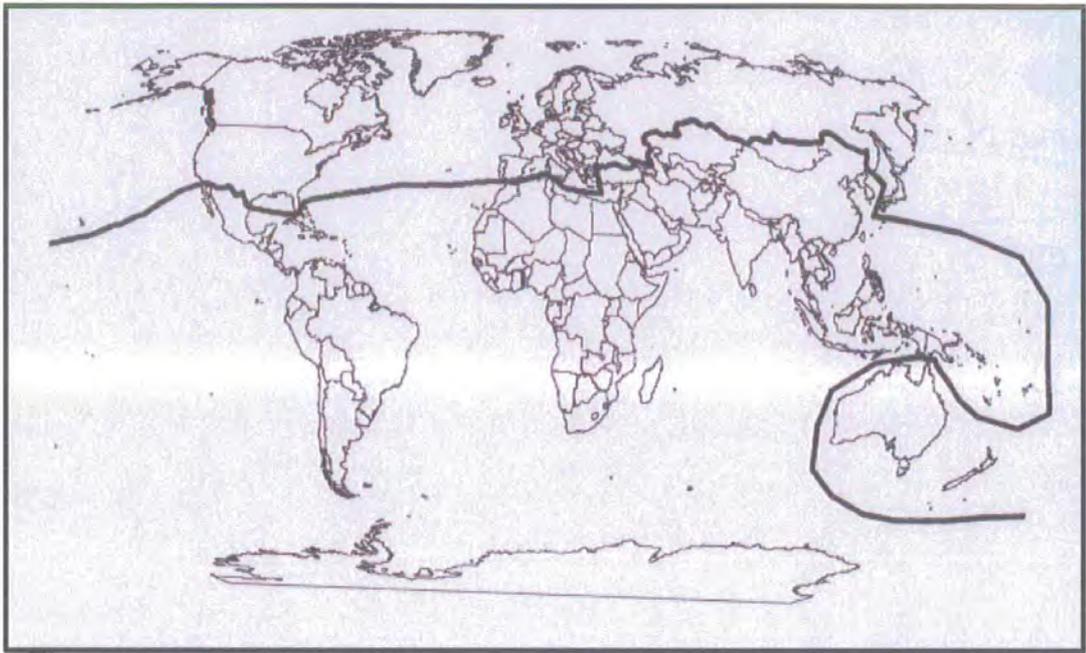
In reference to geography, Slater was able to write in 1992 (p. 313) that the "geopolitical divide of the North-South axis, with antecedents in colonialism, and its contemporary expression in new forms of imperialism, rarely receives any concerted analysis in the work of geographers such as Gregory (1989), Harvey (1989) or Soja (1989)". Little had changed by 2000, when Jones lamented the 'ghettoization of theory' in geography:

> Within Departments of Geography there are those with knowledge and expertise associated mainly with Geographies of the 'North' on the one hand, and the so-called developmentalists, or those interested in the 'South', on the other. Whilst there may be in-house links and individual exceptions, I would still maintain that each is compartmentalized, often dismissive or even apathetic to the other; or, as is often the case with development geographers, for good reasons, very defensive of 'their' marginalized terrain. This failure to communicate within our own departments, not only prevents valuable learning from either context, it also reflects the pedestrianism of academic discourse in comparison to actual processes and practices on the ground (2000: 238).

Robinson (2002: 532) makes a similar point about the rupture between thinking and what's happening 'on the ground' when she suggests that urbanists "could find it valuable to think about the contrast between the restricted spatialities of

73

their theories – the geography of urban theory – and the diverse cosmopolitanisms of the cities they write about".

3.3 Broad strategies of mainstream development

The primary strategies of mainstream development are financial aid, technological assistance, and changes to the political economy of countries. In recent years, the latter could be described as a broad neoliberal strategy that has been the driving force of mainstream development (Allen and Thomas, 2000; Jenkins, 2002). This strategy was reflected in the much-criticised Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1980s[35], major features of the (in)famous 'Washington consensus', a broad term referring to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank's commitment to liberalisation, privatization, the reduction of public spending, and the stabilisation of economies.

This broad strategy has been refigured since the mid-1990s to what has been referred to as a 'post-Washington consensus' or a 'revised neoliberal position' (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). This position reflects a cautious approach to the earlier view that the market could deliver development, and emphasises the role of an efficient and transparent state as a facilitator of development, and civil society as an implementer. It is a position often associated with 'good governance' strategies. Good governance refers to strategies of accountability of states to citizens, of institutional pluralism in which international agencies and/or states work in partnership with civil society – particularly NGOs - and businesses, and of decentralization (Pieterse, 2001; Jenkins, 2002). For example, the UN Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT[36]) defines 'good

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[35] SAPs were a response to the debt crisis and took the form of policies emphasising, and loans with conditions on, the reduction in state expenditure, the reduction on state intervention in the economy, and the promotion of liberalization and international trade (Simon, 2002: 87).

[36] HABITAT is the United Nations Human Settlements Programme. It seeks to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. It is a large and influential organisation involved in both policy development and infrastructural improvement.

urban governance' as "an efficient and effective response to urban problems by accountable local governments working in partnership with civil society" (BSHF, 2000: 13). Good governance discourses, despite occasional emphasis on legal systems, often assume that pluralism leads to effectiveness and efficiency. Some critics have pointed out that the notion is more "management oriented than political in spirit" (Mohapatra, 2003: 291). In practice, however, governance is shaped by the interests of powerful actors (Jenkins, 2002). Broad strategies of mainstream development are spatialised through the geopolitics of development. One example is the 'Washington consensus', often associated with the political agendas of a North being applied to a South through mechanisms such as aid conditionality (Killick, 2002) and good governance agendas (Chossudovsky, 1992; Desai and Imrie, 1999).

3.4   Goals of mainstream development

The goals of development have shifted away from simply increasing growth and GNP per capita – economic development - to human development. The UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) published in the annual Human Development Report, which measures literacy, education, health, housing, gender differentials, life expectancy, death rates, amongst other variables, "has become an influential standard" (Pieterse, 1998: 358). The belief that economic growth=social growth, or that 'trickle down' necessarily works, has been challenged. This shift does not represent a redefinition from development-as-economics to development-as-society, but rather an 'adding on' of social concerns to the goals of development: growth *plus* human development,

participation, or sustainability (Pieterse, 1998: 359)[37]. Pieterse (1998: 359-360) rejects the claim (for example, Korten, 1990) that this is necessarily a weakness and suggests that this may be how perspectives from alternative development have become effective in influencing the mainstream: "[F]rom the point of view of policy implementation and institutional acceptance, 'adding on' may be a source of strength, because for bureaucracies in welfare ministries and international agencies, total breaks are much more difficult to handle than additional policy options".

The shift in goals reflects a critique of conventional developmentalism – defined as a commitment to growth, modernization, and neoclassical economics (Pieterse, 1998: 356) – from alternative and mainstream directions. This leaves a picture of two broad aims, or dialectics (Pieterse, 1998), propelling mainstream development: a revised conventional developmentalism and a broad social development. Pieterse (1998: 345) argues that mainstream development is caught on the "horns of a dilemma" between these two broad aims – which are not mutually exclusive – which refer, respectively, to the IMF and World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the UN, with the World Bank "straddled somewhere in the middle" (*ibid.* 360) (see also Therien, 1999).

As we look at development goals[38], the notion of mainstream becomes conceptually slippery. The division between mainstream and alternative starts

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[37] Perspectives from development studies have influenced this shift. The concepts of *entitlements, capabilities, livelihoods and vulnerability* are examples. Sen's (1984) work on 'entitlements' focuses on the inequalities in, contingencies of and opportunities for entitlements. This useful notion steers development goals away from, for instance, a simple focus on numbers of unemployed to *opportunities* for employment. He developed this work (1999) by focussing on the 'capabilities' these entitlements generate. Murray's work, amongst others, on livelihoods (2002) focuses on the household and the ways in which people make a living beyond straightforward formal income. In particular, the livelihoods approach is concerned with the *relationship* between different ways of making a living over time (see also DFID's 2000, 'Sustainable Livelihoods' programme). Closely related to livelihoods, Robert Chambers' (1997) work has brought attention to the importance of including those vulnerable to short- and long-term shocks and trends, from shifting seasonal constraints to market fluxuations and industrial change.

[38] Including the international Millennium Development Goals declared in 2000, which range from education, child, gender and maternity concerns, to disease, environmental sustainability and a 'global partnership' for development (World Bank, 2003).

to break down. The goals of human and social development thought to be particular to alternatives during the 1970s have become mainstream (Pieterse, 1998). Pieterse (1998: 358) argues that approaches that define themselves as alternative often do so by setting themselves against a stereotyped and fixed mainstream that is narrowly economist. The distinction between mainstream and alternative has shifted. Pieterse (1998: 360) summarises: "[T]he divide now runs between mainstream and alternative development grouped under a general umbrella of social development, on the one hand, and the number crunching approach to development, the positivism of growth, on the other".

The goals of development have included the question of North-South dialogue, which emerged in the 1960s as a variety of attempts to encourage negotiation around issues like trade between countries perceived to be part of a North and countries perceived to be part of a South. The idea of North-South dialogue did not seek to challenge the creation of a North – South geopolitics in development. Its proponents sought to influence and create new goals of development through negotiation.

3.4.1   North - South dialogue

The notions of North and South emerged in mainstream development during the 1960s, and took on greater credence with the partial collapse of notions of First and Second in the post-Cold War period (Dodds, 2002). Debates between collectives of 'rich' and 'poor' countries around international concerns like trade or aid began in earnest in 1955 with the Bandung Conference, a meeting of representatives from 29 African and Asian countries in Indonesia. Its aim was to promote economic and political co-operation and to oppose colonialism, and it represented the 'launching pad' for 'Third World demands' (Power, 2003: 103). In 1964, the "first forum for the consideration of North-South issues was established" through the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva (Hadjor, 1988: 46). UNCTAD represented and became a means for 'poorer' countries to influence international development and politics, as Evans and Newnham (1998: 384-385) suggest:

> From the early 1960s onwards the Southern states began to use their burgeoning majority in the United Nations to press for greater attention to be paid to their aspirations and concerns. It was pressure from the South that largely created the...[UNCTAD conference]...and it was Southern economists such as Prebisch that provided the intellectual framework for the series of demands for a new deal on world trade that accompanied the UNCTAD process[39].

While Hadjor (1988: 197) argues that the 1964 conference itself was characterised by "meaningless general platitudes" and the rejection of "any specific reforms", the conference did lead to the formal constitution of the 'Non-Aligned Movement'. Watts (2000: 558) argues that the notion of the South arose in particular through the Non-Aligned Movement. The movement was a foreign policy orientation widely adopted by 'poorer' countries during the Cold War. Principally, it was an attempt to form a unified front of decolonised and other Third World countries campaigning for "peaceful coexistence" with and between the capitalist and Soviet geopolitical blocs (Evans and Newnham, 1998: 378)[40].

By the mid 1970s, "North-South dialogue was all the rage", particularly because, argues Hadjor (1988: 197), OPEC emerged as a "global force" during the oil crisis. In 1974, the *Declaration and Action Programme for a New International Economic Order (NIEO)* at the Sixth Special Session of the UN General Assembly was a response to a demand long campaigned for: "[I]t was a sign of the times that it was adopted without being put to the vote" (Hadjor, 1988: 48). This was only one agreement in the history of dialogue, and even then it was non-binding. Evans and Newnham (1998: 385) argue that while OPEC's successes in the 1970s "seemed to point to new possibilities for strengthening the bargaining position of the South", these opportunities went unrealised for two principal reasons. First, collaboration between "conservative forces" within

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[39] "For some years, Raul Prebisch and his colleagues at the UN's Economic Committee for Latin America had been at the forefront of highlighting inequitable 'centre-periphery' relations existing between the North and South" (Allen and Thomas, 2000: 200).

[40] The remit of the movement rarely extended beyond such military-security concerns and as such the post-Cold War world has "robbed the movement of much of its rationale" (Evans and Newnham, 1998: 378).

OPEC and the "Northern financial system" - for instance in the recycling of petrol-dollars – under writ Southern 'unity'. Second, the oil action hit the Southern oil importers harder than Northern importers (Evans and Newnham, 1998: 385). These developments drove a "line between oil producers in the South and the rest" (*ibid*). Further, the emergence of the 'Fourth World'[41] of so-called 'failed states', and of the Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) led to further breaks in Southern solidarity, if ever there was one to speak of.

The 1978 Brandt Commission popularized notions of North and South and was influential in redrawing development geopolitics from West-East formulations informed largely by Cold War politics to North-South formulations informed largely by economics. As Watts (2000: 558) states:

> *North-South* was the title of an influential book which became popularly known in the 1980s as the Brandt Report after its Chairman, the former West German Chancellor...It signalled divisions between rich and poor nations in contradistinction to the East-West divide of the Cold War[42].

The report made a series of recommendations about trade but these collapsed more or less by 1980, amounting, for Hadjor, to little more than a "public relations exercise" (Hadjor, 1988: 49). Hadjor (1988: 46) argues that "looking back over the last three decades it is clear that North-South dialogue never became anything more than a good idea." Rather than being a dialogue, attempts amounted to a "question of imparting the wisdom of Western

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[41] Watts has written that the "appearance of a *Fourth World* of extreme poverty (the so-called famine belt), particularly in Africa, suggests a growing economic polarization within the South coeval with a deepening polarization between North and South" (2000: 558). Dodds (2002: 5) has referred to the poorest 25% of countries – including, for instance, Burkino Faso and Laos – as a 'Fourth World'. On the one hand, the notion of 'Fourth' World' itself disrupts the imagery of the 'Third World' as homogeneous space, yet on the other hand it calls into question the whole notion of 'Third World' by revealing its conceptual weaknesses. While the notion of a 'Fourth World' refers to 'poorer' countries, it has resonance with often dubious (perhaps even racist) claims of the emergence of an 'underclass' in the higher-income countries, including the inner-cities of the USA and the Aborigines of Australia (Murray, 1990; Morris, 1994).

[42] Despite this contradistinction, the emergence of 'North' "in terms of development models...may be regarded as synonymous with the growth of the First World", claim Evans and Newnham (1998: 384).

civilization to the impatient pupils of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East" (*ibid.* 47). Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania, reflected that "the first reaction to any question about the North-South dialogue is therefore a question: what dialogue?" (1988: 197)[43].

North-South dialogue did not significantly influence the goals of development beyond some influence on debates about the inequities of trade and tariffs and the importance of sustainable development. Moreover, through debates and discussions around the idea of North-South dialogue, notions of North and South themselves were reinforced. The idea of separate geopolitical blocks which were politically and economically different, wrangling around trade and aid, further marginalised questions of engaging and learning between countries in the North and those in the South from the agenda of mainstream development. Learning was taken for granted as something the South did and the North delivered and controlled.

3.4.2   Beyond North-South? Bretton Woods and the UN

Therien (1999) argues that for more than a generation the North-South divide was central to the explanation of world poverty. However, he suggests that it is being replaced by the two main theses in mainstream development - the contemporary Bretton Woods thesis and the contemporary UN thesis - both of which emphasise the impacts of globalisation but from different political perspectives and with different political interpretations. For example, the Bretton Woods thesis argues that the gap between 'rich' and 'poor' is narrowing, the latter that it is growing. Both perspectives are undoing notions of North and South by invoking the 'global' - Bretton Woods by highlighting global trade, the UN by highlighting poverty in 'rich' countries and wealth in 'poor' countries,

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[43] Elsewhere Hadjor bleakly asserts: "[T]he transfer of military technology appears to be the most significant contribution of the North to the South...It is through the barrel of a gun that the North-South issues are most sharply posed" (1988: 49).

commonalities in causes associated with globalisation, and so on[44]. There is some evidence that the UNDP is problematising the North-South divide and emphasizing international poverty and development. Recently, the UNDP have "emphasised that the winners and losers [of globalisation] straddle the North-South divide" (Maxwell, 1998: 27): "With the expansion of foreign trade and investment, developing countries have seen the gaps among themselves widen. Meanwhile, in many industrial countries unemployment has soared to levels not seen since the last century" (UNDP, 1997: 82, cited in Maxwell, 1998: 27). The goal for both the Bretton Woods institutions and the UN is to channel globalisation to development.

The effects of globalization on realigning the geographies of mainstream development have so far been limited. There are some indications that a simple configuration of North and South is being replaced by a more complex mosaic of global geographies of wealth and poverty. In this context, there are opportunities to conceive development as in international concern, and perhaps to explore the possibilities of learning from different development experiences. Some recent work in development studies has sought to deconstruct the organisational categories of development, with the goal of creating anew imaginative geographies of development, and often also with the goal of learning from different development experiences.

3.5   Redrawing imaginative geographies of development studies

Maxwell argues that development classifications such as Seers' (1963) schema now have a "distinctly dated feel" (Maxwell, 1998: 24):

> It can hardly be said of the Asian tigers, for example, or of the middle-income countries of Latin America, that they lack entrepreneurship, skilled professionals, or sector exporting manufactures. But more generally, there has been a movement on both developed and developing countries, which has brought them

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[44] Therien stops short of calling for an outright abandoning of notions of North and South, but he makes a convincing case for the collapse of the analytic utility of the North-South divide, a process he refers to as the "end of a world-view" (Therien, 1999: 725).

> closer together: free trade and deindustrialisation in the North; population increase, urbanisation and economic diversification in the South; these and other factors have changed the world significantly since 1963 (*ibid.* 24-25).

Kamrava (1995: 691) is similarly concerned: ""Thanks to the dizzying global changes of the 1980s and the 1990s the usual standards for categorising countries and their political systems have become hopelessly outdated and anachronistic". Writing in *Third World Quarterly* (1995: 692), Kamrava rounds upon the notion of Third World and the conceptual and organisational categories that sustain them:

> Are we, as students and scholars who have spent years studying the Third World, clinging to a notion whose slow but very certain death we are not willing to admit? Or is it still a valid intellectual exercise to point to that group of countries once called the Third World and ascribe to them specific features and characteristics that set them apart from a group of others? Can we, simply put, still place Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil and South Africa in the same category of countries?

A spate of articles over the years in the journal *Third World Quarterly*[45] have sought to move beyond divisions of First and Third World. The notion of Third World has been unsettled and to some extent replaced by the notion of 'postcolonial' (Power, 2003: 114). Postcolonial literature, particularly the work of the 'Subaltern Studies School', which attempts to write alternative and plural histories from 'below', has attempted to move beyond binaries and hierarchical notions such as the three-world concept[46]. Latterly, literature on North-South tends to focus on common causes of inequality (for example, Payne, 2001), and aid and trade agreements, and only very recently has there been attention to the possibilities of engaging and learning (Gaventa, 1998). Payne highlights the good intentions of many people who continue to employ notions of North-South but adds, "for all the term's merit as a symbol of faith, it does not travel well into the post-cold-war, globalizing world" (Payne, 2001: 9). He writes:

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[45] See, for instance, Berger (1994), Kamrava (1995), Korany (1994), and Wolf-Phillips (1987).

[46] However, as Dirlik (1994) has argued, this work rejects structural forces such as capitalism as 'foundational' in the process. Its plurality lacks attention to structural forces of inequality such as uneven development.

> In the first place, there is more than one North. It is too glib just to locate Japan automatically in the same camp as the USA and the leading countries of Western Europe. Japan may have been trained to become a part of the West in the cold-war sense of that term; but it represents a different view of development and therefore stands for a different North than does the USA. Given, too the differences that still exist between Anglo-American and continental European forms of capitalism, that fissure within the North also differentiates the political economies of the two sides of the Atlantic alliance. In the second place, for reasons already advanced, there are now many different Souths...

Dodds argues that "it is no longer appropriate or simply accurate to describe global poverty in terms of a North-South division" (Dodds, 2002: 6). For instance, he points out that countries like Brazil and Saudi Arabia have more in common with the USA and Germany "in terms of concerns relating to market access and world economic trends" (Dodds, 2002: 6). He highlights Albania and the former Yugoslavia as containing areas "that are undoubtedly poor as assessed by all the traditional criteria relating to income levels, childhood mortality, healthcare and other measures of human development" (Dodds, 2002: 6). He goes on to say that "the geographical distribution of poverty defies simple categories such as North and South", highlighting Singapore and Mumbai as cities with a "degree of affluence [for some] more akin to the northern industrialized cities of London, New York and Paris" (*ibid*). Recent articles in the new (2001) journal *Progress in Development Studies* have started to explore linkages between North and South and to suggest that, particularly in light of processes of and effects of increasing globalising tendencies, these views of world poverty are dated and unhelpful (for example, Hart, 2001; Payne, 2001).

3.5.1 Retaining classifications: arguments for

There have been influential attempts and arguments to (re)construct and retain categories of 'developed' and 'developing'. Sen (1983) identifies qualitative differences based on structural problems such as capital accumulation, industrialisation, unemployment, and planning. Meier (1989) focussed on population growth, inequality, and lack of political development. Some commentators have argued that the vocabulary of North and South is important in development studies (Ould-Mey, 2003). Watts (2000: 558) has argued that notions of North and South are unsettling for those policy-makers who would

83

argue that the world as a whole is becoming richer: "The language of First and Third Worlds or North and South is often conspicuously absent among the major multilateral and national development agencies (for example the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund) which stratifies states according to income (low, middle and so on)". It should not, most importantly, be forgotten that some stark facts mark world inequality. Notwithstanding the geographical variation within countries that is so important for how we think about development today, we are reminded by Rapley (2001: 296) that:

> The ratio of income distribution between rich and poor countries has not converged but widened throughout the history of capitalism. At the start of the nineteenth century, for example, the ratio of real income per head between the world's richest and poorest countries stood at 3:1. By the year 2000, it had reached 60:1.

To take just one example:

> Given that at the end of the twentieth century, the average African household consumed 20% less than it had 25 years previously (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), while consumption in First World countries raced ahead, the reality of divergence has been everywhere in evidence (Rapley, 2001: 296).

Similarly, Maxwell (1998: 24) comments: "GNP per capita is over 40 times that of Ethiopia, even on the basis of purchasing power parity (UNDP, 1997). The poverty line in the UK is 17 times the poverty line established by the World Bank for developing countries". Ould-Mey (2003: 466) argues that "the chronic debt problem of the last two decades has clearly demarcated southern borrowers (whose foreign debt reached $2.57 trillion in 1999) from northern lenders". He also points out that the conditions of loans are usually determined by organisations like the IMF and the World Bank in Washington. He believes that "North-South categories are even more salient in global finance" (Ould-Mey, 2003: 467), arguing that the politics of currency devaluation leads to a deterioration in the terms of trade for 'poorer' countries as they receive fewer imports for each unit of goods exported[47].

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[47] Another argument for retaining notions of North and South is in the political utility of the categories for mobilization in global politics. For example, leaders from 133 'poor' countries attended a five-day 'South Summit' hosted by Cuba in April 2000, "with a

84

3.5.2   Retaining classifications: arguments against

These are examples of global inequality.   However, do they require classifications of North and South, or developed and developing?   Maxwell criticises such classifications.   He does not aim his argument at the rigour of such analyses, but raises two problems:

> First, classification is obviously an endless game. Take any pair of societies or countries, identify some differences between them, isolate those which belong to the poorer country, and call this the true territory of development. But we could do this with Britain and Belgium, as easily as we could with Britain and Belize; and anyway, the characteristics change over time. Does the game bring us any closer to a 'true' definition of a developing country? I fear not...The second problem is that the list of features of development studies will immediately be familiar and seem relevant to many who work on so-called developed countries (1998: 25).

We may ask ourselves whether there is a 'true territory of development'? Maxwell (1998: 25-26) offers some specific and challenging questions, and highlights some broad possibilities for dialogue:

> Do developed countries not need to 'modernise'? Do they not face growing pains associated with structural change in their economies? Do they not struggle with market failure? If 'development studies', by induction, is what students of development do, then many current

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united agenda for narrowing global wealth inequalities and stressing the identity of the South" (Ould-Mey, 2003: 467). Similarly, at the eleventh G15 summit held in Indonesia in May 2001, "a group of 17 developing countries (Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe) discussed ways to energize the North-South dialogue through the formulation of concrete proposals that will be brought up in their dialogue with the G8 developed countries" (ibid). However, such collective identities are in reality only occasionally mobilised. It is a false premise to talk, as Hardjor (1988) does, of 'Southern unity'. It is simply not the case that 'poorer' or 'richer' countries work together as blocks on all issues. Watts points out that "the South has rarely had a unified political position even within the Non-Aligned Movement" (2000: 558). Edwards (2001: 146) points out, in reference to grassroots networks, that: "On some issues (such as debt or landmines), there is a solid South-North consensus in favour of a unified lobbying position. However, in other areas (especially trade and labour rights and the environment), there is no such consensus, since people may have conflicting short-term interests in different parts of the world" (see also Keck and Sikkink, 1998). On the recent debate around the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the EU, to take another example, the UK was supported by countries like South Africa against a Franco-German alliance, for instance at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

themes are relevant to both North and South: restructuring the state; poverty reduction and livelihood; political development and governance; gender inequality; social capital; agency and participation... social exclusion.

On inspection, we are forced to conclude, with echoes of Jones' (2000: 238) comments about what's happening "on the ground", that development[48] is not – if it ever was - just a concern for the South:

Changes taking place in the advanced economies – regionalization, deindustrialization, flexibilization, migration, urban problems – also lead to what are in effect development policies, albeit at different economic and institutional levels. Accordingly the line between 'developing' and 'developed' worlds has been blurring (Pieterse, 2001: 197).

3.5.3 Learning between North and South

Thinking about development in the North as well as the South need not ignore the plight of the poor in the South. Instead, the approach can be to try to learn about how to view development problems from different and new perspectives, and to do development better in both the North and the South. Far from ignoring the poor in the South, such an approach may help improve the lives of the poor in both the South and the North. A recent one-day conference staged by the *Development Studies Association (DSA)* and the *Political Economy Research Centre (PERC)* at the University of Sheffield, sought to explore this concern. Maxwell (2000: 4), then (2001) DSA President, who gave the opening talk, argued that there was much for the North to learn from the South despite the difference between countries:

This [differences between 'richer' and 'poorer' countries] affects the proportion of people who are poor (and thus the political configuration), the amount of money available for poverty reduction programmes and safety nets, and the sensitivity to shocks (e.g. floods in Mozambique). Nevertheless, there are enough commonalities to make comparisons worthwhile. Lots more could

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[48] Here, I should emphasise, I use development not to refer to a notion of linear progress whereby societies and standards of living are necessarily improving, but to change.

be said about particular programmes (e.g. microfinance, safety nets, employment). This is fertile territory.

However, despite some explorations of possible strategies that could be employed in 'rich' and 'poor' countries alike, such as microfinance, few attempts were made to problematise the notions of North and South and, with two or three exceptions, there was little engagement with the actual possibility of learning, how that learning could be conceived, or how that learning might take place. The conference was generally a collection of papers that explored poverty separately in the 'poorer' and in the 'richer' countries, with few connections or productive intersections being made.

One instructive and provocative attempt to explore the possibilities of learning between North and South is a special issue of an Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Bulletin of January 1998 entitled *Poverty and Social Exclusion in North and South*[49], edited by Maxwell with de Haan. de Haan and Maxwell contend that it would be "foolish to deny the possibility of learning across geographical boundaries" (1998: 5), and make a series of interventions in different themes of development. The theme issue highlights a number of specific issues where connections can be made, including the nature of 'active labour market policies' designed to help people find work (Robinson, 1998), the nature of participation in development programmes (Gaventa, 1998), alternative routes to the reform of social welfare (Evans, 1998), and the value of food security analysis (Dowler, 1998). de Haan and Maxwell make some further suggestions: "What, for example, can we learn in the North from the successes with employment guarantee schemes in India or Botswana? Or what can we learn from the East Asian experience with its 'social question': the way it prepared the whole population, including the poor, for an internationally competitive market?" (1998: 7). They go further to present some ideas for joint research projects on specific themes: "[S]mall-scale credit, participation and participatory methods, social policy, food policy, and public works; and, indeed, in the meaning and measurement of poverty and social exclusion" (de Haan and

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[49] As the title suggests, the articles in the issue do not problematise the terms North and South.

Maxwell, 1998: 8). With respect to the latter, they argue that the attention debates on social exclusion in the North bring to role of institutions in reducing poverty, could contribute to debates on development in the South. Such an engagement could be particularly useful at a time when donors such as the World Bank are increasingly focussing on the role of institutions (Allen and Thomas, 2000: 206).

Direct or indirect learning?

The partial undoing of categories of North and South, then, points to the possibilities of learning from different development experiences across traditional divides. The rare attempts to explore such possibilities have lacked sufficient attention to how we should conceive learning. One partial attempt is de Haan and Maxwell's (1998) special IDS issue. Perhaps the most notable aspect of the special issue is the assertion of the possibility of indirect learning, rather than simply reducing discussion of learning to the question of whether knowledge can be applied in a linear, untransformed fashion. This is a distinction between a rationalist and a post-rationalist conception. For instance, in the editorial, they argue that even if knowledge cannot travel directly, comparisons between North and South can still be "fruitful" (de Haan and Maxwell, 1998: 7). Most notably, Maxwell (1998: 24) argues that "the point here is not to pretend that analysis and policy from one country can be read off directly from another, even within broad groupings of North and South. It is simply to demonstrate that opportunities are missed to compare and contrast".

However, elsewhere in the issue de Haan and Maxwell insert a caveat: "Despite growing heterogeneity among developing countries and some signs of convergence between the North and parts of the South...the particularities of place and history remain important, so that lessons can rarely be transferred directly" (1998: 7). While this is an important point, another way of seeing this is to emphasise that *because* the particularities of place and history are important, lessons can travel but *rarely directly*. This requires the understanding that knowledge and ideas must change in new circumstances, and that learning can occur in creative, indirect ways. For instance, specific development strategies in 'poor' countries, like public works, food policy or participation – all of which are

88

highlighted by Maxwell (1998: 28) as issues that 'rich' countries should engage with –may appear to offer little opportunity for learning for 'rich' countries if the approach is to ask whether the strategies can be transferred directly. They may appear to offer more, however, if the approach is to engage in debate around these strategies with no rigid predetermined notion of how they may be useful. More general debates about the nature of development, such as those concerned with the meaning and measurement of terms like 'poverty' and 'social exclusion', or about the possibilities of employing a livelihoods approach to development in 'rich' countries, also offer a basis through which indirect learning may occur.

The theme issue would have benefited from carrying these issues further forward – often there appears to be a focus on direct learning and an insufficient appreciation of the potential value of indirect learning. This points to a more general problem with the rare attempts at exploring learning between North and South in development studies: there has been no attempt to explore how information, knowledge, learning, ideas, and discourses should be conceived, and how their travelling could be conceived. Away from development studies *per se*, there have been limited attempts to explore the possibilities of North-South engagements in civil society. The next section highlights explorations between SDI and groups in the UK introduced in Chapter 1.

3.5.4   SDI – UK explorations

The links between SDI and UK groups are examples of rare dialogue between civil society groups working in the South and the North. Since 1990, a range of groups concerned with urban poverty and based in the UK have formed relationships of varying natures, strength, and duration with groups in SDI, and with the Indian Alliance in particular. These groups include Homeless International and Groundswell, the former as a donor and advocacy partner, and the latter as part of a learning process.

Homeless International and SDI members have had funding and personal connections since the early 1990s, for example between SPARC director Sheela

Patel and Homeless International Chief Executive, Ruth McLeod. Visits from SDI leaders from in particular India and South Africa led to Homeless International hosting a series of meetings involving international guests. Often, these meetings took (and continue to take) place during Homeless International's Annual General Meeting. In the mid-1990s, Jerry Ham, then co-ordinator of the newly formed Groundswell, became involved with some of these meetings after encountering McLeod. A UK visit by Patel in 1996 was an inspiration to Ham, claims McLeod: "Jerry got very excited about it. So we then brought visitors from India, Zimbabwe, South Africa etc. to a number of Groundswell events"[50].

Members of UK groups (with Homeless International, the National Homeless Alliance, Groundswell, and others) visited the Alliance in Mumbai in January 2001 and following this visit Groundswell initiated a programme of horizontal exchanges in the UK. The purpose of the UK-India exchange was not to explore international links *per se,* but to learn how to create, extend and strengthen UK networks in order to more effectively tackle poverty locally and nationally, by drawing on the knowledge of the Alliance. The visit followed a trip by members of SPARC and NSDF to the UK in January 2000, spending time particularly with Homeless International, the National Homeless Alliance, and Groundswell, and visiting projects all over the UK.

According to Groundswell co-ordinator Toby Blume, Groundswell "came across the idea of exchanges when we came into contact with groups of homeless people from India and South Africa" in London in January, 2000 (Groundswell, 2001a). For Blume, participating in and documenting exchanges, along with Speakouts - where various groups come together annually from around the UK to engage policy makers - and communications through email, telephone calls, or the Groundswell newsletter, results in a "recording of the learning process" and the expansion and refinement of the "tool box" (Blume, 2001[51]). Groundswell began a round of exchanges following the visit to India. These

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[50] Interview with Ruth McLeod, July 2001.

[51] Interview with Toby Blume, July 2001.

included visits to Bristol, Glasgow, Birmingham, Nottingham and London, all in 2001 (see Chapter 6). An additional feature Blume believes he personally has learned from SPARC relates to the relationship between the NGO and the grassroots. He pointed to the ways an NGO can support local groups by helping with funding applications, by adding credibility, by organising, or by initiating campaigning events, adding that he had learned "about the validity of how we go about galvanising action in the UK [from the trip to India]". The engagements between the Alliance and Groundswell, as links between civil society groups in 'rich' and 'poor' countries, highlight a rare phenomenon in civil society. Generally, these engagements take the form of NGO's from 'rich' countries in the role of donor, setting the agendas of NGOs in 'poorer' countries (Mawdsley, *et al*, 2002). Both the Homeless International – SDI and Groundswell – SDI encounters subvert this tendency. I will discuss some of the challenges around these exchanges in Chapter 6. Here, it is important to note that there are creative possibilities for engagement between civil society organisations in the North and South, and that these engagements themselves allow us to interrogate the utility of notions of North and South by highlighting possibilities that these categories often militate against. In this sense, we can read these examples as ways of subverting and beginning to move beyond the geopolitical imaginaries of mainstream development.

3.6   Means of mainstream development

The mainstream-alternative divide becomes further problematised when we consider the means of development. How are the goals of development met? Discourses that are often portrayed as 'alternative' circulate mainstream development institutions, including those of participation, working with the poor and vulnerable groups, empowerment, and local action. If alternative development is associated with civil society, then there appears to be a "peaceful coexistence and continuity" between mainstream and alternative accounts (Pieterse, 1998: 346). For instance, the number of funds channelled and rechannelled though NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s was enormous, and now exceeds the total annual disbursements through the IMF and World Bank (Pieterse, 1998: 346). The concern is not so much 'which means?' but 'how to

employ these means?' An important question, then, which is absent from Pieterse's account, is 'how do these different organisations *do* discourses such as participation in practice?' Here, the mainstream – alternative distinction may become clearer.

Pieterse (2001: 166) has argued that development is a "large-scale spin-doctoring operation," and highlights Woost (1997: 229): "We are still riding in a top-down vehicle of development whose wheels are greased with a vocabulary of bottom-up discourse." Joshi and Moore (2000: 26) argue that mainstream discourses are little more than "fashionable jargon" used to gloss over political and institutional issues. Perspectives from groups referring to themselves as alternative often criticize development as 'top-down'. Further, Joshi and Moore (2000) argue that the proliferation of NGOs since the 1980s has co-opted alternative voices through the funding of and the 'pulling-in' of radical groups to 'accommodative' discourses with conservative agendas.

However, this reading is too pessimistic. As Pieterse (1998: 359) suggests, co-optation does not necessarily rob alternatives of their radical clothes. Instead of viewing alternatives as being made conservative and the mainstream remaining unchanged – a flawed logic that assumes alternatives are only alternatives so long as they are marginalized - we must recognize that the entire field of development is changing. Governments, civil society, and international agencies engage with one another and often work together. The Indian Alliance, for instance, employs a radical notion of partnership and participation as self-management (Section 2.8.4), and is funded by the World Bank in its sanitation construction in Mumbai. There have been disagreements over the nature of participation between the World Bank and SPARC, but their collaboration itself undoes any straightforward mainstream – alternative dichotomy. The shared discourses between mainstream and alternative development around, for example, participation, disturbs the distinction between the two. Nevertheless, the contestation over notions like participation cautions against a reading that argues the division has completely dissolved.

3.7   Alternative development and development alternatives

Alternative development perspectives are far more varied than those of mainstream development. There is little consistency in form, strategies, goals and means. Pieterse (1998: 345) conceives alternative development in three broad ways: as a *critique-based reactive phenomenon*, that changes as the perception of the mainstream changes; as a "loosely interconnected series of *alternative proposals and methodologies*"; and as a *redefinition of development* that stands for a "definite theoretical break with mainstream development" (Pieterse, 1998: 345; emphasis added). These three conceptions represent a vast plethora of critiques and proposals that have centred in particular upon environmental pollution and degradation, public accountability, decentralisation, participation, marginalisation, feminism, eco-feminism, the importance of culture, the importance of the local, anti-capitalism, and the neo-imperialism of financial agencies. Perhaps the most common thread uniting alternative development perspectives is the call for development-from-below, where 'below' is various interpretations of civil society. These three conceptions are separate from but often intersect with anti-development, which is sometimes referred to as 'post-development' or 'beyond development' (for example, Escobar, 1995; Sachs, 1992)[52].

Given that many previously alternative development perspectives are now mainstream, it is useful to draw a distinction to Pieterse's three conceptions. This distinction is between alternative development and development alternatives, where development alternative refers to Pieterse's first two conceptions and alternative development to the latter. Development alternatives are those which seek to change and refine mainstream development and offer

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[52] 'Anti-development' is not a rejection of change or possibility, but a rejection of development as a way of seeing and therefore imagining the world. For instance, Sidaway (2002: 18) asks: "What happens, for example, to the perception of Africa when it is seen as *rich* in cultures and lives whose diversity, wealth and worth are not adequately captured by being imagined as more or less *developed*?" However, while the critique is cogent, the analysis of development as discourse offers no alternatives to development and is irrelevant to some debates, such as those over water distribution in parts of Africa or forest management and slum redevelopment in India.

different perspectives, while alternative development seeks to redefine development altogether. In the former, there is agreement over the importance of civil society but debate over why it is important (for example, cost-effectiveness versus democratisation), how the role of civil society is to be practised, and who plans and participates in that process. In the latter, Marxists may reject the entire notion of civil society as important in development by arguing that civil society is an appendage to capitalist social relations, as part of a broader argument for a different political economy of development. Alternative development need not be anti-capitalist; it may for example simply reject the notion of civil society as important altogether, perhaps arguing instead for a 'developmental state' model[53]. Alternative development and development alternatives are not mutually exclusive and often cross-over.

3.7.1   Development alternatives and SDI

Where does SDI fit in relation to mainstream development? SDI represents a development alterative. Development alternatives represent the politicisation of mainstream development. SDI shares discourses of partnership and participation with development organisations like the UNDP, but they interpret these discourses in a radical way (see below). This is not an alternative way of doing development, but an alternative way of doing an agreed means for development – partnership and participation – which in the process politicises these discourses. For example, Sheela Patel criticizes claims to partnership and participation as being generally limited to writing the poor into phases of development projects: "Poverty reduction requires more than an official recognition of the poor's needs; it has to include a renegotiation of the

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[53] The notion of the developmental state refers to successful state-led development, and specifically to the experiences of south-east Asian states Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. A number of commentators (for example, White, 1998) have suggested a number of features to explain the success of these states in directing development: a leadership ruthlessly committed to national economic development (and not to partial interests or its own development); a developmental elite commanding a strong bureaucracy; a bureaucracy relatively insulated from powerful interest groups; the availability of possibilities for strategic intervention to govern the market; and perhaps even a weak civil society.

relationship between city and residents, between state and civil society, between poor and other stakeholders" (Patel 1997: 7) The notion of development alternatives marks out a separate space for SDI from mainstream development, but not to the point where it can be neatly dissociated from the mainstream[54].

Given that Pieterse believes that alternative is often a misnomer, he goes on from his three broad conceptions outlined above to argue that the name should be replaced by 'popular development' (1998: 370), which refers to calls for 'bottom-up' development and a focus on civil society, although not to the extent that the state, for instance, is excluded. The Indian Alliance is a case in point here. The Alliance works in collaboration with international agencies, the local, regional and national state, and businesses. It does so with a grassroots focus, which is to say that the poor themselves, through regular meetings, drive collective learning and decision-making in, for example, what issues the Alliance should be campaigning for, how partnerships with the state should operate, how houses should be designed, and where housing should be located (within given locational constraints). However, contrary to Pieterse's suggestion that we conceive popular development as alternative development, for me popular development is one of a range of development alternatives espoused by the Indian Alliance[55].

According to its leaders, SDI does not view itself as an alternative development (Patel, Burra and D'Cruz, 2001). Patel, Burra and D'Cruz (2001: 59) see SDI as influencing mainstream development by demonstrating the importance of "expanding the reach of discussions on urban poverty so that people's organizations can take part in them". The hope, they argue, is to "influence the reigning paradigms of development" (ibid). In the process, SDI is engaged in a learning process around innovative development strategies, from enumeration to exhibitions and exchanges, which travel between places in a process that is

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[54] Indeed, a development alternative may be proposed by the mainstream, such as the World Bank or the UNDP, and this may refine development policies and projects.

[55] While the rhetoric of other SDI members espouses a similar popular development, the limits of my research do not allow me to say to what extent they reflect such a structure in practice.

sometimes referred to as 'precedent setting' (Patel, Burra and D'Cruz, 2001: 51)[56]. SDI advocates a range of development alternatives. A key feature of this is the very idea of a transnational learning process that links poor people living in poor urban environments around the world: it is an idea that subverts the notion of development consultants travelling the world delivering solutions and that marks a new horizon of transnational connection (Appadurai, 2000b)[57]. Having situated SDI in relation to mainstream development, I will now go on to explore in more detail how SDI itself approaches and conceives mainstream development.

3.8 The Indian Alliance and SDI

This section will provide more detail on SDI, and will describe their approach to and view of development. I will start with the members of the Alliance because they are the organisations that my research concentrated on in particular.

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[56] Precedent-setting represents the primary means through which the Alliance seeks to influence municipal corporations. Rather than attempting to influence authorities solely through writing reports that contain the views of the poor, or verbally communicating their needs, the Alliance seeks to demonstrate the potentials of the poor through practical examples such as exhibitions or enumerations.

[57] Elsewhere, Appadurai (2002: 22, 25) positions SDI as presenting a post-Marxist and post-developmentalist vision. He describes the Marxist vision as one which, in all its global variants, "promised some sort of struggle of class-based internationalism premised on class struggle and the transformation of bourgeois politics by proletarian will. This is an internationalist vision that nevertheless requires the architecture of the nation-state as the site of effective struggle against capital and its agents" (2002: 22). The developmentalist vision, "salient after 1945, was that of modernization and development, with its associated machinery of Western lending, technical expertise, and universalist discourses of education and technology transfer" (*ibid*). Both these "great paradigms for enlightenment and equity", for Appadurai (*ibid*), "seem to have become exhausted" with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the collapse of faith in development. SDI represents one of a variety of visions that conceives both the poor and social change in different terms from the Marxist vision. It does not present an alternative to the developmentalist vision, but presents development alternatives. This discussion will be explored further in Chapter 7.

3.8.1   SPARC

The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) was formed
in 1984 by twelve people "who didn't really fit into any organisation" and who
were discontent with the approach of many other NGOs, which they viewed as
attempting to 'apply-out' a service (for example, through a health or education
project) rather than ascertain the needs of the poor themselves (Patel, 2001[58]).
The group "had previously worked with more traditional and welfare-oriented
NGOs in the neighbourhood of Byculla in central Mumbai" (Patel, 2001: 6).
Rather than providing services, SPARC started working with Muslim women by
encouraging them to form their own organisations based on their own needs and
desires.   Although not explicitly a women's organisation, SPARC realised –
according to Director Sheela Patel - "the central role of women in the family as
well as the enormous potential that women's groups had in transforming
relations within society and in improving the lives of poor families" (Patel, 2001:
7). Patel (1999: 160) has written:

> Through its work with pavement dwellers and Mahila Milan, it
> became clear to SPARC that women were critical in the creation of
> housing for the family, the management of community services and
> the protection of homes from demolition. Ironically, however, when
> NGOs or government officials visited low-income settlements, they
> sought out male leaders. Moreover, the socialization of women in
> low-income communities was such that on the occasions of such
> visits, the communities 'presented' a male leader to speak on their
> behalf.

Work began with women living in makeshift huts on pavements[59]: "Training
programmes were then established so that the women could learn how to
survey [conduct a census of] their own settlements and start to use the data
generated to campaign for land" (Patel, 2001: 6). SPARC's work as part of the

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[58] Patel, 2001: Interview conducted in November 2001.

[59] Pavement dwellers – people living in shacks built upon pavements - account for an
estimated 5%-10% of homeless people in Mumbai, compared to slum dwelling
population of around 45%-50% (Appadurai, 2002: 26). There is an estimated 30,000
families living on pavements in Mumbai (Bapat and Agarwal, 2003: 72). Slums are larger
settlements of people.

Alliance lies predominantly in fund-raising, writing proposals, documenting Alliance (and SDI) activities, and liaising with donors and the state.

3.8.2 NSDF

The National Slum Dwellers Federations (NSDF) was born as an agitational organisation in 1975 because of a plan to demolish the slum that Jockin – NSDF's President - was living in. Its first guise was as the Mumbai Slum Dwellers Federation and its main activity was to demand resettlement through protests of slum dwellers. NSDF grew into a loose federation that extended throughout India and spent most of its time organising protests and lobbying officials. They had a network of around eight to ten cities before they formed the partnership with SPARC in the late 1980s. Exchanges around enumerations, savings, exhibitions, and so on, "reactivated this federation" (Patel, 2001[60]), so much so that Patel claimed: "The network is a learning process" (ibid.).

NSDF had been exclusively male, as Jockin said of the years up to 1984: "I was predominantly a male leader...women were crowd-pullers [at demonstrations etc.]...but they were not in the leadership" (Jockin, 2001[61]). Fifteen years on "almost half of the NSDF executive is female" (Patel, 2001[62]). MM is now viewed as fundamental to the work of the Alliance: "All is born from their living, their experience" (Jockin, 2001 op. cit). In this shift, NSDF has moved from an oppositional approach to the authorities to a negotiating role following the overwhelming desire of the slum dwellers that make it up. NSDF's work as part of the Alliance lies predominantly in lobbying local, regional and national states, organizing exchanges, and coordinating national and international events and activities.

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[60] Interview with Sheela Patel, January 2002.

[61] Statement made at group meeting, November 2001.

[62] Statement made at group meeting, November 2001.

3.8.3   Mahila Milan

Mahila Milan (MM) ('Women Together') is predominantly but not exclusively a woman's organisation. They had 600 members in Byculla, Mumbai, when SPARC encountered them in 1984. They are generally formally uneducated, although many are now members of Municipal Committees and have travelled to different countries to take part in exchanges with other groups. MM Byculla was the first group to be given land for housing construction by the government. They are made up of fifteen 'leaders' (one of which is male) most of which have gone to around five different countries in the past twelve years or so. However, they "never introduce themselves as international leaders...their identity is very local...they view their role as peer support and will talk about their own area" (Patel, 2001[63]). 600 women are members of MM in Byculla alone (Patel, 2001: 7).

MM works with NSDF on "broader policy issues at state and city levels" and "together with NSDF, MM now has a total of over three hundred thousand households as members across the country" (Patel, 2001: 7). Many of these women have a "dual membership" with NSDF and sit on a national committee (around 60% female) to organise exchanges of poor people (Patel, 2001: 7). MM's work as part of the Alliance lies predominantly in organizing and running daily savings schemes, providing a forum for mobilizing and discussion women's support, rights, and short- and long-term plans, negotiating with local state, building and police officials, and participating in exchanges.

3.8.4   Self-management: a development approach

David Satterthwaite, of the Institute for International Environment and Development (IIED), has argued that the Alliance's work is marked by a commitment to partnership and participation that amounts to a commitment to 'self-management':

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[63] Statement made at group meeting, November 2001.

> It's about poor groups organisation and negotiation. Look at what SPARC/NSDF have done in the [railway] resettlement programme...you weren't allowed to evict these people until you had let them organise, make decisions about where they are going to be resettled...John Turner years ago made this critical distinction...it's not so much self-help, it's self-management...The key is that you control that process...all the experience within the federation is about self-management of construction, not about self-construction (Satterthwaite, 2002[64]).

The self-management approach is a discourse shared by many Alliance and SDI members. This discourse frames development by territorializing what can be meaningfully said about development and what cannot, and therefore what issues become political and what do not. For example, compare 'the problem with urban poverty is that the knowledge and capacities of the poor are marginalised' (self-management) with 'the problem of urban poverty is that the state has not taken control and provided for the poor'.

3.8.5   Slum/Shack Dwellers International

SDI was formalised in 1997 through the connections between the Alliance, the South African Homeless People's Federation (SAHPF), and the Asian Coalition of Housing Rights (ACHR) – a group of professionals involved in campaigns for urban development who accrued funding for early exchanges. Exchanges between these groups had been ongoing since the late 1980s, and "when the groups from Asia and Latin America joined the SAHPF's anniversary last year (1997), the participants decided to set up '[Slum]/Shack Dwellers International'" (SDI, 2003: no pagination). Initial funding for exchanges was provided by an NGO called Miserior sympathetic to the work of the Alliance. The SDI network is sustained through regular exchanges and through the commitment of members to the range of strategies that form part of an ongoing learning process.

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[64] Interview conducted in March 2002.

3.8.6   Funding and donor relationships

> We never thought we would have the courage to organise ourselves
> like this. We hope you will have the courage to support us[65].

Most of the resources for exchanges (and, indeed, for the majority of SDI activities) have been obtained from a few Northern NGOs, notably Selavip, Misereor, Cord Aid and Homeless International, and they have been documented through support from Pilot Light and the Ford Foundation. Mitlin (2001: 3) describes these donors as:

> [A] group of committed professionals seeking to provide the urban
> poor with the funds necessary for learning, experimentation and
> relationship-building, with the understanding that solutions have to
> be driven from below rather than by professionals who believe
> (despite the evidence of history) that they have the answer.

Mitlin (2001: 4) outlines the respective contributions of each of the major SDI donors:

> Homeless International, for its long-standing support of the Indian
> Alliance, its exploration of some of the first international exchanges
> and its willingness to extend grants to many other members of SDI;
> Misereor and CordAid for their individual and collective generosity in
> providing both start-up and continuing funds in South Africa, and for
> funding many other emerging SDI community networks throughout
> southern Africa and Asia; SELAVIP for its continuing willingness to
> back initiatives that are a priority to groups of the urban poor; and
> the Ford Foundation for its sustained support of SDI's global
> activities[66].

The commitment of these donors to the role of the poor in development has meant that SDI has been generally able to design their activities, rather than being forced to meet the prescriptions of donor agendas. This is a rare phenomenon. Development funding is often driven by the agendas of donors

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[65] Mahila Milan member, speaking at a meeting of the Alliance and the Ford Foundation in Byculla, Mumbai, November, 2001.

[66] These relationships are often close and personal, such as that between Ruth McLeod, Chief Executive at Homeless International, and Sheela Patel, or between Jorge Anzorena of SELAVIP and NSDF President Jockin, who first met over 20 years ago.

(Mawdsley, *et al*, 2002). For example, Patel (2002[67]) has commented on Homeless International's involvement with SDI:

> HI [Homeless International] has taken a very unusual and very unique decision to use the SDI network to recommend new projects to them versus having everybody just apply to them for grants. So they have made a commitment to invest in the [SDI] federation model...Another important thing is that much of the priorities of the federation, whether it is do with financing, exchanges, infrastructure projects – they are all priorities that the SDI network has put forward to them [HI].

Homeless International also works with the Indian Alliance to lobby the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) for funding and policy changes. One example is the recently established Community Led Infrastructure Financing Facility (CLIFF), designed by Homeless International and DFID. The overall goal of the project, funded under the auspices of the Cities Alliance programme (a World Bank / UN Habitat programme), is to increase the access of organisations of the urban poor to "commercial and public sector finance for medium to large scale infrastructure and housing initiatives" (McLeod, 2002: 11)[68].

Patel (2002[69]) contrasted what she perceives to be the general mode of operation of mainstream development assistance with how the Alliance in India seeks to fund development in the federation:

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[67] Interview conducted January 2002.

[68] SDI's economic geography is changing with its deepening transnational connections. Baumann (2001: 140) has argued that: "The national financial liberalization associated with globalization is creating new possibilities for SDI affiliates". For example, it is now less difficult to set-up national and international flows of capital and revolving funds, and SDI are in the process of attempting to develop a revolving fund. Resource sharing, and cross-border and joint fundraising between countries, is more plausible and common, as is direct borrowing from international institutions like Homeless International. However, the fact that economies such as India's and South Africa are increasingly liberalising and smaller economies like Zimbabwe or Kenya remain "isolated and protectionist" will have an impact on the changing financial relations of the SDI network (Baumann 2001: 141), what Appadurai (1990) may refer to as its shifting 'finanscape'.

[69] Interview conducted January 2002.

The federation process tries to pick-up more and more peoples experiences so that they can draw inspiration, they can draw courage, they can show it as an example and motivate themselves and their cities to explore those options...And our challenge is that we need to have patience to allow that fruition to occur. But the other way that development operates is you can go there and you can put your flag there. That's the way development assistance works: we choose the plan, we decide what has to happen there, we decide how it has to happen.

Patel is arguing that the Alliance is committed to a process of funding that allows local groups the time to develop their priorities and to form negotiating platforms with local government, as opposed to a more 'top-down' model of development funding.

3.8.7 Conceiving SDI

SDI could be described as a social movement using Mario Diani's broad definition - "networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities" (1992: 1). It is also a close fit to what Keck and Sikkink (1998) have referred to as 'transnational advocacy networks' in reference to, for example, campaigns for human rights, land mine retrieval, or environmental protection. These tend to be single-issue and focussed on the global, whereas SDI is multi-issue (covering, for example, governance, infrastructure, and land ownership) and focussed on local struggles. More instructive than either of these is to envisage SDI as operating in, and producing, a space between social movement and NGO forms of global civil society, and having many characteristics of both. In common with a social movement, SDI is marked by solidarity amongst its members, has a loose horizontal structure, uses the media to aid its message and pressure authorities, and is concerned with changing state/society relations (Kaldor, 2003: 80-81). In common with transnational NGO connections, SDI is concerned with development, contains member organizations that are bureaucratic, is directed at service provision and advocacy, is funded by states and international institutions, and is concerned with influencing and working as part of local, national and international governance relations (Kaldor, 2003: 80-81). However, the key feature that sets SDI apart from an NGO form of global civil society is its

grassroots membership and focus. SDI's grassroots membership and focus, however, is not characteristic of what Kaldor refers to as an NGO form of global civil society. The SDI secretariat, based in Bangkok, writes:

> The SDI network is not a supra-national NGO or development agency. It is a voluntary association of like-minded people's organisations committed to a shared process of grassroots organisation, problem solving, and solution sharing. An SDI Secretariat helps to co-ordinate these activities, but the primary focus of the network's activities is emphatically local (SDI, 2002).

The network is a series of a local struggles engaged in a process of transnational learning and support. Patel, Bolnick, and Mitlin (2000: 402) suggest SDI's work "is not a global process that focuses on international policies and practices but it is global in outreach and strengthens groups' capacity to deal with what is oppressive and exploitative within their local environment." In SDI, struggle remains the locality (for example, the local municipal corporation), and this is informed in part by "the knowledge and tacit innovation of multiple other localities around the world engaged in similar localized struggles with similar local actors" (Sassen, 2003: 11). SDI should be imagined not as a global organization, but as a series of paths which are more or less connected, and as a result more or less co-constituting.

3.9   Approach to mainstream development

The Indian Alliance, and SDI more generally, view mainstream development as a process that marginalizes the targets of development assistance – the poor. The argument from SDI is that development is generally dominated by professionals and states. This includes what SDI views as 'traditional NGOs', NGOs that seek to deliver welfare with limited or no understanding of the needs and desires of the poor. Mainstream development is viewed in SDI as being constituted by the agendas of the Bretton Woods institutions and other mutli- and bilateral development agencies, and by a broad array of "technocrats, bureaucrats and professionals", including the state (Patel, Burra and D'Cruz, 2001: 48). SDI's approach to mainstream development is to attempt to form collaborations with agencies. In these collaborations, SDI seeks to place the

poor at the centre of development as much as is possible. This can lead to contentious relations. For example, in a sanitation project in Pune, the Alliance rejected attempts by the World Bank to create a project strategy that was not conceived by the local people. The Alliance made the decision to reject Bank funding on the grounds that the project was "over-prescribed" because its nature was pre-determined by Bank officials (Patel, 2001[70])[71].

SDI often groups multilaterals with the state (SDI, 2003: no pagination), and has described them as "Big brothers to the Nation States, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the UN". SDI positions itself in relation to the state, international institutions and alternative development (SDI, 2003b: no pagination):

> Since they [SDI members] question the capacity of these agencies [the state, mutli-laterals] to deliver, they constantly seek situations that enable those who are affected by poverty to become organised and united in ever-expanding networks, and to play a defining role in the way in which Governments and multi-laterals discharge their obligations to the poor. This is in sharp contradistinction to the rights-based social movements or the micro-finance organisations, or even archaic social movements of the past, such as earlier rural and urban movements of the poor, including trade unions and left-wing political parties.

The general approach to international development agencies is mediated by specific SDI member experiences. This is because different SDI members have different levels of contact with these institutions. For example, the World Bank and DFID have had more funding contact with SPARC than with any other SDI member (Mitlin, 2002[72]). Specific experiences of each SDI member with international institutions influence their view of these institutions. For instance,

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[70] Comment to group at Homeless International meeting in London, September 2002.

[71] In this particular instance, around a year or so later, the Bank requested that the Alliance complete the project (which was making slow progress) with greater local autonomy and participation than was originally envisaged by the Bank.

[72] Diane Mitlin, IIED: Interview conducted in June 2002.

SPARC's Celine D'Cruz (2001[73]) stated: "They [organisation like the World Bank] seem very conservative on paper, but some individuals aren't"[74].

The 'broad array' of bureaucrats and experts are viewed as outsiders who enter urban areas with the belief that they are able to offer solutions. Patel, Burra and D'Cruz (2001: 48-49) write:

> One immediate consequence of this is the mystification of knowledge resting upon the claim that only 'experts' can provide solutions because development problems are technical.

The knowledge of the poor themselves is marginalized in the process, the SDI argument goes, and as a result the development solution that is designed for the poor tends to fail. Patel *et al* (2001: 51-52) go on:

> SDI believes that the monopoly over information and knowledge exercised by officials, technocrats and professionals needs to be broken and poor people themselves need to gain control over knowledge [for example, through enumerations; or construction during exhibitions] in order to deal more effectively with their situation.

The state is often perceived in SDI as unwilling to cede decision-making and resources to the poor, either because of a mistrust of the poor or a corruption that seeks to maintain state control and ownership of resources. SDI generally criticize states for operating in three modes. First, an *authoritarian* mode, through which the strategy for addressing challenges around slum, shack and pavement dwellers is to demolish and evict (for example, Mohapatra, 2003). Second, an *exploitative* mode through which the state make promises to the poor in order to win votes. Third, a *provision* mode through which the state

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[73] Interview conducted in October 2001.

[74] In addition, within SDI members it is important to be clear that not all individuals share the same views. As Appadurai (2001: 30) has commented: "Not all of the members of the Alliance view the state, the market or the donor world in the same way. Thus, every new occasion for funding, every new demand for a report, every new celebration of a possible partnership, every meeting with a railway official or an urban bureaucrat can create new source of debate and anxiety within the Alliance. In the words of one key Alliance leader, negotiating these differences, which are rooted in deep diversities in class, experience and personal style, is like 'riding a tiger'".

seeks to 'give' development to the poor rather than assist the poor in managing and realizing their own development. SDI's response to this is to insist that the state shift its role to one of collaboration with the poor in meeting development goals. Three SDI leaders – Patel, Burra and D'Cruz (2001: 46-47) – argue that SDI falls into a 'category' of development that questions "the validity of the state as a delivery agent and seek(s) new possibilities in which the groups affected [by development] have a major say in this activity as well". The role of the state in development is often conceived in SDI in its relation to civil society.

3.9.1 The state and SDI: approaching the state-civil society relationship for development

There is a general view in SDI that the state should be collaborating with civil society and allowing the grassroots to design and manage development. The desired role for the state is for it to be fulfilling that which civil society cannot do alone, such as institutionalizing housing policy, regulating construction and other relevant agencies, and protecting the rights of the poor – for example, from housing demolition[75]. However, for every SDI national member the specific conception and form of the state-civil society relationship is influenced by the histories of this relationship through time in a given country. In this section I will briefly examine three instances: India, post-Apartheid South Africa and post-Pol Pot Cambodia.

India: working towards collaboration

The state in India is a varied actor, taking on different forms across India and in different sectors, and it is itself a site of contestation that is always being made and remade. The Indian state is complicated by a federal structure (Corbridge and Harriss, 2000; Mawdsley, 2002). Regional states have a great deal of power and differ substantially, for example by "variations in the nature and extent of political participation of lower castes/classes, as well as by differences

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[75] In India, however, the state has often been a perpetrator of demolitions (Mohapatra, 2003; Patel, Burra and D'Cruz, 2001).

in their party systems" (Corbridge and Harriss, 2000: 222). However, it is possible to detect broad changes in the nature of governance, as Veron (1999) has done in his examination of changing policy discourses in India through, in particular, the Five-Year Plans that have been produced by the state since Independence in 1947.

Veron (1999) argues that the Indian state has moved from the broad role of 'provider' to one of 'supplementary provider' or 'facilitator' in the 1990s: "It [the state] enables, or 'empowers', self-help groups and voluntary organisations to strengthen people's opportunities for development" (1999: 5). This thinking was reflected in the government's Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-1997), which called for an increased participation of NGOs in improving the service delivery of social services and in increasing people's participation in the governance of a variety of sectors (Government of India, 1992). Veron continues:

> The state defines its role increasingly as a supplementary provider of services that are not offered by the private sector, voluntary organisations and the community. In line with current World Bank thinking, India's government is concentrating its efforts, besides promoting economic growth, on the provision of basic education and primary health care because in these areas, private initiatives and the market are unlikely to play a significant role...Development responsibility is shared with, and delegated to, other institutions such as community groups and the private sector. This also signifies the state's changing relationship to these institutions (Veron, 1999: 10, 12).

Sanyal and Mukhiya (2001: 2043) have explored the shift in "housing policies in developing countries" that took place during the 1980s and 1990s by examining the changing form of governance in India. They describe the development of the relationship between the state and civil society in India – amongst other sectors, such as the private sector - in terms of 'institutional pluralism'. This is a governance arrangement "whereby multiple institutions ranging from private firms to community groups, faith-based organizations to political parties, governmental institutions to NGOs, could operate freely pursuing varying strategies to reach the urban poor" (Sanyal and Mukhija, 2001: 2043).

Despite the development of these governance arrangements in many sectors in India[76], S. Sen (1999) argues that in practice state-civil society relationships are "generally characterized by the hostility of politicians, party workers, local elites, lower level bureaucrats, and lower level employees of the state toward NGO activity". S. Sen (1999: 350) goes on to argue, for example, that local level state workers often "consider NGOs which implement development projects as a threat to their power, and therefore try to impede the functioning of such NGOs", for example by withholding information or funds, or delaying planning approvals.

Despite this hostility, civil society groups in India must engage the state. The state is and has always been the most crucial site for the country's development, and, as Corbridge and Harriss (2000: 203) write, effective civil society strategies must to some extent and in some ways relate to the state:

> [I]t is misleading to suppose that citizens' movements, NGOs and community organizations – for all their evident vibrancy in India – provide an alternative to the state...We contend that citizens movements are most effective where they put pressure on the state to take the part of the poor, or to protect the poor from some of the abuses heaped upon them.

This view is characteristic of the Alliance's approach to the state[77]. However, while the Alliance views collaboration with the state as critical, the state's role in urban poverty is conceived as a historical failure. Jockin (2001[78]) argued that increasing collaboration with the state or bi- and multilaterals illustrates both the failure of the state and the readiness of, for instance, the World Bank to work 'outside' of it: "The government, [and] the World Bank, have been trying for

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[76] See, for example, Sundar (2000), Sundar and Jeffery (1999), and Gadgil and Guha (1995) on forest management.

[77] The regional state, of course, is not always forthcoming, and in such circumstances where the local state is hostile the Indian Alliance will "go to the centre" for support (comment made by SPARC official, November 2001). For example, in the recently announced national sanitation programme (modelled on the Alliance's work in Pune), the Alliance included Kanpur and Lucknow in the list of cities where the work is needed, because the state of Uttar Pradesh – where Kanpur and Lucknow are located - was unlikely to support the idea itself.

[78] Comment at meeting with Ford Foundation, November 2001.

years and not one house has been built". He argued that it took the World Bank seven years to back the Alliance, having realized that "the government of India has no mechanism [for tackling slum poverty]" (*ibid*). The contemporary state-civil society relationship in India can be conceived as a confluence from 'above' and 'below': the state – in part through the pressure of donors – has moved towards models of institutional pluralism, and the Alliance has sought to work with the state as a collaborator.

The Alliance relationship with the state is generally based on a commitment to collaboration that aims to use its vast membership[79] to influence authorities and lobby for land, subsidies, or policy change. Collaborative relationships with individual state officials have developed over time. The relationship is aided by the presence of Sundar Burra, a former state bureaucrat, in the SPARC leadership, because of his connections with state officials. Indeed, in December 2001, Burra's influence among bureaucrats in the Pune Municipal Corporation aided the payment of state funds for sanitation construction to Mahila Milan in Pune. Jockin has similarly developed a range of useful political contacts across India. The Indian Alliance's relationship with the state is mediated by its involvement with SDI. For example, the Alliance has used exhibitions in India involving various SDI group members – often including accompanying local state officials from, for instance, Cambodia or the Philippines – to attempt to pressure local officials into making policy commitments. This strategy has had some success in both Mumbai and Bangalore.

South Africa: the 'cautious optimism' of post-Apartheid

The state-civil society relationship in South Africa has been conceived in relation to the pre- and post-Apartheid years. This relationship has been portrayed by

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[79] For instance, in 2001, there were over 25,000 Alliance members saving for housing in Mumbai alone (Patel and Mitlin, 2001: ii).

the South African Alliance[80] as "the crux of development practice" (People's Dialogue, 1994: no pagination). Writing in the early period of post-Apartheid South Africa, the emerging South African Alliance wrote:

> Who will be at the centre? The people or the state?...Beware if the town planners, the architects, the bureaucrats try to point the way...the formation of a SA Homeless People's Federation will go some way towards ensuring that the democratic right of poor people to manage their own development is enforced in practice throughout the land (People's Dialogue, 1994: no pagination).

The newly elected African National Congress (ANC), which most shack dwellers voted for, was viewed with cautious optimism. For instance, at a Housing Policy conference in 1994, the SA Alliance asked of one ANC representative: "Why do you need experts, who are not homeless, to draft your housing policy?" (People's Dialogue, 1994: no pagination[81]). Baumann and Bolnick, two members of People's Dialogue, reflect on the perception of the ANC:

> They [the ANC] envisioned a top-down 'delivery' process in which a triumphant liberation movement would solve all the problems of the dispossessed majority. To the ANC, the poor were *objects* of 'development'.

The SA Alliance's approach was informed by this perception of the state, in turn informed by pre-Apartheid political struggles. Baumann and Bolnick (2001: 109) continue:

> It [the SA Alliance] sought to build on traditions of autonomous, local-level mobilization and consciousness originating in poor communities during the apartheid era. This meant creating space for the poor to identify, understand and articulate their own priorities rather than passively await delivery from above. It meant recognizing that the poor are creative agents. To the Alliance, the poor were *subjects* of their own progress.

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[80] The South African Alliance consists of the South African Homeless People's Federation (SAHPF) – the equivalent of the Indian NSDF – and People's Dialogue – the NGO equivalent of SPARC. The name 'Alliance' is taken from the Indian Alliance.

[81] See Tomlinson (2002) for a discussion of 'international best practice' and the relationship between international development agencies, the state, and South African housing policy.

The state-civil society relationship was conceived in part in relation to the state. However, the framing of this relationship was also influenced by contact with, in particular, the Indian Alliance. People's Dialogue (no date[82]: no pagination) write, somewhat polemically, of what they learned from exchanges with the Indian Alliance: "We also realised that most of the important knowledge for our development was buried in our communities, like gold buried deep in the earth. If we wanted to get stronger we needed to get it out and use it". People's Dialogue (no date: no pagination) describe early exchanges with the Indian Alliance as 'shock therapy':

> The conditions of poverty and homelessness which greeted them [travelling South Africans] on the pavements of Bombay after more than 40 years of Independence shattered the consoling illusions that an ANC government would provide land and houses for all.

The exchanges "played a catalytic role" and identified savings and loans as a "universal need" for "mobilising and empowering the urban poor" (People's Dialogue, 1996: no pagination). Specific strategies such as enumeration and house modelling travelled and were important for South African Alliance members in reaching this conclusion[83]. The SA Alliance's view of development was influenced both by a perception of the role of the state and a perception of the work of the Indian Alliance.

Cambodia: post-Pol Pot and urban experimentation

The collapse of Pol Pot's regime in 1978 instigated a huge change in the Cambodian political environment, in part associated with a return to urban living. The Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) sketch the context from their perspective: "In the early 1990s, Cambodia was practically starting anew, after decades of war, upheaval and dislocation. There were large numbers of NGOs and aid agencies in the country, most of them operating in the welfare mode,

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[82] This document, entitled *Regaining Knowledge: An Appeal to Abandon Illusions*, was most probably written during the mid-1990s.

[83] See, for example, Section 5.7.2 on a house-modelling exhibition in South Africa.

delivering what they felt the poor needed" (2001: 61). The lack of traditions in urban governance meant "a lack of rules and established practices that mean the state is more welcoming of new ideas and faster changing than many of its more consolidated Asian neighbours" (ACHR, 2001: 61). Furthermore: "Severe budget shortfalls have made the government increasingly open to unconventional ways of getting things done" (*ibid*). The conception and nature of the state-civil society relationship for development with urban groups in Cambodia has developed in the context of a post-Pol Pot administration that is exploring anew the question of urban development, and has been influenced by SDI and in particular the Indian Alliance. ACHR write:

> 'Integrated exposure visits' [exchanges] to community initiatives in other [SDI member] countries have included municipal officials and NGOs from early on, offering people at community, government and NGO levels a chance to learn together. Over the past five years, at least 100 community leaders have gone on exposure trips, along with 20 professionals from NGO and 25 municipal and district officials from various levels. All seven of they city's district (khan) chiefs have now been on exposure trips and all are working with community and NGO representatives on development committees at khan level. This form of joint functioning is becoming increasingly acceptable in the city (ACHR, 2001: 69).

Exchange has helped influence local policy in Phnom Penh:

> After spending a few days with Mahila Milan and the National Slum Dwellers Federation in Bombay along with community leaders from settlements in his own district, the district of Chamkarmon chief, Mr Lor Rhy, and community leader Men Chamnan came back home and wasted no time in starting to collaborate, which eventually led to the Akphivat Mean Cheay relocation project (ACHR, 2001: 70).

The Indian, South African and Cambodian examples show that there is a general view of the role of the state and framing of the state-civil society relationship in SDI. There is a strong perception that groups should not be dependent on the state, so much so that in SDI discourses on the state-civil society relationship there is an almost rallying insistence that organisations of the urban poor should be managing their own development, and a fear that progress cannot be made if the role of the poor is one of expectation or even simply one of lobbying the state. The ways in which this framing operates in practice is influenced by the political histories of a country. The perception of

the state and the political history of a country, and the interactions with SDI, shape the nature of the approach to development that a given SDI member holds.

3.9.2   Implications of SDI's approach

SDI's perception of development has two broad implications. First, it energises SDI with the belief that development is in their own hands, and that it can therefore be realized through their collective effort in collaboration with (not subordination to) agencies like the state, international donors or professionals. Second, it commits SDI to a poor people's learning process built around exchanges and regular local interaction, to what ACHR has articulated as a 'poor people's pedagogy', with echoes of the work of Paulo Freire (1970). Patel, Burra and D'Cruz (2001: 49) argue that SDI is challenging "existing paradigms of development" that exclude the poor from the development process through a stress on "grassroots democracy".

3.10   Conclusion

This chapter has provided detail on the Indian Alliance and SDI and positioned them in relation to mainstream and alternative development. It has introduced the links between SDI and groups in the UK and positioned these links in the context of a historical 'rich' country – 'poor' country divide in development. The chapter has shown that SDI's approach to development is one that is committed to the self-management of poor people in the governance of development. I have argued that this approach represents a development alternative that politicises the discourses of mainstream development. While there is a general approach to mainstream development in SDI, the chapter has shown that the relationship between SDI members and their respective states is important for their conception of mainstream development. The discussion of mainstream development, alternative development, and development alternatives presents a schema for analysing contemporary development. This schema is important given that the divisions between mainstream and alternative development in the current development landscape have blurred.

The discussion of the links between SDI and groups in the UK opens the question of the possibilities of learning between North and South, as well as the question of whether these constructs are useful. I have shown that categories of North and South function in ways that acts as barriers to learning between 'rich' and 'poor' countries. I have argued for a conception of development that recognises global geographies of wealth and poverty and that is aware of the potential for fruitful connections to take place beyond categories of North and South that allow learning to occur. In doing so, the chapter has raised a number of specific sites where dialogue could be useful, including, for instance, the potential for 'richer' countries to learn about the geographical distribution of food stores, enumerations, or microfinance, from 'poorer' countries, and has highlighted more general potential sites of engagement that could assist those working in both 'rich' and 'poor' countries to understand and seek to improve development initiatives: including restructuring the state, industrial change, flexibilization, regionalisation, urbanization, migration, employment, safety nets, poverty reduction and livelihood, social exclusion, participation and partnership, the meaning of poverty and inequality, and so on. In thinking through these and other possibilities, we need always to remain attentive to the different power relations that structure such debates between academics, policy makers, and civil society organisations working in 'rich' or 'poor' countries (discussion of these possibilities will be extended in Chapters 6 and 8).

One issue that emerges from this discussion is that of viewing learning possibilities not in terms of direct transfer (a rationalist conception), but as an indirect learning (a post-rationalist conception). By examining the conceptual territories of both SDI and the SDI – UK links in relation to development, the chapter has provided a basis for building further arguments in the thesis that need to be rooted in an understanding both of what I mean by development and of how SDI relates to development. This allows for the development of a discussion around mainstream 'knowledge for development' strategies as they relate to SDI (Chapters 4 and 5), and around SDI, politics and development (most explicitly in Chapter 7). The next two chapters will examine in turn how knowledge is conceived in mainstream development and in SDI. They will aim to consider the role of knowledge in development.

Chapter 4

Rationalism, knowledge and mainstream development

4.1   Introduction

This chapter will debate the relations between knowledge, place and development in the context of the increasing currency of knowledge as a strategy in mainstream development.   The chapter will examine and critique how knowledge and learning is conceived in mainstream development, and will outline alternative ways of conceiving knowledge in development, building on a range of post-rationalist perspectives introduced in Chapter 1. The chapter will start by attending to the ways in which knowledge is conceived in development. It will highlight shortcomings in 'knowledge for development' discourses, focusing in particular on the World Bank. This discussion will include attention to the question of whose knowledge is privileged through the conception of knowledge in development, and the relationship between the conception of knowledge and technology. The chapter will then examine and critique how the travelling of knowledge is conceived in mainstream development, before raising the question of whether it is in fact more appropriate to write of travelling *agendas* for development than travelling *knowledges*. The chapter will then explore and critique how learning is conceived in development through discussion of the World Bank, before presenting some alternative ways of conceiving knowledge for development.

4.2   Knowledge for development

Knowledge *is* development (World Bank, 1999: 130[84]).

Arguments are increasingly being made for the role of information, knowledge, ideas and learning in the development of 'rich' and 'poor' countries. Leadbeater (1999) argues that 'Western' ('knowledge') economies are driven by three forces - finance, social capital and knowledge – which need to work together for creative and economic success.   Such claims have resonances in influential places. British Prime Minister Tony Blair has claimed:

> Our [the UK's economic] success depends on how well we exploit our most valuable assets: our knowledge, skills and creativity. These are key to designing high-value goods and services and advanced business practices. They are the heart of a modern, knowledge-driven economy (Blair, 1998: no pagination; see also New Labour, 2001).

Throughout 'rich' countries, regional development strategies have increasingly focused on creating 'knowledge-based' economies and 'learning regions' (Amin and Cohendet, 1999, 2000; Hudson, 2002). This has been accompanied by intellectual claims to the role of knowledge. For instance, writing about theories of the firm, Amin and Cohendet (forthcoming: 16), claim:

> Knowledge has become the buzzword in theories of the firm and in explanations of corporate competitiveness. A polyphony of voices from various fields and disciplines (including organizational sciences, sociology of organization, social anthropology of learning, evolutionary economics, economic history, economic geography, theories of conventions, cognitive psychology, and competence or resource-based approaches to strategy) has grown to insist that knowledge plays a key role in the raison d'être, definition, functioning and performance of firms.

Mainstream development institutions have espoused the role of knowledge and learning in the development of 'poor' countries. The 1998/9 World Bank World Development Report (WDR) entitled *Knowledge for Development* argues that knowledge must be used to alleviate poverty and contribute to economic growth.

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[84] Cited in Power (2003: 185).

Numerous statements have been made by the Bank claiming that "Knowledge has become the most important factor in economic development" (World Bank, 2002: 7).   Knowledge is perceived as a critical ingredient lacking in poor countries. The report claims (1999: 1): "Poor countries - and poor people - differ from rich ones not only because they have less capital but because they have less knowledge. Knowledge is often costly to create, and that is why much of it is created in industrial countries".   For the Bank, it is knowledge and not resources that "has become perhaps the most important factor determining the standard of living – more so than land, than tools, than labor" (World Bank, 1999: 16, cited in Power, 2003: 185). In the Bank's view, countries that fail to encourage knowledge for development strategies "are likely to fall behind those that succeed in encouraging it" (World Bank, 1999: 186, cited in Power, 2003: 186) [85].

4.2.1   The 'Knowledge Bank'

Since the late 1990s, the World Bank has portrayed itself as a 'Knowledge bank' (Stiglitz, 1998; World Bank, 1999)[86]. However, there has been little attempt to define knowledge.   The *Knowledge for Development* WDR instead makes a distinction between knowledge about technology and knowledge about attributes. Knowledge about technology refers to "technical know-how" around

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[85] The WDRs are influential.   Mehta (1999: 152), writing about the *Knowledge for Development* WDR, argues that while the report is not necessarily endorsed by all World Bank staff: "This Report – along with most of its predecessors – has been disseminated across the globe and may well set the priorities and agendas in development thinking amongst academics, donors and practitioners in both the North and South". Mawdsley and Rigg (2003: 282) write: "The WDRs both reflect and promote changes in orthodox development thinking within the hegemonic institutions, and are extremely influential publications".

[86] While being the focus of this chapter, it should be noted that the World Bank is not the only donor propagating knowledge for development. As Stone (2002: 23) has pointed out: "The IMF, the UN and the OECD amongst others are highly professionalized organisations with core research staff and can also be thought of as 'knowledge organisations'. Similarly, the world's major foundations – Ford, MacArthur, Sasakawa – and the civil servants based in development agencies like DFID or JBIC [Japan Bank for International Development] have strong 'cognitive' interest in research informing policy. Research organizations and individual experts adapt to the 'knowledge for development' discourse coming from donors".

"nutrition, birth control, software engineering, and accountancy", and "knowledge about attributes" refers to the "quality of a product, the diligence of a worker, or the creditworthiness of a firm – all crucial to effective markets" (1999: 1). Incomplete knowledge about attributes results in market failure and problems for the poor. Knowledge is conceived as "light" capable of "enlightening" the "darkness of poverty" (World Bank, 1999: 1). As the 'Knowledge Bank', Mehta (1999: 154) suggests, the Bank attributes to itself "a major role in dispelling this darkness of ignorance" (see World Bank, 1999: 6-7).

The WDR has two broad themes. The first draws attention to the knowledge 'gaps' between the North and the South and highlights ways of reducing these gaps. Rather than "re-creating existing knowledge" (World Bank, 1999: 2), poor countries are encouraged to acquire knowledge from the North through open trade regimes and foreign investment, as well as to build on indigenous knowledge. Countries are encouraged to "acquire, absorb and communicate knowledge" by expanding their research base and developing secondary education, particularly in science and engineering (World Bank, 1999: 2). The second theme is concerned with levels of information. The report argues that orthodox development models assume perfect information, but that poor countries suffer more from imperfect information than rich countries. The report argues that imperfect information deleteriously affects institutions and their structures, environmental policies, and the broader economy (Mehta, 1999: 152). These two themes constitute the first two parts of the report. The final third part focuses on the role of international institutions and states in bridging knowledge gaps.

As part of a broad World Bank knowledge for development strategy, the Bank claims are both exciting and potentially productive. As the Bank has written:

> It means that students in Ghana have access to quality tele-education in their classrooms. It means that midwives in Uganda have mobile telephones, enabling them to get advice from physicians when they encounter conditions which threaten the lives of mothers. It means that agriculture students in China can go to the [Development] Gateway and find out about development projects in their own and other countries. It means that private sector and NGO representatives in Nicaragua can join with the Government in developing the approach embodied in the Poverty

Reduction Strategy Paper. Above all, in country after country it means that an increasing number of poor people, and others striving to create opportunities to reduce poverty, are acquiring the knowledge that can help them in this task (World Bank, 2002: no pagination).

These are good intentions and some of the potential benefits are clearly very significant. For instance, the prospect of rural health workers with mobile phones, though not structurally tackling the reasons underlying health differences, is potentially life-saving. Furthermore, the problems of a lack of knowledge about nutrition or birth control have been widely identified as critical for the health and development of low-income countries (see entries in Allen and Thomas, 2000, and Desai and Potter, 2002). However, there are some serious difficulties and shortcomings in the knowledge for development strategy arising from both the Bank's conceptualisation of knowledge and the kinds of knowledge that are envisioned as travelling.

4.3   Conceiving knowledge for development

In the WDR, 'knowledge' and 'information' are often used interchangeably. "Incomplete knowledge" is posed as an "information problem" (World Bank, 1999: 1). Ostensibly, information is distinguished from knowledge in terms of 'knowledge gaps' and 'information problems'. A knowledge gap is the unequal distribution of 'know-how', about, for instance, nutrition or software, within and between countries. An information problem is incomplete knowledge of attributes - for instance, the quality of a product or creditworthiness of a firm (World Bank, 1999). Knowledge gaps and information problems blur into one another (Power, 2003: 186). Elsewhere, the World Bank has written of "processing...information into useful knowledge" (World Bank, 2002: no pagination). One implication is that there can be complete knowledge, as long as the conditions are set for information / knowledge to be moved around (for instance through the development of ICT facilities). There is little reflection on how information is converted into knowledge or vice-versa, or how learning occurs in practice. The Bank assumes a rationalist approach to knowledge in which information is conceived as being converted to knowledge in a linear and functionalist manner, or as coming to stand for knowledge itself. Key questions

go unexamined. What happens when information becomes knowledge? How does information get used? How does learning occur?

Some rudimentary insights begin to problematise the Bank's rationalist approach to information and knowledge. Information becomes knowledge when it is interpreted by people. Information is interpreted in multiple ways and has multiple effects. Given that the places information moves through are generally different, it is likely that the knowledge that results and what it does will be to some extent different. For instance, Power (2003: 187) asks: "How is the same information viewed differently by, say, a government official as opposed to a community activist?" More broadly, Mehta (1999: 151; see also 2001) argues that the Bank's conception "operates with a very narrow and reductionist notion of knowledge which ignores the dynamic and plural aspects shaping knowledge production and generation".

Away from the Bank, an example of a functionalist approach to knowledge production and learning is the knowledge management (KM) strategies of corporate and – increasingly – development organisations. KM is a process whereby organisations convert information into useful knowledge to meet strategic aims (Hovland, 2003). The more effectively an organisation can do this, the more effective its KM strategy. For example, BOND (British Overseas NGOs for Development) (2002: 1) write of knowledge as a resource 'stack' and draw on an ontology of knowledge development as a linear process:

> The more you know, the better you perform. Knowledge Management is about systematically and routinely making use of the knowledge in the organisation, and applying it to key activities; tapping into 'What you collectively know' to help deliver your goals, objectives and mission. It aims towards never making the same mistake twice, and making every decision in the light of the full knowledge base of the organisation.

4.3.1 Whose knowledge?

In recent years, there has been a drive by mainstream development agencies and in development studies to draw on the knowledge of the poor in development projects. For example, the World Bank has been part of large

international programme aimed at highlighting the views of poor people across the world in its *Voices of the Poor* (2000). The growth in interest in participatory development has been to large extent influenced by the work of individuals like Chambers (1997), and has been associated with widely used participatory methodologies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), which has gained significant support from the Bank. PRA uses oral and visual techniques to generate knowledge because it is thought that the written word marginalises those that less accustomed to it. Mapping, ranking of preferences and oral histories are all noted parts of the PRA toolkit. Chambers (1997: 103, cited in Mohan, 2002: 52) has conceptualised PRA:

> The essence of PRA is change and reversals – of role, behaviour, relationship and learning. Outsiders do not dominate and lecture; they facilitate, sit down, listen and learn. Outsiders do not transfer technology; they share methods which local people can use for their own appraisal, analysis, planning, action, monitoring and evaluation. Outsiders do not impose their reality; they encourage and enable local people to express it.

PRA has the strength of being locally oriented, but its impacts have been mixed in practice. Despite some real successes in democratising development, PRA is often rigidly tied to the agendas of donors, and can be implemented in a tokenistic fashion, routinised and 'parcelled-in' to development initiatives (Mohan, 2002). In addition, while more successful PRA has picked-up on, for instance, gender imbalances (Mosse, 1994), local elites have sometimes come to stand for 'the community'. Other have argued that the very focus on the 'local' has been a shortcoming of PRA, suggesting that it marginalises some of the causes of poverty by bypassing national and international concerns such as trade, or strengthening states in order to make them more accountable (Mohan, 2002). PRA and the shift towards participatory development more generally hold strong potential for the role of the poor in knowledge for development strategies. However, there remains the need to consider carefully the conceptualisation of knowledge and learning in development, and to ensure that this conceptualisation is politicised. As Mehta (1999: 155) argues, the framing of knowledge as Northern in the Bank's knowledge for development strategy contradicts participatory approaches to development because it affords little place for the poor.

122

Particular forms of knowledge are being highlighted for development by the Bank in the WDR, and the knowledge of local people remains marginalised. Knowledge from the North is privileged; the WDR "fails to explore alternative visions of the world and of development that might stem form the south" (Mehta, 1999: 154). While the WDR claims that "the most important knowledge for development comes from developing countries themselves" and that knowledge must undergo "adaptation" in new settings" (World Bank, 1999: 7), the recommendations from the WDR on what government's should do are firmly based upon knowledge from outside countries. The report outlines a number of steps governments can take to "facilitate the acquisition, absorption, and communication of knowledge" (World Bank, 1999: 7). Acquiring knowledge occurs only from abroad, according to the report. Indigenous knowledge does not feature in the list. For instance, knowledge can be acquired, argues the WDR, through three key means: an open trading regime, foreign investment and technology licensing (the 'green revolution' is given as an example of successful importation of technology) (World Bank, 1999: 8). This will enable countries to acquire "the large global stock of knowledge" (*ibid*) that exists 'out there' in the North and that needs to be delivered to the places of the South.

Absorbing knowledge involves ensuring basic education for all and a government commitment to lifelong learning (which appears to be mainly about improving tertiary education). Basic education for all is surely a noble pursuit, and the report makes important references to, for example, educating girls about child nutrition, health and fertility. Basic education is also about giving people "technical skills to participate in the global economy" (World Bank, 1999: 8). The report refers specifically to "furthering the adoption of improved agricultural techniques" (*ibid*). Lifelong learning is important because it "enables countries to continually assess, adapt and apply new knowledge" (World Bank, 1999: 8). However, there is little discussion of existing knowledge in 'poor' countries or the possibilities of 'poor' places and countries being able to produce their own knowlegdes. Again the emphasis is on preparing countries for using knowledge from abroad, rather than on the possibilities for knowledge creation that may exist in the country itself.

There are parts of the WDR that problematise this North – South geography. The WDR mentions that there should be a two-way flow of knowledge between rich and poor countries (World Bank, 1999: 5), it acknowledges that poor people know about their own lives and realities (World Bank, 1999: 117-18), and briefly discusses indigenous knowledge (World Bank, 1999: 31; Mehta, 1999: 155). However, there is no elaboration on these issues, and it is so-called Northern knowledge that is privileged. As Mehta (1999: 155) comments:

> We are not presented with a concrete programme concerning how the knowledge of the poor can be incorporated into the agendas of development agencies...or indeed, how institutions such as the Bank can learn from alternative voices. The statements occur merely in passing and are an exceptional departure form the otherwise top-down thrust of the knowledge transfer the Report is propagating[87].

World Bank knowledge is presented as "neutral and absolute" (Mehta, 1999: 159). Panos, an international think-tank, argues that "the World Bank's vast reservoir of knowledge generally represents its own understanding of issues" (Panos, 1998: no pagination). In the WDR, while there is reference to 'indigenous knowledge', it is superficial:

> For one, 'knowledge for development' is defined at the very outset as something the poor lack, implying that indigenous knowledge is somewhat inferior to the more established kinds of knowledge based on the premise of Western science and Western technology. Furthermore, the Report does not spell out how development agencies such as the Bank can learn from the indigenous knowledge of the poor (Mehta, 1999: 160).

Indigenous knowledges are marginalised. Mehta (1999: 158) highlights the example of diarrhoea. The WDR writes: "Knowledge about how to treat a simple ailment as a diarrhoea has existed for centuries – but millions of children continue to die from it because their parents do not know how to save them"

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[87] Indigenous knowledge is the focus of a recent (2004) edited collection produced by Finger (of the American Enterprise Institute) and Schuler (of the World Bank) entitled *Poor People's Knowledge: Promoting Intellectual Property Rights in Developing Countries.* However, the book's interest extends only to legally protecting those kinds of indigenous knowledges that the author's deem 'economically viable' (such as certain Indian handicrafts, or particular forms of African music), and perceive little difficulty in stating that "it is neither possible nor desirable" to protect other kinds of indigenous knowledges.

(World Bank, 1999: 1). Efficient and rapid rehydration can save lives. Mehta continues (1999: 158):

> However, recent research has shown that local knowledge and techniques to cure diarrhoea can be equally if not more effective than internationally acceptable methods such as the oral rehydration therapy which has been promoted and propagated by major agencies such as UNICEF and WHO...Infact, parents' confidence and knowledge in treating their children with traditional remedies have been undermined through the aggressive marketing of oral rehydration salts or solutions (ORS).

Mehta suggests that deaths from dehydration have resulted directly from rural parents walking miles to clinics or spending food money on expensive sachets. More broadly, she argues that deaths from diarrhoea ultimately have less to do with a 'lack' of knowledge than they do with "malnutrition, poor living standards and poverty", and the existence of overcrowded slums, inadequate water and sanitation facilities, a lack of health facilities and inadequate access to food: "These are entitlement issues, rarely addressed in the WDR" (Mehta, 1999: 158). This example suggests that the knowledge of development institutions like the Bank, or the knowledge propagated by them, "may not be the best for the poor" (Mehta, 1999: 158-159). Yet, given the power of the World Bank to shape discourses of development[88], its 'knowledge' is "often deemed more valid that that of the poor" (Mehta, 1999: 159). Moreover, the example indicates that knowledge by itself is insufficient "if the poor lack entitlements to basic goods and services" (Mehta, 1999: 159).

And yet, the WDR argues, Mehta (1999: 157) points out, that knowledge is non-excludable: "[W]hen a piece of knowledge is already in the public domain, it is difficult for the creator of that knowledge to prevent others from using it – knowledge is non-excludable" (World Bank, 1999: 16, cited in Mehta, 1999: 157). In practice, however, knowledge is differentiated by 'access to' and 'benefits from'. This is related to economic, political, social and cultural marginalisation: "Limited access to these other resources, will exclude the poor from having access to knowledge or to the benefits that such knowledge may

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[88] A discussion of how the Bank shapes discourses is found in Harriss' (2002a) analysis of the Bank's espousal of social capital as a means for development.

provide" (Mehta, 1999: 157). The Bank excludes power from its analysis. Simultaneously, it inscribes and legitimises "a largely technocratic vision of 'knowledge for development'" (Mehta, 1999: 158).

4.3.2   Technocratic knowledge

ICTs are viewed as both essential means to create knowledge – "even greater than the knowledge gap is the gap in the capacity to create knowledge" (World Bank, 1999: 2, cited in Power, 2003: 186) - and technologies the poor need to know how to use in order to gain information to better develop. 'Communicating knowledge' in the Bank's espousal of knowledge for development refers specifically to what the Bank perceives as opportunities for "vast amounts of information" to travel in seconds at an "ever-decreasing cost" through the "convergence of computing and telecommunications" (World Bank, 1999: 9). ICTs such as telephones and the internet allow for a greater acquisition and absorption of knowledge, argues the WDR.

Knowledge is generally conceived as technical: "[T]he examples highlighted [in the WDR] largely concern technical know-how, software technology, information technology" (Mehta, 1999: 156). The WDR, as Mehta (1999: 156) points out, cites examples such as email being used by small business enterprises in Vietnam, and Panamanian women who post pictures of their handicraft on their websites. More generally, the WDR emphasises the potential benefits of telephone lines, digitized telephone networks, fax machines, and the Internet as a route for development. But how widely available are ICTs? Mehta (1999: 156) comments:

> Many people in rural Africa, China and India will not soon have access to the internet. Until then [and most likely then too] email, and trends on the World Wide Web, will remain secondary issues for the poor and marginalised, when compared with tenure rights, food security, water security and their access to institutions and credit.

However, the focus on ICTs impacts on development through, for instance, the politics of access to foreign aid. Madon (2000: 11) argues, for instance, that

among International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) there has been a "neglect of local initiative in the design of development efforts and a threat of the erosion of indigenous and informal systems due to the influence of formal, ICT-based, western-oriented information systems typically packaged with foreign aid."

One example emphasising ICTs in knowledge for development is the Internet-based Development Gateway, launched in July 2001. The Gateway draws on a range of examples of development projects and ideas from across the world and is supposed to be editorially independent of the World Bank. The project is estimated to cost US$69.5 million in its first three years. In July 2002, the Bank estimated the Gateway provided information on 300,000 donor supported activities being undertaken worldwide (World Bank, 2002). The Gateway was conceived by World Bank President James Wolfensohn and aims to "exploit powerful and affordable information and communication technologies (ICT) that were previously unavailable to: increase knowledge sharing; enable aid effectiveness; improve public sector transparency; and build local capacity to empower communities" (Development Gateway, 2003). But who is the Gateway reaching? Less than 30% of the visitors to the site come from outside the US (Power, 2003: 185).

4.4   Conceiving knowledge in travel in mainstream development

> Knowledge is like light. Weightless and intangible, it can easily travel the world, enlightening the lives of people everywhere (World Bank, 1999: 1).

> Knowledge about what constitutes good development policies is to a large extent generic rather than country specific; what works well in one country will, at least to some extent, work elsewhere (Gilbert *et al*, 1999: 615).

The conception of knowledge in travel in the WDR posits that knowledge can be transferred directly. The imaginary is that the North has higher knowledge 'stacks' than the South, and that the conditions now exist for this imbalance to be "easily" rectified and for development to proceed (World Bank, 1999: 1). This vision perpetuates a North-South divide: 'poor' countries are to draw on the

knowledge of 'rich' countries in order to develop. As the WDR argues: "With communication costs plummeting, transferring knowledge is cheaper than ever…Given these advances, the stage appears to be set for a rapid narrowing of knowledge gaps and a surge in economic growth and well-being" (World Bank, 1999: 2). This conception of knowledge transfer as instrumental, reducing knowledge itself to a technology that can be applied, that is, a static entity that can be shifted around to do the job of development: "[A] thing that can be produced or traded, exported or imported" (Power, 2003: 186). The Bank and the North are framed as 'senders'; the South as 'receivers' (Power, 2003: 186), and the process of travel is incidental and direct, without deformation.

Power (2003) argues that the conception of knowledge in travel as (Northern) 'light' is rooted in the notions of progress emerging from the Enlightenment[89]. He (2003: 74) argues that the knowledge for development strategy is "perhaps the clearest indication of the continued importance of the Enlightenment" in contemporary development. The World Bank's strategy entrusts itself with the task of delivering the light of knowledge to the darkness of the South. Power argues that the knowledge comes to be, in line with the Enlightenment notion of progress that underlines the history of modern development, a "technology based around the language of reason and rationality" (Power, 2003: 75). The ordering of knowledge along a North-South divide not only risks marginalising alternative voices, it risks "typecasting and recreating images of the poor as ignorant or depraved, in urgent need of knowledge and enlightenment" (Mehta, 1999: 154).

Knowledge is conceived as universally applicable; wherever it goes it can have similar effects. There is an assumption in the WDR that "knowledge can easily be decontextualised from its original source" (Mehta, 1999: 154). In the WDR, 'knowledge for development', Mehta (1999: 154) contends, is defined as separate from the "socio-political world within which it is located". The WDR posits knowledge as a "commodity" (Panos, 1998: no pagination) without

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[89] 'Enlightenment' is defined here as a period in European intellectual history beginning in the mid-seventeenth century and continuing through the 18th century such as Adam Smith.

geography. A similar conceptualisation of knowledge in travel is found in the example of the World Bank's Global Development Network (GDN). The GDN is a network of think-tanks, foundations, aid agencies, and government donors aimed at producing innovative development strategies. The network was formed in December 1999 by the World Bank in cooperation with the United Nations, the Governments of Japan, Germany and Switzerland, seven regional research networks and other private and public international development institutions (Stone, 2003; Global Development Network, 2003). The Bank estimates that the network included 45,000 government and private sector participants by 2001 (World Bank, 2002). The network is purportedly independent of the World Bank, although it remains dependent on core funding from the Bank (Stone, 2003: 5). Stone, who is a member of GDN's governing body, states that the three broad objectives are to "create, share and apply knowledge" (2003: 3). Stone argues that "there is a rationalist tendency within the GDN that portrays (scientific) knowledge as independent from its social context" (2003: 2).

Highlighting a history of work from a variety of perspectives including the philosophy of science (Popper, Feyerabend), poststructuralism (Foucault, Derrida), the sociology of knowledge (Camic, 2002), and science studies (Latour, 1998), amongst others, Mehta (1999: 154) asserts that it can be concluded that a conceptualisation of knowledge as something that can be separated from its social, political, economic and cultural conditions is a "flawed assumption". Indeed, these conditions are mediations in knowledge production. Mehta (1999: 160) argues that the Bank needs to "recognise the multiple and differentiated [for example, by gender, class] forms of knowledge and knowing and the socio-political contexts within which they are located, constantly contested and re-created".

The assumption in the conception of knowledge in travel in development is one of universality – what works 'here' can then be applied 'there'. This conception is powerfully portrayed in the notion of knowledge as 'light'. Wilks (2001) worries that the Development Gateway, a 'Tower of Babel' on the internet, risks presenting 'success stories' as possible solutions to development problems, or determining what constitutes a development problem. Removed from the place

in which it occurred, what works in one place will not necessarily work in another. Bruno Laporte, Knowledge and Learning Services Manager at the World Bank, acknowledged this problem. While alluding to the Bank's overall strategic vision in the phrase 'knowledge is the currency', he stated that "we still have some way to go in terms of knowledge adaptation" (Laporte, 2002: no pagination).

4.5   Travelling knowledges or travelling agendas?

Part of the reason for emphasizing networks such as the GDN in knowledge for development strategies is that through them "participants can build alliances, develop a common language and construct shared knowledge" (Stone, 2003: 11), and accomplish tasks that are more difficult in relative isolation. However, networks also allow certain discourses to become embedded, such as the post-Washington consensus. Stone asserts that GDN knowledge – "research results, data, information about 'best practice' – is flavoured by the values of those of the post Washington consensus" advocating open trade regimes and various forms of pro-capitalist growth strategies to reduce poverty (2003: 14). The post-Washington consensus discourse frames the kinds of knowledge and information that should be used and promoted in the network because it acts as a regime of truth. For example, the GDN often highlights pro-market development examples and its 2003 Global Development Awards was given to research and policies that were pro-market (Global Development Network, 2003). Recent academic research highlighted by the GDN includes, for instance: recommendations on the financial regulation of Russian markets encouraging, for example, more strict and conservative banking regulation (Vasiliev, 2003); the impact of e-commerce on employment in the Philippines (de Vera, 2002); the potential positive impacts of trade liberalization in Brazil (Gonzaga,, Filho, and Terra, 2002); while also including articles on subjects like child poverty (UNICEF, 2003). Certain actors and agendas 'embed'[90]. Stone (2003: 14) writes:

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[90] Sinclair (2000) has shown how 'embedded knowledge networks' connect material interests to ideological functions.

130

> Notwithstanding the public good attributes of knowledge, this [view
> of knowledge as embedded agendas]...highlights the interests of
> the World Bank and other development institutions in 'independent'
> research and analysis that furthers their policy prescriptions that are
> largely in favour of pro-capitalist growth strategies to reduce
> poverty...Knowledge networks [in the 'embedded knowledge
> networks' framework] are treated as 'deep infrastructural forms' that
> represent the micro-politics of contemporary hegemony.

The network structure is a means for providing some measure of control on the knowledge produced and travelling. Stone comments: "Not only are development economists [at the Bank] 'embedded', they also have a cognitive interest in the selective use of their mode of problem definition, methodological approaches and policy solutions" (2003: 22). The actors that embed in the network are generally economists. Indeed, the make-up of the governing body of the GDN as predominantly that of "(male) economists drew sharp criticism" from academics (2003: 10), arguing for a role for other disciplines[91]. For instance, the World Bank has been criticised for "ignoring well-established development studies networks and duplicating efforts whilst also instituting its favoured group of policy institutes, excluding radical political economy approaches" (2003: 6). Networks such as the GDN allow economists in the Bank and partner organisations "to extend their professional interests", meaning that "their preferred pursuit of technical knowledge becomes a self-reinforcing dynamic that encourages resistance to other disciplinary approaches" (2003: 22)[92]. Rai (2003) questions networking as a strategy marked by expansion and integration, and the embedding of particular agendas as 'communication codes'. She writes (2002: 62):

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[91] Harriss (2002b) explores the relatively greater influence of perspectives from mainstream economics as compared with, for instance, more social or political economy perspectives in his analysis of disciplines in international development. In the paper, he makes the case for cross-disciplinary approaches in development.

[92] In this sense, the network concept entails "an effort to reconstitute and reorganise the social world" (Barry, 2001: 87). This use of the network concept as a technology is perhaps most notably revealed in Castells' espousal of the 'network society' – "characterised by the pre-eminence of social morphology over social action" (Castells, 1996: 469) and associated in his view with "the new society in the making" (2000: 501) (see cautionary criticisms by Barry, 2001, and Thrift, 1995).

> The 'gateway to development knowledge' [the GDN], through the incorporation of myriad local and global networks, then attempts to systematize the knowledges generated by the individual and organizational actors that make up these networks...Expansion of networks is then integrated into the dominant development policy framework that legitimizes the policy framework and ensures that the communicative codes are not challenged.

The network form, then, can be just as much a means for agendas to travel as it can for knowledges to travel. Agendas can also travel through the popularisation and promotion of particular development practices, most notably in the espousal of 'bets practice' (see Oyen, *et al*, 2002; Tomlinson, 2002).

4.5.1 Neoliberal rationalities and development

Tomlinson (2002), in his discussion of the post-Apartheid housing policy negotiations in South Africa, of which he was a part, argues that claims made by international development agencies to 'international best practice' negates the specificities and contingencies of particular places. International best practice, enshrined in documents such as the UN's *Habitat Agenda*, acts as a technology of governing that to some extent explains the confidence donors place in claims based on homogenised data gathered from a variety of countries. This confidence, combined with the influence of agencies like the World Bank, inflects the intellectual hegemony of neoliberalism that delimits the scope of debate and potential forms of development. The result is that a range of alternatives and local contingencies are marginalised. Tomlinson points to a variety of examples of this, from the wholehearted donor support of privatization of service delivery, to the lack of consideration of the importance of HIV / AIDS in urban South Africa in the formulation of settlement restructuring plans that emphasise a key role for the family. For Tomlinson (2002: 381), responsibility here is with the policy prescriptions emerging from the donor dominated state-donor negotiations, prescriptions that were profoundly ageographical:

> [I]t was surprising to find out that most mission [World Bank] members had not undertaken prior reading on the country...The [backlog and costing] data were 'plugged into' the Bank's model and, where data was missing, numbers were derived based on assumptions regarding what had been found in other countries...which goes some way towards explaining why the Bank

132

mission did not require prior knowledge of the local policy environment.   What were missing were the data.   Inevitably, a model presumed to apply to all countries and the incorporation of data from other countries as indicative of local conditions produces a homogenizing effect.   International best practice becomes self-fulfilling.

Perhaps the most popularised form of best practice in recent years has been the strategy of microfinance, which has followed hot on the heels of the celebrated Grameen Bank example in Bangladesh (Harper, 2003; Todd, 1996).   Rankin (2001), in her analysis of microfinance in rural Nepal, has argued that this strategy is part of the political rationality of neoliberalism and argues that it is a form of Foucauldian governmentality[93].   Agencies like the World Bank are key supporters of microfinance (World Bank, 1999: 5).   Rankin (2001: 18) argues that as a governmental strategy microcredit is an example of a neoliberal agenda with associated constitutions of social citizenship[94], and that undermines "local cultural ideologies and social processes".

Rankin's analysis reveals how strategies such as microcredit, while contingent and contested, can be one of the ways in which neoliberalism "becomes the established system of rule in a particular time and place" (2001: 22).   She highlights how microcredit has come to be vigorously promoted in Nepal by agencies like the World Bank as a model aimed at women and embodying a neoliberal social citizenship, pointing in particular to how women undergo a training in financial discipline, review one another's proposed enterprises and savings, and collectively guarantee one another's loans.   For instance: "Ethnographic studies have shown that in some microcredit programmes group

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[93] Foucault's (1978) work on governmentality traces the ways in which the human subject is constituted "in relation to itself and to constellations of power" (Cosgrove, 2001: 318; Sections 6.7 and 7.6.2).

[94] Rankin does not define 'social citizenship', but she appears to be referring to a general shift in rural Nepal from 'small-farmers' with rights under a deprived sector lending system "to women [financial] clients with responsibilities to themselves and their families" (2001: 29).   This is a shift in the constitution of social citizenship from one emphasising rights (reminiscent of Marshall's [1950] notion of citizenship as related to welfare rights) to one emphasizing responsibilities.   Rankin (2001: 29) continues: "When poor women are constructed as responsible clients in this way, the onus for development falls squarely on their shoulders, and their citizenship manifests not through entitlement but through the 'free' exercise of individual choice".   A fuller discussion of citizenship will take place in Chapter 7.

members vigorously monitor one another's consumption patterns to ensure cash reserves are devoted foremost to loan repayment" (2001: 32). She claims (2001: 28): "Embedded in the 'business' approach to poverty lending is a social identity through which to accomplish the desired restructuring – that of the self-maximizing entrepreneur".

Financial discipline is introduced through peer pressure rooted in 'solidarity' (or 'borrower') groups (as well as more 'vertical' differentials such as those of caste, ethnicity and class), with the added bonuses of reduced administrative costs. All of this, she asserts, encourages subjects in an improving direction "consistent with prevailing [neoliberal] political rationalities" (2001: 30): "From this perspective, microcredit as a governmental strategy is all the more pernicious in its appropriation of feminist languages of empowerment and solidarity to alternative (and fundamentally conservative) ends". Furthermore, she claims microcredit programmes tend not to challenge gender divisions because they tend not to interfere with domestic responsibilities, and are not a vehicle for social change. Rankin (2001: 27) shows that the neoliberal orthodoxy of microcredit in Nepal tends to dominate over local concerns, despite the long-standing attempt in Nepal to tailor neoliberalism to social protection:

> Once neoliberal rationality takes hold, however, the grounds for pursuing an end of social protection and social justice become considerably more tenuous...[in Nepal] the market has become an end in itself and microcredit has been identified as the governmental technology most suited to the objective of building rural financial markets.

This search for and espousal of best practices is perhaps the most profound and dangerous illustration of a tendency to ignore the complexities of knowledge production and travel. In the process, the knowledge of local people can be marginalized. Habermas' cautionary comments on social theory's ambitions to transcend time and space are apt here. He warns against the search for the "transcendent moment of universality that bursts every provinciality asunder" (1987: 322-23, in Gregory, 1994: 13). The example of micro-credit has the potential to be less a strategy of knowledge for development and more a strategy for agendas for development – in this case a neoliberal agenda that is reconstituting broad forms of citizenship in rural Nepal.

Resisting agendas, promoting travel?

In the context of increasing tendencies and opportunities for global knowledge and agendas to impinge upon local conditions and groups, some NGOs, CBOs and academics have begun to draw attention to the importance of a critical consciousness as knowledges travel. In a paper on housing and literacy policies in South Africa, Spiegel (1999) invokes the notion of 'travelling'. With similarities to Tomlinson (2002), he argues that "much policy development has been influenced by contemporary international trends and ideas about directions policy should take, not all of which are locally appropriate" (Spiegel, 1999: 55). He emphasises a cautious approach to travelling knowledges: "In today's apparently global world there is a marked tendency for theories about society to be transported, easily and rapidly, from one context to another. Yet commonly little, or inadequate, attention is paid to the local conditions into which they are injected, and which alter their very nature and efficacy" (1999: 69).

On a different register, the growth of international INGOs has been one which has prompted some reflection on the difficulties of negotiating transnational relationships and agendas with interests in local places. For instance, there is evidence that official aid to INGOs "can distort accountability upwards with an overemphasis on functional / financial accountability" in ways that can have "damaging effects on the ability of INGOs to be effective catalysts for social change at the grassroots level" (Madon, 2000: 6). Partly as a response to such difficulties, a recent approach adopted by INGOs has been to establish closer links with partner organisations locally and to build local experiences into wider learning processes in INGOs:

> In their networking efforts, INGOs have begun to make much more systematic use of information systems – both ICT-based and non-ICT-based – in order to improve the flow of ideas, experiences and information across national frontiers between INGO headquarters, national offices and the grassroots level (Madon, 2000: 7).

Such attempts seek to draw on the knowledge of local people and strategies as key parts of the learning process, and can help move attention and concerns away from the agendas of funding agencies – and the privileging of particular forms of codified knowledge. This section has explored the conception of

knowledge in travel in development and some of the difficulties and questions around it, the next section will explore how learning is conceived in travel. I will focus on the World Bank as influential propagator of learning for development.

4.6   Learning and the World Bank

Learning is conceived in the World Bank as an inevitable and rational process of 'adding' knowledge from on place to another. There is little reflection on how learning might actually occur in practice. The notion that learning can be indirect rather than direct (Section 1.5.3), for instance, is not reflected upon. Learning is assumed to be incidental – an inevitable by-product of knowledge transmission. It is a view of learning "in terms of the transmission, circulation and appropriation of information and knowledge" (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2000: 329). In this idealist conception, learning is similar to the 'brick laying' model of scientific discovery criticized by Kuhn (1970): learning is simply the acquisition of facts and the accumulation of practical wisdom (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2000: 330). Furthermore, the kinds of knowledge that can contribute to learning about development are limited by an adherence in institutions like the World Bank to 'Official Views'.

David Ellerman (2002: 285), Economic Advisor to the Chief Economist at the World Bank, has argued that the increasing attention to knowledge and learning as key to development is in "direct conflict" with a commitment to official organisational positions. He likened, in particular, the World Bank, to a 'development church',

> [G]iving ex cathedra 'views' on the substantive and controversial questions of development. As with the dogmas of a Church, the brand name of the organisation is invested with its views...As a result, new learning at the expense of established Official Views is not encouraged (2002: 286).

Adaptation of knowledge is curtailed and is viewed as suspicious because it risks changing the official position. Knowledge transfer is more akin to imposition. This leads Ellerman to talk of "branded knowledge as dogma" (2002: 286). Writing about the role of aid, he argues:

> The Church or party model fits perfectly with the standard 'dissemination' or transmission-belt methodology of knowledge-based development assistance. The agency believes it holds the best 'knowledge for development' and is to transmit it to the recipients in the developing world through various forms of aid-baited proselytisation (2002: 286).

Coyle (2001), in her study of the World Bank and the IMF, has similarly found that that multilaterals have a need to project an image of having the right answers and maintaining a consensual official line. This tendency to 'apply' development solutions is bound up with the timescale of mainstream development projects, which puts pressure on strategies to be completed in a hurried cycle of two or three years (Mawdsley, et al, 2002). Ellerman warns against the "self-reinforcing lock-in between development agencies and their client countries" (2002: 289), whereby learning about problems is prevented by advice and help from a powerful outsider and an eagerness of local policy-makers to jump to a ready-made solution. This "rage to conclude" (Ellerman, 2002: 289) often leads to an espousal of best practices – "a tendency based not on any methods resembling social science but on a bureaucratic need to maintain elite prestige by 'having an answer' for the client" (Ellerman, 2002: 289).

Moving towards a 'learning organisation' (Ellerman, 2002: 291) requires a recasting of international development agencies like the World Bank away from an adherence to set views and a "paternalistic model of 'teaching'", towards a 'two-way' learning process: "If the development agency can move beyond the Church or party model to an open learning model, then it can also move from standard knowledge dissemination or transmission-belt methodology towards knowledge-based capacity building". Ellerman echoes Freire (1970) in casting learning as a way of creating pedagogical and social transformations, rather than an attempt to create linear knowledge additions. This is rooted in a Socratic learning tradition of intellectual duelling in which development is ongoing and becoming through engagement rather than preconceived and predetermined.

4.7 Alternative conceptions of knowledge for development: situated ecologies of knowledge

On the one hand, then, there is an increasing prevalence and availability of knowledge about development strategies, but on the other hand this knowledge runs the risk of being abstracted and constructed as a development solution for places considered either to not have knowledge or to not have the right kind of knowledge. This is an approach to space, time and development that, as Massey puts it:

> [E]vokes the understanding of other places, peoples, cultures...as located on this surface. Immobilized, they await our arrival. They lie there, in place, without trajectories; we can no longer see in our mind's eye the stories they, too, are telling, living out, producing. It is to render them... 'without history' (2000: 228).

Instead, I want to offer an approach that is explicitly about trajectories, histories, and the importance of dialogue, contestation and reflection in knowledge and learning for development. In this section, I will present alternative conceptualisations of knowledge for development – which includes a conceptualisation of knowledge in travel – by examining Haraway's (1991) notion of 'situated knowledge', and building on that discussion. To begin, it should be made clear that if the World Bank discourses on knowledge transfer and learning are naïve, rationalist and objectivist, seeking to apply codified solutions, it is important that alternative views of knowledge are not simply relativist, descending into a simple privileging of the knowledge of local people. This would create a false and regressive dualism between 'outside' knowledge and 'inside' knowledge (Clifford, 1997). Haraway's (1991) situated knowledge provides one means of thinking about knowledge for development in ways that embrace the complexities of space, time and power that formulations such as those of the World Bank's negate in their separation of knowledge from place, and that do not fall into a relativist approach.

Haraway insists that we locate knowledge in the world. For her, knowledge is constituted by "tensions, resonances, transformations, resistances, and complicities"

> I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard and to make rational knowledge claims (Haraway, 1991: 195).

Haraway's approach is echoed and developed by Latour (1999). He writes: "Knowledge does not represent a real external world that it resembles via mimesis, but rather a real interior world, the coherence and continuity of which it helps ensure" (1999: 58). Knowledge is produced through particular circumstances, practices and experiences, and is not something separate from the world that can then be applied to different circumstances and experiences. In addition, it takes work to produce knowledge. Latour (1987), for instance, talks about the 'fabrication' of scientific facts and technical artefacts: "Knowledge consequently does not arise from scientific 'discoveries'; rather, it is fabricated by situated practices of knowledge production and reproduction, using the technologies of representation and mobilization employed by scientists" (Gherardi, 2000: 219). Haraway (1991) makes a similar argument, but is more concerned with showing how knowledge becomes conceived as a *thing* – or, in Power's (2003) analysis, a technology - rather than a *social process* that is collectively negotiated and (re)produced through relations of power, space and time. It is the tendency to reduce knowledge to a thing that makes traditional objectivity 'fetishistic', a fetishism that attempts to 'solve' development problems, and a fetishism that would not occur if it was recognised that all knowledge is embodied and partial. Haraway proposes situated knowledges as "a doctrine of embodied objectivity" (1991: 188). In contrast to the traditional view of objectivity, Haraway's objectivity is characterised by the components of *embodiment* and *partiality* (Barnes, 2000: 742)[95].

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[95] Haraway's concept of situated knowledge has received rare criticism, although one conversation is with the notion of 'situated' itself: attention to 'mobile epistemologies' argues against situatedness by emphasising movement in knowledge production (De Laet and Mol, 2000).

4.7.1   Embodied knowledge

Embodiment refers to knowledge as it is mediated by the complex relations between the human body, technology, and the "collective nature of inquiry involving interaction, difference, and debates over meanings and responsibilities" (Barnes, 2000: 743). This notion draws attention to the messy practicalities of knowledge production. Notions of knowledge as a collective and practical process have been expanded in recent work in social science in a variety of ways. For instance, in work concerned with performance, we can point to Butler's (1997) work in feminist and cultural theory, or Thrift's (2000) work in geography[96]. The following quote from Fraleigh (1987: 32, in Thrift, 2000: 23) illustrates some of the flavour of these enquiries, pointing at knowledges created in doing: "The body is not something I possess to dance with. I do not order my body to bend here and whirl there. I do not think 'move' and then do move. No! I am the dance; its thinking is its doing and its doing is its thinking". Here, knowledge is embodied through action. Knowledge is performed into being through interaction, negotiation and struggle. Law (2000b: 349), for example, argues that "knowing is an enactment". This enactment produces an object – something known or known about – and a subject – "something or someone that does the knowing that corresponds to what is to be known" (2000: 349). Knowledge is not a disembodied technology that can moved around intact for development. It is a social process that is negotiated in the particularities of people and places. This puts local people and local places at the forefront of knowledge production and learning.

Practices

Attention to action points to the importance of attending to the role of practices and everyday life for knowledge production. Development literature on knowledge and learning could gain from an engagement with recent corporate

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[96] See also the special issue of *Environment and Planning A* (2003) on performance.

literature on the role of practices in knowledge production[97]. For instance, two insights that the concept of practice brings to learning include: that learning can happen without our awareness, and the importance of not drawing "distinctions among subject, object, thought or context" (Gherardi, 2000: 215). Learning is not something that we are always aware of, anymore than we are consciously aware of, for instance, the conversion of explicit to tacit knowledge. Learning can take place in the everyday flow of experiences (Gherardi, 2000: 214; Polanyi, 1962: 55). Heidegger (1962), and phenomenology and existentialism more broadly, gives substantial purchase to experiential life. *Dasein*, or *being-in-the-world*, collapses the distinction between subject and object. In contrast to Descartes' philosophy, which insisted on cognitive knowledge, people, for Heidegger, only become able to think and act through *being-in-the-world*, through non-cognitive knowledge. Knowledge, then, is not free-floating, rational and objective, but embedded in our daily lives. As Crang writes: "Heidegger thus locates geographical knowledge more closely with existence than abstraction" (1998: 110). Think, for instance, of a hammer and the act of hammering: the hammer is used unthinkingly to drive in a nail; knowing how to act depends on familiarity with the act of hammering (Gherardi, 2000: 214). This is an example of pre-reflexive learning, "of comprehension that takes place in situations of involvement in a practice" (*ibid*).

This is closely related to the concept of tacit knowledge, and even more so to that of "practical knowing" (Thrift, 2000: 222, in Amin, 2002: 391 - see also Amin and Cohendet, forthcoming). Learning is reflexive when, for example, breakdown occurs if, for instance, the hammer breaks. We are made to ask: 'Why did the hammer break?' Through attention to practices, "learning is not conceived as a way of knowing the world, but as a way of being in the world" (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2000: 332). Rather than reducing learning to an adherence to 'Official Views', we might conceive learning as an ongoing process rooted in the everyday practices of the poor. Knowledge and learning for

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[97] However, there are general differences between corporate and development examples. For instance, development organizations are generally more concerned with the ability to influence debates and policy processes by sharing information, knowledge and ideas, whereas corporate organizations often attempt to conceal information, knowledge and ideas because of competition with other firms.

development strategies would gain, then, from examining the ways in which different poor people learn in practice. This would allow both the knowledge of the poor, and the ways in which the poor acquire knowledge and learn, to form the centre of such strategies.

4.7.2   Partial knowledge

By partial knowledge, Haraway (1991) argues that 'full' knowledge is not possible and that only partial perspectives are possible, a consequence of our own "circumscribed subject location" (Barnes, 2000: 743). This derails attempts to seek out an elusive and mythical objectivity. It draws attention, for example, to the multiple effects that a given piece of information can have if encountered by a number of different people (or the same person over time). One consequence is that it reframes the notion of consensus. Partial knowledge emphasises not consensus but 'shared conservations' that are often marked with conflict and never reach conclusion. The basis of this conflict is pre-given and changing positions and view-points. This is knowledge marked by "nodes in fields, inflections in orientations, and responsibility for difference in material-semiotic fields of meaning" (Haraway, 1991: 195), and to some extent depends on the avoidance as much as is possible of pre-established political outlooks such as the World Bank post-Washington neoliberal consensus. This is not to say that decisions cannot be reached or agreements made on, say, a development project, but that these agreements must be viewed not so much in simple terms of building consensus as drawing lines under nonconsensus. As Foucault has put it: "The furthest I would go is to say that perhaps one must not be for consensuality, but one must be against nonconsensuality" (in Rabinow, 1984: 379).

4.7.3   Ecologies of knowledge

Contrary to the World Bank's conceptualization of knowledge as a technology that can be disembedded, then, the production of knowledge is contingent on social, cultural, economic and political circumstances, the practices of poor

people themselves, and processes of negotiation and conflict. Moreover, knowledge production is always a socio-technical process that involves myriad relations between humans *and* non-humans across times and spaces. Starr (1995) writes of 'ecologies of knowledge[98]', a concept that locates knowledge in ecosystems that reject dichotomies such as "those between nature and society, and between social and technical" (Gherardi, 2000: 219). Actor-network theory and associated perspectives – such as Thrift's non-representational theory – are useful here (see, for example, Latour, 1987, 1993, 1997, 1999; Law and Hassard 1999; Murdoch, 1998; Holloway, 1999; Harada, 2000; Amin, 2002; Amin and Thrift, 2002; Thrift, 1999, 2000). The non-human, or material, is usually ignored in social science accounts (Latour, 1999). Despite geography's history of concern and debate over the role of place, sociospatial dialectics, and geographical determinism (Livingstone, 1992), the ways in which different spaces and times are *always* mixed - so that there is never a 'pure' form of 'human' and 'non-human' – was not developed until very recently (see Murdoch, 1998; Bingham, 1996; Thrift, 1999). Even when there have been attempts in social science to move beyond dichotomies such as 'material' and 'social', they often remain within a modernist dualist mode of ordering so that we are still "requested to see any mixture as a combination of *pure* forms" (Latour, 1993: 275, cited in Bingham, 1996: 642). Labels such as 'machine', for instance, bring with them "a whole baggage of assumptions concerning form, function and meaning" – in particular, interpreted through a modernist framework that separates 'technical' and 'social' into separate domains (Bingham, 1996: 642).

Laying challenge to such thinking, Bingham (1996: 643) proposes an *amodern* approach – after Latour and Serres – that argues that 'machines' are from "the first moment of 'production' through to the ongoing acts of 'consumption' in which they (and we) are enmeshed" always social and material. Thus, the essentialist idea of the 'object' is replaced with the relational 'quasi-object' that re-visions objects as able to play a whole variety of different roles. This is not, of

[98] Starr's edited collection focuses on scientific and technical knowledge production. Starr (1995: 2) argues that "ecologies of knowledge means trying to understand the systemic properties of science by analogy with ecosystem, and equally important, all the components that constitute that system". The focus is on the multiple materials, practices and representations woven into the production of knowledge.

course, to suggest, for instance, that a 'computer' is not a 'computer', but that "proper analysis", asserts Bingham (1996: 642), must recognise that such labels are misleading because they carry assumptions about the distinction between the 'technical' and the 'social' as a *pre-given* distinction rather than an *accomplished* distinction – that is, a particularly successful 'way of seeing' (Foucault, 1973).

A different way of seeing would recognise the various ways and extents to which 'objects' inflect the form and meaning of spatiotemporalities, help us to try to order our societies, co- and re-constitute 'ourselves' and 'bodies', have implications on the course of human behaviour and, therefore, how we think about, for example, 'ethics' (see, for instance, Whatmore, 1997), and act in the production of knowledge. A socio-material constructionist approach:

> [C]onceives knowledge and knowing as inextricably bound up with the material and social circumstances in which they are acquired. This is an anti-generalizing and an anti-abstractionist approach which maintains that human action can only be explained in terms of the specific conditions in which it takes place...Its central concern, in fact, is how people use circumstances to accomplish intelligent actions, not how they apply cognitive structures to particular situations (Gherardi and Nicolini, 2000: 331).

Gherardi and Nicolini (2000: 335-336), for example, show how safety knowledge is produced through human and non-human relations, including:

> '[T]echnical' artifacts, or work equipment of varying degrees of safety; safety discourses and people's ability to use language in practice; texts, and specifically regulations as particular types of text (norms and the textual forms derived from them: interpretations of the law, circulars, inspection reports, certifications, technical standards).

In this approach, the production of knowledge and ideas does not occur by applying knowledge as a solution to a development problem, but through a complex process of mixing time, space, human, non-human, and practices – as Callon (1999: 2, translation from original in French, cited in Amin and Cohendet, forthcoming: 124) puts it: "What marks innovation is the alchemy of combining heterogeneous ingredients: it is a process that crosses institutions, forging complex and unusual relations between different spheres of activity..." The

enactments of knowledge are always situated and always materially heterogeneous (Law, 2000b: 349).

There can be no doubt that the material is important for development. For example, the 'green revolution' intricately related the material with the social and environmental. In the example of the green revolution, knowledge of the material emerges as crucial for development. Knowledge, for instance, that monoculture landscapes could become good breeding grounds for pests and diseases, or that, in the Philippines, high-yielding varieties of rice would not necessarily increase the economic value in line with the yield because the quality of the grain became inferior, leading to a lower market price, could have been extremely useful for farmers switching from 'traditional' farming systems (Chapman, 2002: 156). Another example is that of urban environments in 'poor' cities. Knowledge of the role of the material in development is critical here in building development priorities. As Satterthwaite (2002: 263) has written:

> With inadequate or no environmental management, environmental hazards become the main cause of ill-health, injury and premature death. Average life expectancies can be below 40 years and one child in four may die before the age of 5. The urban poor face the greatest risks as their homes and neighbourhoods generally have the least adequate provision for water supplies, sanitation, drainage, garbage collection and healthcare.

Both these examples are in tune with the World Bank argument that increased knowledge, for example about technology, can lead to greater development. However, there is a need to move beyond a recognition that the material is important in development, towards an understanding of the ways in which the material constitutes the knowledges of the poor. The material is critical for what the poor know about and how they construct notions of 'development', and for how they experience poverty. What do the poor think about the material and how do they think it should be changed? The knowledge of the poor about the material is generally excluded, whereas the knowledge of the North about the material – as the 1998/9 WDR indicates – is usually privileged. The experience of the urban poor in slums with the material, for example in reference to housing or sanitation, means that their knowledge can be critical for development. What are the poor's coping mechanisms with the material hazards raised in the Satterthwaite quote? How do the poor, who must contend with these material

hazards on a daily basis, and who must live with the consequences of any development intervention in slums, want these material circumstances to change? How can the knowledge the poor have of the material be used to change the material for their benefit in a development programme?

In a short paper rich in the thoughts and experiences of the poor with sanitation in Mumbai and Pune, Bapat and Agarwal (2003: 72) argue for the need for difficulties in sanitation provision "that often go unrecorded and that rarely come out in quantitative studies" to be subject to greater research. Their interviews, mainly with women, details, for example, how much water families need for cooking and cleaning per day, the conflict that can occur in local areas over access to and the location of water taps, the humiliation, harassment, and violence women in particular are forced to endure in conditions of an absence of sanitation, the impacts of not having sanitation facilities on women[99], how people manage toilets and open drains, and so on. The knowledge of the poor here is crucial. For example, the Indian Alliance has argued against slum redevelopment proposals that plan to build a toilet in every house, arguing instead for toilet blocks. This is because NSDF and MM members have made clear that they do not want a toilet in their homes for reasons of hygiene. Often, where toilets have been built in homes they have been blocked up and sanitation blocks have been used instead. These examples, and Mehta's (1999) example of diarrhoea highlighted earlier in the chapter, point to the need to recognise other ways of knowing in development. The material is critical here. In another example, Briggs and Sharp (2004) highlight the importance of cultural understandings of the use of Accaccia trees by Bedouin in southern Egypt. Conservation controls prohibit the use of dead trees to make charcoal by local people, or to kill snakes and scorpions (a major threat to people living in desert areas). Different ways of knowing have different conservation priorities, and it is important that development agencies seek to engage with other ways of knowing not simply in a liberal way that recognises different views, but, as Briggs and Sharp would have it, in a more radical way that recognises different ways of knowing and being in the world.

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[99] For example, some women eat and drink less in order to minimise having to relieve themselves in public, while others develop illnesses waiting for specific quiet times.

Not only, then, should local circumstances be taken seriously in knowledge for development strategies because of the role these circumstances have both in knowledge production and social change, the role of the material and the 'technical' and how they mediate ways of knowing about place and development should also be taken seriously. Diverse materials are mobilized in knowledge production; knowledge is not formed through speech and text alone, and neither does it exist as a disconnected and free-floating global 'stack'. As Law and Hetherington (1999: 10) put it: "It is a mistake to talk of knowledge, global networks and flows, or sociality, without at the same time noting that these are always *materially produced* in specific and local circumstances".

This discussion highlights alternative conceptions of knowledge and calls for an understanding of knowledge that is at once more ecological and more situated. More ecological because it draws attention to the importance of the circumstances, experiences and practices through which knowledge emerges, and to the human and non-human relations in knowledge production. More situated because it draws attention to the partialities that engage and re-form knowledge, to the fluidity in the relationship between tacit and codified knowledges in the mixing of space and time, to the importance of experiential knowledge, and the importance of conflict and negotiation. Rather than negating power relations and the histories of places in a process of conceiving knowledge as a 'thing' that can be 'applied' in development, this is an approach that explicitly recognises the importance of dialogue, contestation and reflection. In part, this follows Pieterse's (1998, 2001) call for a 'reflexive development' that would recast development as a process of learning, both from previous experiences (including mistakes) and alternative approaches to development.

4.8   Conclusion

The chapter has argued for the need to be alert to the dangers of attempting to apply knowledge from one place to another, or to espouse that one set of knowledges is a 'best practice'. There is a need for greater sophistication in understanding the complexities of the knowledge and learning and the relationship between travel, knowledge and place in development, because the

ways in which these development rubrics are conceived has consequences for development practices. For instance, the tendency in knowledge for development conceptions to privilege knowledge in line with neoliberalism, and to marginalise the knowledge of local people, has implications for the ways in which development practice proceeds. It has implications, for example, for the types of knowledge for development projects that are funded by donors (Ellerman, 2002).

I have highlighted a range of literature and perspectives in this chapter that in various ways point new directions in conceiving knowledge and learning and how knowledge travels, and that are deployed in the hope of developing an understanding of how knowledge for development is conceived and created. These perspectives seek to 'ground' knowledge by drawing attention to its embodiment and partiality. They emphasise the complexity – the ecology – of knowledge production through attention to the role of practices and materiality. With these alternative conceptions of knowledge and learning in mind, how might we approach the practice of knowledge for development in a way that seeks to make the most of the opportunities it offers? Ellerman (2002: 291) puts this well – although problematically - in the context of mainstream knowledge for development strategies:

> The message to policy makers should run along these lines: To the best of our accumulated experience (which we deem to call 'knowledge'), here is what works best in countries like yours[100]. Why don't you study these principles together with their corroboration to date (best practice success stories), take a look at these studies, contact the people who designed those reforms, set up horizontal learning programmes with those best practice cases, and try to do some experiments to see what works in various parts of your own country? After carrying out this learning process on your own, you might call us back if you feel we could help by partially but not wholly funding the reform programme you have decided upon.

I would rather substitute the pejorative notion of 'best practice' that he uses with something like 'common success', and I would emphasise a more explicit

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[100] I would rather say 'situations like yours' than 'countries like yours', primarily because I believe this would widen the possibilities for learning beyond the confines of a predefined set of countries.

attention to unequal power relations that can lead not so much to travelling knowledge as to travelling agendas. Furthermore, it is paramount that the different types of knowledge already 'there' are not marginalised, and that local circumstances form the basis of development strategies (Ellerman acknowledges these points elsewhere in the paper). This chapter makes a case for a focus on knowledge of local people and for local politics, and for geography as central rather than peripheral. This does not mean that, for instance, indigenous knowledge – such as that on diarrhoea highlighted earlier – should be privileged over 'outside' or different knowledge. Rather, I have argued for an approach to knowledge for development that involves the often difficult task of negotiating different situated knowledges, such as indigenous knowledge, World Bank knowledge on a given issue, and so on. This requires critical reflection on the power relations of different agents such as the World Bank relative to community-based organisations. It also requires us to reflect on the situatedness of 'Western' knowledge, often constructed as and assumed to be universally applicable, and to strive to recognise other ways of knowing. Following Briggs and Sharp (2004), this requires more than simply recognising the views of the poor; it requires a more radical attention to the different ways in which the poor know, experience and understand development[101].

This approach to knowledge for development requires a critical approach to some key questions, such as: how are knowledge and learning being conceptualised in a given situation? From where has knowledge originated? Is knowledge relevant? Who decides whether it is relevant? How can it be used (without trying to follow the 'original')? How is it integrated with other forms of knowledge? How does it relate to questions of power and autonomy? The next chapter will explore the conceptualisation and creation of knowledge for development in SDI. It will act as a contrast to the conceptualisation of knowledge for development explored in this chapter, and will deploy the alternative conceptualisation of knowledge and learning – reflecting a broad post-rationalist position - further developed in this chapter.

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[101] In this task, as Sharp and Briggs (2004) contend, there is potential for productive debate between development studies and postcolonial scholarship (see also Sylvester, 1999).

Chapter 5

Knowledge, learning and SDI:
conceiving, creating, mobilising

5.1   Introduction

The chapter examines the ways in which knowledge is conceived and created in SDI, and in particular the Indian Alliance. It will begin be exploring how SDI conceives knowledge, before considering the conceptualisation of knowledge in travel. It will then explore how knowledge is *drawn on*, focussing in particular on exhibitions. The chapter goes onto explore the *creation* of knowledge in SDI, highlighting a strand of organisational theory based on the relationship between tacit and explicit knowledges, before discussing the role of the material in knowledge creation through an analysis of enumerations. The different ways in which knowledge is communicated runs through these discussions. The drawing on, creating of and communicating of knowledge forms three key interrelated features of knowledge and learning in SDI (Figure 8). The chapter will finish with an exploration of how learning is conceptualised in SDI, drawing in particular on a second strand of organisation theory, Wenger's (1998) conceptualisation of communities of practice. SDI's conceptualisation of knowledge and learning provides a contrast with those of mainstream development.

Figure 8: Knowledge in SDI
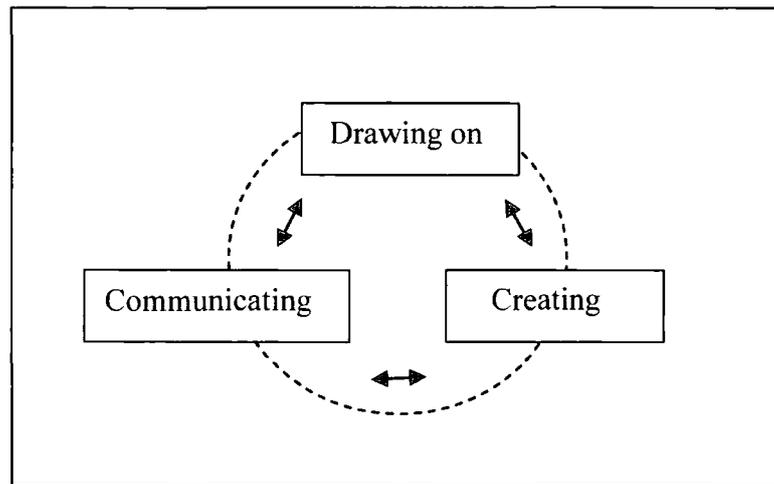
5.2   Knowledge and SDI

With echoes of mainstream knowledge for development strategies, SDI leaders have espoused the importance of knowledge for development.   For instance, SPARC Director Patel (2001: 8) has written:

> Knowledge is power in this new millennium.   Federated communities within SDI have solutions based on information rather than platitudes to discuss with their governments.

SDI concurs with, for instance, the World Bank that knowledge is central to development.   However, SDI politicises knowledge for development by contesting the ways in which knowledge is conceived, whom knowledge belongs to, how it is created, how learning takes place, and how knowledge is communicated.   In this sense, SDI's knowledge for development strategy is not an alternative development, but a development alternative.

5.3   Conceiving knowledge in SDI

SDI conceives knowledge in two principle and interrelated ways: as embedded, and as created through practices.   First, for SDI knowledge is a product of

151

social, cultural, economic and political conditions. Knowledge is conceived as embedded in the lives and experiences of the poor themselves. For instance, knowledge about potential housing in the construction of model houses is conceived as emerging from people's experiences with building their own hutments (Patel and Mitlin, 2001: 18; 2002). Thus, a key part of SDI's work is drawing on poor people's knowledge (Section 5.5.1). Second, knowledge is based on practice (ACHR, 2000: 4). 'Practice' in SDI refers both to regular activities, such as daily savings, and less regular activities, such as house modelling and enumerations, that create knowledge. The emphasis on experiences and practices positions knowledge as produced through being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962), through the everyday interactions between people and objects (housing materials, documents, maps, savings books, and so on), and stands in contrast to the disembedded and abstracted conceptualisation of knowledge deployed by the World Bank.

5.4   Conceiving knowledge in travel in SDI

The conception of knowledge in travel in SDI is that it necessarily changes as it moves. There is frequent comment in SDI publications and websites that knowledge cannot be disseminated in a linear and instrumental way, but that it always changes[102]. Knowledge and social conditions are perceived as changing through the interaction of different groups from different countries, but the general approach to conceiving knowledge creation remains similar across SDI. For instance, writing about sanitation construction projects in India, the Indian Alliance asserts:

> When this kind of community toilet-building process moves into other cities, the cast of characters, the local politics, the peculiarities of different settlements all change. The thing that stays the same is that communities are the tools of change, not professionals (NSDF/MM/SPARC 1997: 26).

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[102] See SDI (2003), ACHR (2000), Patel and Mitlin (2001), Homeless International (2001), special issue of *Environment and Urbanization* (2001).

Speaking about SDI more generally, Satterthwaite (2002[103]) similarly commented:

> What you've got here is each local context shaping the way it's done...You've got a thirty-year history of community organisation and mobilisation in the Philippines. In South Africa you have the very unique, strong social bonds formed by women to survive Apartheid. Here you have in SPARC a methodology that was after all developed in one locality with one particular group in mind, with the NGO doing everything in it's power not to push, not to go ahead of the women pavement dwellers...That seems to work. And if you just look at the influence it's had, it's tremendous...I've been in this business 30 years and it's the most exciting thing I've seen in all my professional life.

This conception of knowledge reflects a discourse of knowledge in SDI. It is discourse that legislates what kind of knowledge and information is valuable. There is a discourse emphasising poor people's knowledge. Poor people's knowledge is framed as the most valuable development knowledge. Knowledge is conceived as changing in travel, the only consistency being that it remains the object of the poor.

Homeless International (2001: no pagination) have commented on the ways in which the geography of people's lives and places is made an explicit part of SDI activities. They start by commenting that knowledge from one place – for example about daily savings or enumeration - that may appear initially useful, might be completely discarded. The discarding of knowledge occurs often in SDI, as Mitlin (2002[104]) commented:

> That happens quite a lot...[For example] some of the communities in South Africa say it is impossible to do door-to-door enumeration. People are too suspicious. Too much tension. For example...in Durban, they would only enumerate their members. It's too antagonistic to go to strangers and ask for that kind of information...In communities in Zimbabwe I don't think this has been a problem anywhere, you can go door-to-door...Some communities reject daily savings very explicitly [usually, it depends on earning patterns: some groups follow monthly savings patterns].

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[103] David Satherwaite, IIED: Interview conducted March 2002.

[104] Diana Mitlin, IIED: Interview conducted July 2002.

Writing about the knowledges that do travel, Homeless International write (2001: no pagination):

> But if it [a savings record system, a brick-laying technique, or a negotiating strategy] does graft, then a mysterious thing begins to happen – you start out by trying to do it exactly the way they do it over there, but then all the nitty gritty of local realities creep into mess up that original, and you end up having to alter it, adjust it, change the sequence, for local conditions. Before you know it, you've got a brand new thing. The principals of the original may still shine through, but now it's all yours, you made it, you own it, you understand it, your pride in it is the pride of the creator.

ACHR (2000: 14) have similarly commented on the mutually transforming relationship between knowledge and place: "Things which might start out looking alike – negotiating strategies, house designs, credit management systems, land-sharing models, community contracts – *always* get changed, adapted when they move around"[105]. ACHR (2000: 14) assert that knowledge must change in travel: "[E]xchange is not a means for transferring specific solutions – solutions have to specific to conditions in a given place...[exchange involves] tools [for example, enumeration, exhibition, daily savings] for *finding* solutions". The discourse of 'best practice' that circulates mainstream development is treated with caution. ACHR (2000: 10) instead argue that the travelling of knowledge is 'messier' because it becomes caught up with the particularities of place: "Peer learning through exchange is about as far removed from this best practice thinking as you can get. It's perhaps a bit messier, a bit less photogenic." Similarly, SPARC's Patel, Burra and D'Cruz (2001: 51) argue that SDI's activities are not about "projects and 'best practices'" but about "processes and evolving strategies" that extend far beyond the standardised three-year project cycle, and prioritise local circumstances and struggles.

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[105] This is an explicit part of membership of the Indian federation, as Patel commented in interview in relation to potential new members: "[T]o be in [the federation] they [potential affiliate organisations] have to explore these methodologies and reinterpret them in what is an open environment" (Patel, 2002).

5.5   Mobilising knowledge: drawing on the experiences of the poor

Patel and Miltin (2002) have argued that a key aspect of SDI's work is drawing on the knowledge of the poor. For instance, the Indian Alliance draws on the experiences of poor women who have been forced to deal with a range of difficulties associated with urban poverty. Patel and Mitlin (2002: 128) write that women have "created systems to deal with water, sanitation and with delaying the frequent demolition of houses". These knowledges form the basis of the Indian Alliance's activities, an approach referred to as 'precedent-setting' (Patel and Mitlin, 2001: 16): "This begins by recognising that the strategies that the poor use already are probably the most effective starting point although they may need to be improved". Such strategies are refined through dialogue and practice among the poor and then demonstrated to authorities – for example in housing exhibitions. With new experiences, SDI members develop new knowledges that are drawn on, for example, in exchanges. One example of drawing on poor people's knowledge is from housing exhibitions.

5.5.1   Exhibiting knowledge: construction and measurement

Exhibitions of model houses and toilet blocks have become critical events in SDI's work. These are full-size model houses that are designed and built by organisations of the poor. Exhibitions are an attempt to illustrate the potential of the poor and to attract media and political attention. Often, they are associated with exchanges of poor people from across the city, country, or world, and they generally last three or four days. They often involve informal discussions ranging from concerns over land tenure to construction to local organising. Occasionally, exhibitions are combined with other events such as enumerations.

Model houses draw on the knowledge of the poor for the purposes of housing construction. For instance, rather than focussing on conventional measurements, they stress non-technical knowledge. At the level of the individual house, construction techniques draw on the geographical imaginations of the poor (McFarlane, 2004). Jorge Anzorena (1987: 6), of SELAVIP, highlights the way in which the mechanics of housing construction become "de-

mystified" by drawing on measurement techniques used by people who may be confused by conventional systems:

> [F]or example if 10 x 15 feet is taken as a standard size, then an average of 5 yard sari is 15 feet, hence one length would be the breadth of the house. A Mangalsutra [a necklace worn by married women as a symbol of marriage] of 20 inches could be used for measuring 1. 1/2 foot for a window. North Indian women could use the cord, which ties their Salwaar to get a measurement of 4. ½ feet. In this way, using various items which were on the women's person, such as a blouse length or a petticoat, all the structures within a home could be measured within a certain degree of accuracy.

People are using their own knowledge created through experiences of constructing slum huts, using rudimentary materials including the clothes that they possess – rather than, for instance, tape measures that they are unfamiliar with - to imagine new houses and begin the process of construction. Future exhibitions draw on the knowledge of the poor as an example, or precedent, for house modelling. Writing in reference to Mumbai's Railway Slum Dwellers Federation (RSDF) – an NSDF affiliate - SPARC (1988: 27) have stated:

> It has been our past experience while working with the pavement dwellers that it was difficult to explain the dimensions of a 10 X 15 feet (150 sq. ft.) house to a group of people who have been living in 45 sq. ft. for most of their lives. Hence, planning for a change or discussing alternative plans which are different or unfamiliar to people can cause a lot of anxiety, which may result in a resistance to change. However, life size models of houses designed by the people can be a very effective means of depicting the spatial dimensions. This enables them to arrive at a common consensus about what they want. The RSDF committee felt that such an exhibition would facilitate their outreach among the rest of the railway settlements. There were four house models which were presented in the exhibitions, three of which had been built in the past by women pavement dwellers.

The boundaries between drawing on existing knowledge and creating new knowledge are slim. Drawing on existing knowledge leads to questions about future strategies and the development of new knowledge, as the following comment from Patel and Mitlin (2002: 129) indicates: "Through sharing their common experiences, community members identify solutions and make plans to instigate change. Gradually they start to identify new solutions to existing problems, passing on confidence and skills in the process". One specific

example is women teaching other women about making measurements. Clearly, there is a gender element in the above discussion of measurements in that they refer to women. For some, this is a subverting of the domestic burden women bear, an attempt to (literally) employ their domestic knowledge constructively, as Patel and Mitlin (2001: 16) argue:

> Women can 'dream' about their houses better than men, in part because they use the structure that the live in more than men; men therefore easily concede that women can design the new structure better. Once that is achieved, men often concede that women who are trained to manage construction are the most effective supervisors of the process.

In turn, women 'teach' each other (and men) about what they have learned, creating new knowledge. Patel and Mitlin (2001: 16) argue that this is part of the overall process of increasing women's confidences and competence (capabilities, skills), thereby helping "women to renegotiate their relationship with the community, with their family and with their husbands" by demonstrating women's knowledge and capabilities and showing how new knowledge and capabilities can be formed. The next section will look in detail at how knowledge is created in SDI through the example of enumerations.

5.6   Creating knowledge in SDI

This section will explore the creation of knowledge in SDI. It is in two parts. The first part will analyse the creation of knowledge in SDI with reference to a model of knowledge creation developed by Nonaka *et al* (2000). The second part will explore the creation of knowledge by showing the importance of attending to the role of the material in knowledge creation through the example of the creation of statistical knowledge in the Indian Alliance.

5.6.1   Analysing the creation of knowledge in SDI

In the creation and travelling of knowledge, knowledge is converted to and from tacit and explicit knowledge. The relationship between tacit and explicit knowledge is always changing, and is critical for the creation of knowledge.

These conversions can be analysed through a model of knowledge creation advocated in reference to firms by Nonaka *et al* (2000) called SECI, which also provides insights on how learning occurs. SECI refers to four modes of knowledge conversion: (i) *socialisation* (from tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge); (ii) *externalisation* (from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge); (iii) *combination* (from explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge); and (iv) *internalisation* (from explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge). Socialisation converts new tacit knowledge through shared experiences: "[T]acit knowledge can be acquired only through shared experience, such as spending time together or living in the same environment". Tacit knowledge can move directly and indirectly. It can move directly through *occasions* and *sustained practices*. In terms of occasions, tacit knowledge may travel through, for example, watching in a non-reflexive way a person hammering a nail. We see how it is done and do it ourselves – we learn through 'unconscious' vision and practice.

In terms of sustained practices, tacit knowledge may travel through, for instance, children learning to walk through seeing it occur regularly and trying to do it themselves. Similarly, we may gain tacit knowledge through colleagues by watching them operate a given task without realising we have gained this knowledge. These conversions of tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge are acts of learning. In SDI, tacit knowledge converts to tacit knowledge in travel through exchanges. Ten days to two weeks of watching how a group operates a daily savings scheme, constructs houses, makes measurements, and so on, involves the travelling of tacit knowledge. Activities of individual SDI group members, such as ways of doing daily savings, or of mapping settlements, involve the conversion of tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge. The emphasis in SDI on both practices (the main emphasis) and discussion in exchanges encourages opportunities for tacit and codified forms of knowledge to travel.

Externalisation is the process of articulating tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Nonaka *et al* (2000: 9) argue that the "successful conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge depends on the sequential use of metaphor, analogy and model". This appears to be the case in SDI in, for instance, the articulation of daily savings, organisation forms, enumeration, or exhibition in exchanges. For example, in Bangalore, Thomas, a local NSDF leader, argued

that the organisational form of federation activities in the city followed a model codified in Mumbai with NSDF, and that travelled through exchange. He pointed to four committees for managing construction projects as a specific example of this: (i) a labour committee; (ii) a purchasing committee; (iii) a finance committee; and (iv) a supervising committee. In Mumbai, experience led to externalisation of this model, and the model subsequently travelled. On a different register, ACHR (2000: 29) list ten tips for exchanges, from getting a balance between NGO and CBO involvement, to presenting knowledge and ideas rather than attempting to convert people, to holding small meetings rather than larger crowded meetings. An example of the use of metaphor is daily savings, described in the Philippines as "the building block", the "common denominator" and "the 'glue' that holds communities together" (VMSDFI, 2001: 74), and described by NSDF's Jockin in India as "breathing", the foundation of the federation (Appadurai, 2002: 34). One way in which the relationship between knowledge and place is described in the Indian federation is through reference to a cooking metaphor. Patel has written (ACHR, 2000: 8):

> The federation is kept alive by all this experimentation in all these scattered communities. It's like a hundred cooking pots simmering away, each with it's own masala, it's own concoction of local circumstances, personalities and whimsy.

This metaphor is a way of codifying the different activities of the different members of the federation across India. It is one way of converting tacit knowledge through metaphors. Moreover, the metaphor encourages groups to view their circumstances and development as unique, and as such rallies against any notion that different members need to be at the same 'level'. Combination is the process of converting explicit knowledge into more complex and systematic sets of explicit knowledge. This conversion "synthesises knowledge from many different sources in one context" (Nonaka, et al, 2000: 10). Examples here include grey literature published in both English and vernacular languages by SDI members —examples include the Indian Federation's *CityWatch* or ACHR's publication on exchanges, *Face to Face* – which compile knowledge on exchanges and other activities. Furthermore, the repeated listing of a range of strategies – savings, enumeration, exhibitions, partnership, land-sharing - among SDI leaders, systematises activities into a broad development alternative.

Internalisation is the process of converting explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. This is "closely related to 'learning by doing'" (Nonaka *et al*, 2000: 10). For instance, in the contexts of firms: "Explicit knowledge, such as the product concepts or the manufacturing procedures, has to be actualised through action and practice [for example, internalising manuals about job procedures through practice]". The general SDI principle that NGOs should support CBOs but allow CBOs to make key decisions, or allow CBOs to begin to negotiate with authorities on their own, is an explicit knowledge that is converted to tacit knowledge in practice. Groundswell co-ordinator Toby Blume, for instance, has spoken about this positioning of the NGO in relation to the CBO as something he learned about the exchange to India (Section 3.5.4). This tacit knowledge is shared with others through socialisation.

Each conversion in SECI is as process of translation. These translations are relational in that they are constituted by near and far: tacit or explicit knowledge in one place can, for instance, be combined with tacit or explicit knowledge from another place. Space and knowledge are relational constitutions, and as such are beyond simple bounded points on a map. This question of relationality is important. It attends to the crucial role of space in knowledge travel that is missing from the SECI schema as developed by Nonaka *et al* (2000). Nonaka *et al's* (2000) model also excludes the role of the material in knowledge creation, which is the subject of the second part of this section.

5.6.2 Documenting enumeration: creating statistics through socio-material imbroglios

The relationship between the material and the social, which can be traced as a series of steps of translation, is important because it affects the nature of knowledge creation. A range of heterogeneous materials are engineered – human and non-human – and mobilized in the creation of knowledge in enumerations. Various steps, or chains, connect knowledge about the world and the world itself, meaning there is no division between knowledge – say that written in an Alliance enumeration publication – and the 'outside world', that is, all the practices and materials that help produce that enumeration document.

Knowledge and the sites through which knowledge gets produced, are not separate. They are mutually constitutive and transformative. This is an ontology of knowledge contrary to the rationalist ontology of knowledge as a free-floating thing. The concept of translation highlights the sites and practices through which knowledge is heterogeneously produced, and calls for attention to the various materials that produce it. For Latour (1999), an important consequence of this is the realisation that 'words' do not correspond to 'things' – they do not *resemble* them. Rather, things become engaged in discourses through a series of translations. These discourses can ultimately come to "take the place of the original situation", just as a diagram of a forest can come to take the place of a forest itself (Latour, 1999: 67), or a map of or set of demographics about a slum settlement may take the place of the slum itself. The creation of knowledge in enumeration documents in SDI collapses the division between human and non-human and between knowledge and place.

My approach here is to question the separation of the 'social' from the 'physical' through a 'material semiotics' (Akrich and Latour, 1992: 259; Bingham, 1996) that is "concerned with how all sorts of bits and pieces – bodies, machines, and buildings, as well as texts – are associated together in attempts to build order" (Bingham, 1996: 643). My approach is similar to Riles' (2001) in that it takes seriously the role of documents, funding proposals, newsletters, and organizational charts, in the institutional life of organizations[106]. My approach also echoes Holloway's (1999) and Philo and Parr's (1999) attempt to conceptualise institutional geographies in travel, drawing on, for instance, actor-network theory. They argue that institutions are never 'pre-given' or 'formulated in advance', but are constantly in the making, and that they act in multiple ways through the weaving together of heterogeneous materials. Holloway (1999: 654) characterises institutional geographies as "active space-times in allowing certain knowledges and practices concerning ourselves and the world to be performed and made to travel...[they are] always becoming stabilised, rather than already stabilised and formalised relational effects." These materials travel to greater or

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[106] Riles (2001) conducts an ethnography of legality that analyses the experiences of a group of Fijian bureaucrats and activists preparing for and participating in the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

lesser extents. For example, documents, data and people travel more successfully than buildings. Artifacts of varying degrees of travel show that the geographies of institutions are not fixed points of simply bricks-and-mortar, but relational geographies that combine heterogeneous connections of near and far. This approach emphasises the geographies of knowledge as 'ongoing accomplishments'.

An example of the collapsing of the material and social in the creation of knowledge is the production of the Indian Alliance's document, *We, the Invisible (WTI)*. WTI is a collection of data based on an enumeration conducted by the Alliance of poor people in Mumbai in 1985. It represents the first enumeration conducted by the Alliance, and by implication the first conducted by SDI. A most obvious but taken-for-granted (Riles, 2001) example of the role of the material in the production of knowledge is the role of the computer and the different relations computers have with different people in allowing action to take place, as Batliwala and Patel (1985: 13) narrate:

> Since none of us had any training in computers, we were totally mystified by the 'computerese' spoken by our EDP [a computer firm] friends as they no doubt were by our 'activese'. We were told the size of our data – 6,000 households and almost 27,000 individuals – was throwing up a host of problems for a programme normally designed to handle a much smaller volume of data. By the time the programme was 'debugged', there was no time for anything but simple frequency tables.

If the computer programme had failed then the document would not have been completed and the press conference for its launch would have been cancelled. SPARC worked through the night to get the document finished. The document is an accomplishment, part of a network that weaves together a range of heterogeneous materials.

In both *WTI* and a second enumeration report concerning hutments along railway tracks produced by the Alliance in the late 1980s - *Beyond the beaten track* - the Alliance acts as a translator through the displacement and thus transformation of its skills, knowledge and histories into documents. Here we have the ideas of SPARC workers - placed as they are in the broader backdrop of development strategies perceived by them as dismissive of poor people's

knowledge – creating statistical knowledge of individual pavement and slum dwellers (arranged into collectives of information – as 'clusters'), and arranging these artefacts into two short documents. This translation involves "*mobilisation*: the use or the *enrolment* of different, heterogeneous, materials" (Latour, 1999: 67), including paper, PCs, envelopes, cameras, films, developing materials, printers, maps (for example, pavement clusters were charted on city maps), questionnaires, and so on. The pavement enumeration was mobilized in the railway enumeration. The two documents are folded into one other – the 'ghosts' (Thrift, 1999) of the pavement enumeration are present in the railway enumeration, for instance, as a set of ideas about how enumeration can be done. In the travelling of enumeration, pieces of paper become standardised and form a basis for simplifying and collecting data about slum settlements. Standardisation in enumeration is perhaps most potently visible in the enumeration form itself, which is designed to compartmentalise data about the slum as a cluster. Figure 9 illustrates one example of an enumeration sheet compiled by the Bangalore Slum Dwellers Federation:

Figure 9: Slum enumeration sheet

BANGALORE CITY SLUM DWELLERS FEDERATION

Affiliated To: National Slum Dwellers Federation

Head Office :   Regional Office

National Slum Dwellers Federation   C/o Ambedkar Education Society,
Megraj Sethi Marg,   K. S. Garden, Lalbagh Road.
Municipal Dispensary,   BANGALORE-560 027.
Byculla, bombay-400 008

SLUM ENUMERATION SHEET

1. Name and Address of the Slum : ....
   ....
   ....

2. Age of the Slum............................. City................................... Slum No...................

3. Location of the Slum (Description of Boundaries) ....
   ....
   ....

   a) Total Area in Acres............... ....
   b) Land Title:...................
      Central Government, State Govt., B.D.A., B.D.O., Corporation.
      Slum Board, private land. if any other specify.
   c) Authorised or Unauthorised by...........................from the year.......................
   d) Tax paid yes / no patta issued yes No if yes which year...............................

4. Corporation Division No...
   Legislative Constituency No..

5. Total population.......... ....

6. Number of Huts...........................

7. Number of families. ....

8. Caste............ ....(S C / S T & BC Minority)

Through a series of translations, 'things' become engaged in travelling knowledges. Settlements get mapped, houses get enumerated. They are transformed into a small mobile collection of data, that is, 'things' are made into 'signs' (Latour, 1999). They are then analysed on the floors of the Area Resource Centres (ARCs), the slums of the settlements, and the offices of the Municipal Corporations. When the maps and enumeration statistics are

accompanied by written text – as in, for instance, *WTI* – the text acts as a 'sign' for the 'things' that the map and tabulated enumeration data then become[107]. This data reveals codified knowledge and trends not known previously and that could not be known without the enumeration. It reveals features of the slum settlements unknown not just to outsiders but also to pavement and slum dwellers – or, at best, only guessed at – prior to the data collection. In so doing, responses and scenarios are imagined. Pieces of paper encompass the sites – divided into 'clusters' - that, paradoxically, disappear even as the observers sit and analyse them in the settlements. This is a reversal of space and time: "...we are able to oversee and control a situation in which we are submerged, we become superior to that which is greater than us, and we are able to gather together synoptically all the actions that occurred over many days" (Latour, 1999: 65). As Latour writes of pedologists researching the Amazon forest, it is only when samples are abstracted for analysis from the dense confusion of the forest that rapid progress is made: "In losing the forest, we win knowledge of it" (*ibid*. 38).

The purpose of these documents is to allow the Alliance to "(potentially) exert an influence, to be able to act across space and through time" (Holloway, 1999: 557) in attempts to influence authorities and organize pavement and railway slum dwellers. Both documents travel through public and private organizations, donors, and other NGOs and CBOs as a result of three processes of transformation involved in translation: *simplification* - the complexity of information about the lives of those involved is "suppressed" - *discrimination* - the documents brought into being are "now clearer objects" than what they replace (that is, they are a particular view of the pavement or railway slum, charted in frequency tables, graphs and pie charts; a situated knowledge) - and *interrelation* - although different in nature, the documents are understood as similar objects to other documents (Holloway, 1999: 557). The creation of action across space and through time by these documents illustrates the properties of

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[107] These translations usually go unnoticed, as Latour writes: "We never detect the rupture between things and signs, we never face the imposition of arbitrary and discrete signs on shapeless and continuous matter. We see only an unbroken series of well-nested elements, each of which plays the role of sign for the previous one and of thing for the succeeding one" (1999: 56).

immutability and mobility: they travel and are to varying extents durable through time (Latour, 1988). Through documents, the Alliance's ideas are able to move at new speeds and distances, although the knowledge is variously received and interpreted. As codified knowledge, the knowledge can move more rapidly than tacit knowledge. The documents are posted on SPARC's website and reach further distances and take on new mobilities, in the process changing form and becoming more durable while simultaneously more available and limited (slum dwellers, for example, are less likely to be able to go to the website).

Thus, new knowledge about pavements and slums emerges from analyses of data, which emerges from the compiling of maps and tables using various materials (statistical packages, computers, etc.), which emerges from data collection by whatever volunteers can be mobilised throughout the slums, which emerges from questionnaires, which emerge from the idea of conducting an enumeration, which emerged from the exclusion of pavement and slum dwellers from government censuses. Latour has referred to this process as 'inscription': a general term that "refers to all the types of transformations through which an entity becomes materialized into a sign, an archive, a document, a piece of paper, a trace" (Latour, 1999: 306). These inscriptions, such as graphs in enumeration documents, are empirical knowledge, and SDI has found they can gain credibility as such. Both the material and the social are (always already) folded together in the creation of statistical knowledge in documents like WTI. The documents, then, are 'quasi-objects', as Serres would have it (Bingham, 1996) – they can act in various ways and are therefore more than what the traditional sense of 'object' allows. For instance, *WTI* alters in the hands of different people in different situations with different objectives (for example, a municipal corporation designing policy as compared with an NGO planning an enumeration, or a donor allocating funding).

5.7   Learning and SDI: communities and constellations

SDI conceives learning as occurring through participation in the practices of groups. By joining in on whatever is going on in a place when an exchange occurs – such as an enumeration, exhibition, or dialogue with local state officials

- learning occurs. Learning is conceived as a creative mixture of knowledge and places. Rather than being perceived as the linear addition of knowledge, learning is conceived in SDI as a transformation of knowledge and social relations. For instance, ACHR (2000: 2) argue that the one commonality in exchanges "is that afterwards, when people go back home, or when they see off their visitors, *they are a little bit different.* Something has happened to shake things up". As a result, learning is viewed as uncertain (ACHR, 2001: 2).

The most frequent way in which learning is referred to in SDI is in terms of 'learning-by-doing' in groups (ACHR, 2000; SDI, 2003; Patel and Mitlin, 2001). Learning is conceived as taking place "in situ" (Homeless International, 2000: 7). For example, SPARC write in a Homeless International publication about learning in exchanges that:

> Normally NGOs design workshop-type exposure programmes where the week's programme is organised in advance. We have never used that system, because we are quite clear that the most effective way in which people learn is *practically, by doing things.*

This means that learning occurs through an "immediate immersion in the ongoing projects of the host community" (Appadurai, 2002: 41). This immersion can be any of a whole range of activities. For instance, Appadurai (2002: 41) states that they "range from scavenging in the Philippines and sewer digging in Pakistan to women's savings activities in South Africa and housing exhibitions in India". The next section will analyse learning in SDI using Wenger's (1998) 'communities of practice' and drawing on examples from exchanges, daily savings, and model house and toilet construction.

5.7.1   Learning by doing

There is an emphasis in SDI on learning through practice, whether in respect to daily savings, enumerations, exhibitions, exchanges, or negotiations with authorities. This doing is explicitly social in SDI: learning occurs through interaction with people and participating in the practices of a group. Wenger (1998: 45) defines communities of practice (COP) as "created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise". Knowing (1998: 137), for Wenger, is

the ability to participate in the practice of the community[108]. COPs are autonomous groups that are self-organising and share the "mutual commitment of the community, built around activities commonly understood and continually renegotiated by its members" (Amin and Cohendet, forthcoming: 125). Local SDI members, such as Mahila Milan, contain COPs. COPs emerge not necessarily along organised group boundaries, but through interaction between particular people. Thus, within Mahila Milan in Byculla there are sub-groups that form COPs, such as the group of four women who update the manual ledgers on daily savings, or the group that conducts daily savings rounds. SDI is not a single COP, but a collection of COPs with varying forms and strengths of relationship with one another.

Wenger (1998: 127) refers to such organisational forms as "constellations" of COPs. 'Constellation' is a term referring to a grouping of stellar objects of different sizes and distances form one another that are seen as a configuration. It is an appropriate concept because it is a particular way of seeing groups as related (Wenger, 1998: 127). COPs are part of a constellation when they include (Wenger, 1998: 127):

1. shared historical roots

2. having related enterprises

3. serving a cause or belonging to an institution

4. facing similar conditions

5. having members in common

6. sharing artefacts

7. having geographical relations of proximity or interaction

8. having overlapping styles or discourses

9. competing for the same resources

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[108] The role of group learning means, for Wenger, that the privileging of learning in a classroom environment with a teacher delivering information in quiet, controlled conditions, is often misplaced.

SDI members share many of the listed features between them. They share historical roots not in the sense of being from the same place but in the sense of being people living in urban poverty and often being rural-urban migrants. They have related enterprises through, for instance, the involvement of visiting groups in the activities of another during exchanges, or the similarities in struggle with negotiations with authorities for resettlement, or the common pursuit of funding from a small clutch of donors. They share in common being formal SDI members and work towards urban poverty reduction through changes in urban governance and the deployment of a range of shared strategies. They have members in common in that, for instance, NSDF President Jockin is also the SDI President, or MM members are NSDF members. They share artifacts in the form of self-documentation, for instance through enumerations, or through sharing ideas about how to possibly use materials for construction. Sharing ideas about housing construction is one practical way in which knowledge travels in SDI and learning occurs. For example, in the first India – South Africa exchange in the early 1990s to Mumbai, South Africans were introduced to house construction through visiting model houses constructed in Mumbai and Bangalore, then drawing their own model houses in consultation with one another, then constructing small versions of model houses using cardboard, paper, sellotape, etc. The visitors went through this process again when they went home with people in their local area. Soon after, they constructed their own full-size model houses.

SDI members share a broad discourse of self-management as an approach to urban poverty. While SDI members do not compete for the same resources, they campaign for similar resources – that is, land and infrastructure. SDI members do not share physical proximity, but they do share proximities of knowledge. For instance, traces of the Indian Alliance are left in South Africa from exchanges in the form of, for instance, knowledge about conducting housing construction. Wenger (1998: 131) himself states that the geography of practice in constellations cannot be reduced to proximity: "[T]he landscape of practice is an emergent structure in which learning constantly creates localities that reconfigure the geography". SDI members share a relational proximity that refigures proximity as shared pursuits and knowledges rather than simply physical adjacency. This spatial relationality is one of the ways in which learning

occurs in constellations of COPs. In this usage, constellations of COPs are translocal[109].

These nine features create continuities that define broader configurations than a COP: a COP can be part of any number of constellations, and indeed COPs define themselves in part by negotiating positions in relation to broader constellations. The Indian Alliance or the South African Alliance, for instance, view themselves as local organisations part of an international network. In these constellations knowledge is tacit and codified and, as is clear from the varied list of nine features, the distinctions between the two in learning are difficult to make. In COPs and constellations of COPs it is practically impossible to attribute learning to tacit or codified knowledge, because groups "enrol and align a very wide range of facilities, tools, routines and conventions, some of which are expressions of tacit knowledge and some of which embody codified knowledge" (Amin and Cohendet, forthcoming: 130)[110]. One example of the distinction between tacit and codified knowledges in learning in constellations can be made through exchanges. Wenger (1998: 139) defines learning as a "transformation of knowing". This can occur in SDI through, for instance, the conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge (externalisation)[111]. One of the purposes of exchange is to make tacit knowledge explicit, and through this allow groups to learn about themselves and learn with others. This tendency in SDI is reflected in ACHR's (2000: 16) claim: "The farther away you travel, the

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[109] Translocal (M.P. Smith, 2001: 17, 19) refers to "multi-sited" networks of "social actors engaged in a reterritorialized politics of place-making" (see also Clifford, 1997: 7). It is a useful term in reference to SDI because it emphasise the linking of places (local to local) not necessarily including the national scale.

[110] More broadly, Wenger (1998: 47) problematises the individual / collective knowledge barrier by arguing that tacit knowledge is not simply restricted to the individual: "Common sense is only commonsensical because it is sense held in common...the concept of practice highlights the social and negotiated character of both the explicit and the tacit in our lives". Starbuck and Porrini (2002: 7454) argue that the boundaries between information and knowledge are difficult to draw because the conversion of information to knowledge depends on knowledge (is this information of use? How should I use this information?), which derives from information.

[111] I should make clear here that I am not suggesting all tacit knowledge is or can be converted into explicit knowledge in SDI. Undoubtedly there is much tacit knowledge, perhaps particularly that related to emotional trauma (like demolition), that cannot be articulated or necessarily understood (Mohapatra, 2003: 298; 314).

more you see yourself". For example, visitors in a new place are forced to ask questions about themselves not normally examined in daily life 'back home':

> Responses have to be addressed, different attitudes and values have to be clarified, moods and atmospheres have to be read. But all this is happening light years away from their local situations, they're out of the caution zone – they can relax a little, make mistakes, say what they think, test new positions (ACHR, 2000: 16).

To some extent, then, learning in SDI is a product of displacement. This is learning as a relational process combining 'near' and 'far', a process that to some extent calls such binaries into question. This is not to say that the 'far' is a more important than the 'near' for learning in SDI: it is the 'near' that is the object of struggle and key site of learning for SDI, whether through local political negotiations, meetings, enumerations, exhibitions, or daily savings. Rather, I am attempting here to attend to the important role of the 'far' in contributing to learning in SDI. COPs are one useful way of thinking through the spatial relationality of learning in SDI. In particular, attention to the changing alignment between 'experience' and 'competence' in SDI helps to explore some of the ways in which mutual imbrications of 'near' and 'far' occur and are important.

5.7.2 Experiences and competences

Learning in COPs is a function of the alignment between experiences and competences. This underlines the importance of practices. In exchanges, learning-by-doing occurs through participating in what is going on in a given place upon arrival, whether it be an enumeration, an exhibition, or a period of negotiation with authorities for, for instance, land. It is in learning-by-doing that 'teaching' occurs in SDI. This is based on the principle: "If she can do it, I can do it" (Patel, 2001[112]). The following quotation, taken from an Indian SDI member and highlighted by Groundswell (2003), espouses the importance of establishing competences through the experiences of poor people:

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[112] Interview with Sheela Patel, November 2001.

> No university has taught you to come from the village, to squat on land, to build your own house, to find work. Nobody gave you that training. But you have all that knowledge. If you depend on training, nothing will come to you. If you see somebody doing something, you can do it yourself. In our work, we do no training - we learn from each other. If you go somewhere and tell your story to another person, they will learn from you - how you came, how you survive, how you got a house, how you talked to the city.

Exchanges are a means through which the poor can reflect on their own experiences and become involved in practices in a given place and develop competences. Exchanges are one of the ways in which, Patel, Bolnick and Mitlin (2000: 399) claim, the poor learn how to "participate in their own development". This is learning through constellations of COPs. For instance, in Bangalore, one MM woman, Jula, who is one of three main MM leaders for the thirty areas covered by the 'South Unit' (there are two 'units' in Bangalore), said exchanges had taught her how to 'do' savings and that at an exchange to a housing exhibition in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, she had learned how to construct houses with a low budget. The kind of competences she is referring to include the daily practice of savings, such as getting individual passbooks to members, arranging groups of around 50 people into collection areas, and drawing up and compiling manual records. Lacksmi Shanmughan (2001[113]), of Bangalore District Mahila Milan (BDMM), referred to how through exchanges with Mumbai she and others learned "how they [in Mumbai] started their organisation through savings". One practical example Shanmughan gave was the use of colour coded money deposit boxes – for example, green for Rs. 1 or red for Rs. 2 – that helps organise the scheme and make it accessible to slum dwellers. Here, learning is occurring through the experience of one group driving the competences of another. These competences are in turn altered through experience. This occurs, for instance, through groups mediating knowledge for their own places. For example, groups may draw on the organisational form of daily savings but learn that in practice it is more fitting in their own place to have weekly or monthly savings than daily savings due to earning patterns. This is the case in Hyderabad and in areas in South Africa and Thailand.

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[113] Interview with Lackshmi Shanmughan, President of Bangalore District Mahila Milan (BBDM), December 2001.

Learning from new and old experiences

The driving of competences through experiences – new and old - indicates that learning is uncertain. New experiences, such as participation in a model house exhibition, can lead to competences in construction. One example is the early experimentation with housing construction in South Africa. New experiences led to new competences, and groups were organised through social learning:

> [At first people were sceptical about] this people's housing training business. But in India we saw for ourselves how easy and how important this people's based shelter training is for individual squatter settlements and also for a united homeless people's movement. It was soon clear to us that here in Piesang River, the people we were training were reaching a similar understanding" (People's Dialogue, no date: no pagination).

This became clear during a house-modelling exhibition: "By the time it came to assembly the four of us [from People's Dialogue] were on the sidelines. The members of the community were in charge of the house modelling, giving advice, voicing disagreement, actively discussing the kind of houses they would like to live in" (People's Dialogue, no date: no pagination). House modelling is a form of learning that is at one social, practical and material. Modelling is an example of learning-by-doing, marked by the development of new competences through new experiences. For example, Figure 10 shows members of the South African Homeless Peoples Federation drawing a model house following a trip to Mumbai in February 1993, and Figure 11 shows people working on the model house:

Figure 10: Drawing model houses (People's Dialogue, no date: no pagination)

Figure 11: Constructing model houses (People's Dialogue, no date: no pagination)

In exhibitions and construction projects, learning is a process of achieving technocratic knowledge. Mahila Milan women in Pune, for example, have trained themselves, though the help of an NGO called the Maharashtra Social Housing and Action League (MASHAL), in construction techniques pertaining to the building of toilet blocks. They buy materials, employ contractors, deal with corruption, engage in construction, and maintain the final product. 'Development problems' such as housing are simultaneously social and technical; the difference lies in the fact the 'experts' and poor people are speaking in different sociotechnical 'phrase-universes' (Lyotard, 1988). Exchanges provide a way around this and allow one group's competences (say, in a construction technique) to drive another group's competence through the experience of meeting other poor people in exchanges. For instance, Amita Mbaye, part of a Senegalese Savings and Loan Network, said:

> When I asked the technician (who works with us in Dakar) to show us how layout plans are designed, he used such sophisticated jargon that I barely understood a word he said. In Protea South

> (Gauteng, South Africa) during our last evening, we asked a woman to draw us a plan. When she explained house modelling, I understood and felt that I too could do it (Patel and Mitlin, 2002: 132).

This is a new experience driving learning through the travelling of codified knowledge: an example of combination in the SECI schema. Old and familiar experiences, such as family problems, can be reframed through COPs. For example, through regular interaction in daily savings[114] the experiences of groups develop ways of meeting needs. One MM member in Mumbai, Shanhaz, from Shantinagar, describes this process:

> So for one year we didn't touch this money we put it aside and said we were going to use this money only for a house and nothing else. But in a year's time one of our federation members Laxmi had a problem, her husband was picked up by the police and she had to bail him out but she didn't have the money...so she came running to Mahila Milan to ask for some money. That's what made us realise that we can't just save for a house but we have to look at the many other aspects of our life. And so we started looking at other forms of savings and other things we had to do to make this whole process more integrated and not just focussed on a house (Shanhaz 2001: no pagination).

COPs and constellations of COPs learn through a changing realignment of experience and competence in social participation, then, but this does not mean that learning is consensual. Patel and Mitlin (2002: 126) argue that conflict is part of the process of participation in SDI:

> [The process] of securing participation may involve conflict, often within the community itself, as social relationships change and a new set of winners and losers emerges. This raises a set of issues about how such conflicts can be managed successfully, although with the recognition that 'conflict' is a central aspect of participation and democratic local development.

Managing conflict is a question of managing competing situated knowledges in a web of different power relations. Learning in SDI gives the poor additional

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[114] Speaking at a meeting with the Ford Foundation in November 2001, Jockin highlighted savings as an everyday routine: "Everyone [of the MM leaders] does it in one hour...it is not paid, it is a voluntary service...they just collect money...Then [they bring] in the money [to the Byculla ARC]...it becomes so routine". He asserted that these routines drive the savings process and bring people together to discuss, develop allegiances to one another, and mobilize.

power to analyse, reflect and debate on their development, a power "traditionally held by professionals" but through SDI's activities "owned" by poor people (Patel and Mitlin, 2002: 134). This ownership, argue Patel and Mitlin (2002: 134), results from the fact knowledge is drawn from and created by the poor themselves.

5.8   Conclusion

This chapter has explored how knowledge is conceived and created in SDI, concentrating in particular on the Indian Alliance. It has shown how in SDI knowledge can be draw upon and mobilised, created and communicated. The emphasis in SDI is on creating knowledge, which occurs in three principle ways. One, existing knowledge is drawn upon in order to create new knowledges. This includes knowledge related to construction, coping with demolitions, developing savings schemes, and so on, that then undergoes translation in housing and sanitation construction, or in 'teaching' other SDI members about, for example, daily savings. The creating of knowledge through drawing on knowledge highlights the overlaps between the two. Two, technical knowledge is created through experience and dialogue between poor people in exchanges. Three, statistics are created and used in various ways as development tools[115]. The distinction between creating knowledge, drawing on knowledge, and communicating knowledge is useful for analytic purposes (see Figure 8), but collapses in practice. There are significant overlaps between the three. The creation of knowledge can be analysed through the SECI schema developed by Nonaka *et al* (1999), which reveals the important role of the relationship between tacit and explicit knowledge in knowledge creation. This chapter has shown the importance of developing this model to include both spatial relationality and relational materialism in knowledge creation.

The chapter has argued that in SDI learning is conceived as occurring through the participation of people in groups. Wenger's (1998) notions of communities of practice and constellations of communities of practice have been

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[115] Chapter 7 will elaborate on the political impacts of this knowledge.

demonstrated to be useful analytical tools here. His emphasis on the relationship between experiences and competences is useful for analysing learning in SDI. For example, the dialectic is helpful for understanding how learning about the practicalities of daily savings and housing construction occurs.

This chapter should be viewed in comparison to the previous chapter on knowledge for development in mainstream development. Through the two chapters, the importance of taking seriously the conception of knowledge for development has been demonstrated. This chapter has argued that, far from travelling in a linear way - a conception of knowledge in which knowledge can travel untransformed - knowledge always changes as it moves. Knowledge travels by always undergoing translation. Materials are important in the travelling of knowledge: for example, model houses travel through SDI, and enumeration documents influence enumeration in different places. The relationality of space is also important in the travelling of knowledge. The 'mixing' of different spaces creates new and shifting alignments of competence and experience in an (uncertain) learning process. Through examination both of mainstream development and SDI as a development alternative, a post-rationalist theoretical framework has been built for analysing the conception and creation of knowledge that builds on the framework introduced in Chapter 1.

This framework has highlighted: the importance of a non-linear and non-functionalist conception of knowledge and learning; the crucial role of practices in knowledge creation and learning, the importance of conceiving learning as a social process; the need to recognise the labour involved in knowledge creation; the need to recognise the uncertainty of learning rather than assuming that learning will follow a pre-determined course; the need to recognise spatial relationality in knowledge creation rather than emphasising an 'in-here' (local) 'out-there' (global) ontology of knowledge creation; the insights that emerge when the material is considered alongside the social as a critical ingredient in knowledge creation; and the importance of recognising the role of power in shaping discourses of knowledge and learning for development, whether from the World Bank or SDI. SDI's conception of knowledge and learning represents an alternative politics of knowledge from that of mainstream development, which

frames knowledge and learning through a neoliberal post-Washington consensus. In SDI, poor people's knowledge is placed at the centre of development, creating space for pedagogic learning. In doing so, SDI does not exclude knowledge from 'outside' the immediate settlement and city. Indeed, while 'near' knowledge, learning and struggle are the focus of energy for SDI members, knowledge, learning and struggle are all informed by transnational engagement. For SDI, privileging the knowledge of the poor need not involve excluding knowledge from 'outside': indeed, it actively seeks to engage in 'outside' knowledge, while simultaneously arguing that this knowledge must be driven by other groups of the urban poor in other settlements rather than by professional 'experts'. One consequence of this discussion is that mainstream development and development studies should seriously consider the possibilities of learning through exchanges of the poor locally, nationally, and even internationally (although clearly here there are important constraints of budget). The next chapter will explore the challenges of learning through travel, focussing in particular on exchange.

Chapter 6

Managing exchange:

challenges to knowledge and learning in travel

6.1　Introduction

This chapter will explore challenges to knowledge and learning through travel, and will do so with particular attention to exchanges. While the last chapter detailed the conception of knowledge and learning in SDI, this chapter will detail some of the challenges to the travelling of knowledge. The chapter will begin with a brief consideration of whether and how differences in language present a challenge to SDI and its exchanges. It will then explore the relationship between knowledge, power and the SDI network, highlighting how representations by SDI leaders risk limiting the autonomy of knowledge and learning of member groups by potentially encouraging them to attempt to copy. The chapter will then consider the relationship between knowledge, SDI and the Groundswell network, highlighting how perceptions can become embroiled with the nature and possibilities of knowledge and learning through travel. A tension in SDI between copying and learning will feature throughout the chapter. Through the analysis of SDI and the relationship between SDI and groups in the UK, the chapter will draw attention to some of the challenges of knowledge and learning through travel in civil society, and in particular the question of learning between and beyond North and South, questions often neglected in global civil society literature. The chapter seeks to make a contribution to the important question of the challenges presented by knowledge and learning in travel. The topic of learning between North and South, explored in Chapter 3, will be examined in reference to some of the challenges that the opportunity provides.

6.2   Exchange, language and culture

International exchanges, as well as some exchanges throughout India, are made more challenging by cultural differences[116]. A range of challenges present themselves in exchanges, sometimes related to cultural differences and sometimes not (ACHR, 2000: 9):

> Dealing carefully with all this is an important part of managing exchanges. For people unused to travelling, the difficulties of going away can be overwhelming; different food, different customs, different languages, different habits of cleanliness, different styles of organisation. The exchange file is bursting with stories of Indians getting lost in airports looking for the toilets, Vietnamese losing passports, Cambodians falling into the sea on the way to Elephanta Island [Mumbai], Sri Lankans mistaking a finger bowl for soup and drinking it, Thais carrying secret stashes of dried noodles and bananas for fear of foreign food...

Differences in language present a challenge in exchanges but are rarely discussed as an obstacle in the SDI literature; interpreters are provided where needed (from the organisations themselves if possible) and expected to give full translations in informal and exploratory dialogue. For example, ACHR (2000: 9) write in their advice on exchanges: "A person [interpreter] who is actually interested in the process, who can translate in a lively, accurate and sensitive way – without interpreting and processing – *is a gold mine*". Interpreters are not always used. ACHR comment, for instance, on one of the ways in which key SDI groups – the groups that do most of the exchange 'teaching' – handle language barriers. They refer to these groups as 'vanguard communities'[117]. ACHR (2000: 9) comment:

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[116] The question of cultural differences will be explored in relation to issues that have emerged through the engagement between groups in the UK and India later in the chapter. These issues are in a separate section because they are distinct from the issues raised here in relation to SDI itself because of perceptions about the UK.

[117] "The ones up at the front of the line, the innovators, the risk takers, the go-getters. So in Bombay, you have your Byculla Mahila Milan, and in Pune there's Rajendranagar. Then South Africa has its Philippi and Zimbabwe has its Mbare. In Phnom Penh you have Toul Svay Prey and in the Philippines it's Payatas. These communities become demonstration centres and hosts of innumerable exchange visits" (ACHR, 2000: 9).

> After handling such a lot of traffic, these vanguard communities become very resourceful and efficient hosts of exchange teams...The Byculla Mahila Milan have even been known to do without translators now and then. Now, when the South Africans, Cambodians and Nepalis come to India...you just send the visiting teams out with these Mahila Milan women and they talk in their own simple telegraphic language: You go do this, go do that! [They] may know only a few words of [for example] English, but there's so much affection there, so much understanding about people's needs. They can take visitors around on their savings collections, go shopping with them, take them to eat.

This passage indicates that the emphasis on learning through practice mitigates the difficulties of language in exchange. Taking part in practices in a given place mediates the relationship between different groups. However, while these challenges in communicating knowledge and learning in exchange are viewed as difficult but not insurmountable challenges, the relationship between knowledge, learning and power in exchange is rarely considered in SDI. The next section will explore some of the difficulties around this relationship through a discussion of two related challenges that affect exchanges: representation and replication.

6.3 Knowledge, power and SDI

Power and knowledge are inextricably related (Foucault, 1978; Kothari, 2001). Few writers have demonstrated the inseparable connection between power and knowledge more fully than Foucault. For example, writing about torture in his (1978: 27) *Discipline and Punish*, in which he relates changing forms of punishment to the development of different legal and scientific knowledges, he argued the need to "abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended". Foucault insisted that we "admit rather that power produces knowledge...that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations". The travelling of knowledge is always marked by fields of power-knowledge relations. The engagements between particularly influential groups in SDI, such as the Indian Alliance in Mumbai, and other groups in India and SDI, are not neutral encounters. In this section, I will explore some of the ways

in which knowledge and power relate in problematic ways in SDI, exploring in turn closely related politics of representation and politics of replication.

6.3.1   The politics of representation

This section will highlight some of the potential dangers of the relationship between power and knowledge as knowledge travels in SDI by examining the representations of places and knowledge transfer in SDI. It will explore the question of representations by drawing mainly on examples from India. Mumbai is often represented as the site where work is most established and advanced in India and SDI by Alliance leaders. There is an implicit danger in the mobilising of these representations: that groups outside Mumbai may feel compelled to copy what they see in Mumbai during exchanges. This danger exists despite the emphasis in SDI on the need for groups to develop strategies autonomously (Section 3.8.7).

The Alliance has shown a commitment to learning both in its own work and in its work across India and with other SDI members. Within the Alliance in Mumbai there is a commitment to learning through dialogue and practices between slum and pavement dwellers in meetings, and between the poor and authorities in meetings (Patel and Mitlin, 2001: 11). The Alliance also learns from other groups. One example is a sanitation construction programme that has been ongoing since 1999 involving Mahila Milan in Pune. The programme led to greater technical knowledge about sanitation construction among MM members than those in Mumbai. A number of exchanges between Mumbai and Pune since then have focussed on 'teaching' MM members in Mumbai about the construction of toilet blocks.

However, some comments from key Alliance members appear to indicate a tendency to view knowledge and ideas as disseminating *from* Mumbai, a tendency that sits alongside and runs contrary to the conception of knowledge

and learning elucidated in Chapter 5. For example, Patel (2002[118]) has defined the relationship between groups in India and throughout SDI and Mumbai as one in which Mumbai is the central reference point:

> What you have to do is see Mumbai as a hub that's like the crucible. All the new ideas...it's the most difficult place to work...the size of the city, the scale of the problem, a very dense environment...If you can solve something in Mumbai you can solve it in other places, and that's one of the reasons that we are not anywhere else.

She argued that the groups outside Mumbai are travelling along a similar path of development to the Mumbai groups, just at varying degrees along the path. This is an imaginary of the network in India as a progressive continuum. Speaking generally in reference to federation groups in Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore, Patel (*ibid*) argued that these places, which have generally been involved in relatively less social organising, have been less involved in such activities because they have not reached Mumbai's levels of 'consolidation':

> It's just advanced [in Mumbai]. What you see here is the culmination of fifteen, twenty years of work, but in other places it's five, ten years...that consolidation has not occurred in other places. You have to see the whole process as if it is on a continuum. Put Mumbai at this end [gestures with hand], very dense, very deep...that's why there are so many exchanges to Mumbai.

On another occasion, Patel referred to Mumbai as "the mother base"[119]. This reveals the perceived importance of Mumbai from one of the key members of the network. This is not just Patel's perception however. Jockin is confident about the potential of Mumbai to act as a "model" with Mumbai as the central reference point: "If you can do this in Mumbai you can do this anywhere else [because land is so short in Mumbai and the scale of the problem so large]...And it is also a model. Delhi is now asking 'please come and help us'"[120]. In addition, the constant reference by people in Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Bangalore, to what they have seen and learnt from the groups in

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[118] Interview conducted January 2002.

[119] Interview conducted November 2001.

[120] Comment made at meeting at with Ford Foundation, November 2001.

Mumbai and in other places in India (and internationally), pointed to a sense of a wider and 'close-knit' federation with Mumbai at the centre.

Individuals in the Alliance in Mumbai may think in terms of the transferring of knowledge and ideas from Mumbai across the world because of how they have come to perceive SDI activities. One professional, in an interview in June 2002, associated with the Alliance suggested in reference to Patel:

> It's also an imagery the Indians like to portray...and I can kind of see why from their perspective. You know, it's a bit like, and this is a bad analogy, a kind of Mother carries on talking...she's conscious of the children in the growth phase, she puts a lot of support in, but also children then get to sixty and they've all got their own lives, their own complexities, they've taken over a career, they're moving in a completely different direction, but she focuses on the beginning bit when she supported them...So I think there's a genuine reason for a difference in perception...I don't think she's [Sheela Patel] falsifying, she's just representing her experience.

This individual is suggesting that the early involvement of the Alliance with emerging SDI member groups creates a sense of Mumbai in a senior, almost paternal role. Patel's (2002[121]) own view appears to support this:

> I think it's no different from a child who is crawling and learns to walk. You don't teach them to walk, you just hang around while they learn to walk...And when they learn to walk you don't say 'I taught you how to walk' – they learned to walk. We give support, we provide protection – you create a condition that makes that transition comfortable.

The concern here is with what these representations in Mumbai might do. If expressed to new or existing groups in India or elsewhere, do they risk encouraging those groups to try to copy what they see in Mumbai, rather than using what they experience in Mumbai as a platform for exploring their own priorities? This positions the Alliance as potentially similar to the 'development church' model outlined by Ellerman (2002) in reference to the commitment to 'Official Views' in mainstream development (Section 4.6). This possibility is hardened by the fact that even as many SDI groups publish their own work, SPARC have become key spokespersons for the Indian groups and SDI more

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[121] Interview conducted January 2002.

generally, writing in journals like IIED's *Environment and Urbanization* and a range of SDI publications, and as such have an ability to represent the network through their own perspective and with more potency than most federation members in India and abroad. In addition, individual Alliance members, notably Jockin, have become highly influential personalities in the federation.

Shekhar, in the Mumbai Area Resource Centre, argued that the Alliance's expansion is driven by Jockin's travelling around and making contacts with slum dwellers and officials, rather than through the more conventional process of providing funding to an organisation to set-up somewhere else. From 1986, SPARC supported this expansion by helping to fund exchanges but Jockin's role has continued to be critical. In Kanjur Marg, a suburb of Mumbai, the role of Jockin in the communication of this work is highly significant. A number of people talked in particular about Jockin and a local NSDF member referred to him as "Bapu" (father). In the Mumbai suburb of Wadala, the Railway Slum Dwellers Federation has named a building after Jockin – Jockin Tower. "He's an angel to us", said Sheikh Faruk Mohammed, who sits on the United Central Committee that coordinates the 48 small societies in a transit relocation camp[122]. Jockin has a powerful ability to inspire and motivate people, and these qualities have been invaluable in mobilising people in India and internationally.

Thomas, local NSDF leader in Bangalore, argued that partnerships with state authorities for housing and sanitation development had been greatly facilitated by the recognition of Jockin's work – and here he pointed to the UN Magsaysay Award[123] Jockin received. For example, the influence of Jockin was important in the building of houses in Sundadagugu, Bangalore. He met with Quanraum Islam, then the Housing Minister for Karnataka, and gained support for a

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[122] Interview conducted October 2001.

[123] The UN's Ramon Magsaysay award is an annual award for public service. It was given to Jockin for 'international understanding'. The award carries symbolic capital. For example, the award has given Jockin an international respectability that has aided his opportunities of meeting influential people. For instance, one month after receiving the award, Jockin, along with members of the SDI affiliate, the Philippines Homeless People's Federation, met with President Estrada of the Philippines, to discuss urban poverty in the Philippines.

partnership between the Alliance and the government that pledged funds from both parties and created a greater possibility for future partnership. Thomas pointed to Jockin as the key source of activities in Bangalore: "Everything has come from him", including how to approach the local people in terms of organising and how to negotiate with the authorities, on what terms, and so on[124]. Such views reflect a construction of Mumbai for many federation members throughout India as the central reference point from which knowledge and ideas disseminate and progress must be geared towards. This reveals a problematic effect of travelling knowledges and ideas and the influence of charismatic mediators like Jockin.

Jockin's status in India, and talk of him as an 'angel' or 'bapu', is suggestive of Weber's 'charismatic domination', which Weber uses in reference to political leaders and religious prophets (Weber, 1968: 656-7). For Weber, charismatic domination is a form of domination distinct from traditional (historical rules and powers) and legal domination – the other two main types of legitimacy upon which a relationship of domination may rest. Charisma is defined by Weber as "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he [sic] is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional power or qualities" (Weber, 1968: 656-7, cited in Giddens, 1994: 160). The issue for Weber is not whether a person possesses these extraordinary powers, but the fact that a person is attributed extraordinary qualities. While it would certainly go too far to suggest Jockin is attributed the role of religious prophet, Jockin's charismatic qualities - far from positioning him as a neutral mediator of travelling knowledges and ideas – represent the possibility of encouraging others to strive to copy what they associate with him rather than develop their own strategies. Reflecting on the encounters between individual leaders like Jockin and other Indian and SDI members is not to argue against the immense benefits of individuals like Jockin in mobilising and inspiring people, but to highlight the need to be alert to how Jockin might be received by groups of the urban poor and how to respond to that in ways that explicitly encourage the need to develop local priorities. The

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[124] Interview conducted December 2001.

enthusiasm and desire to learn from Mumbai creates the danger of knowledge and ideas being attempted to be copied directly. On the one hand, travelling knowledge provides an inspirational role. On the other hand, a potential danger appears to be, one, that of disappointment or frustration if progress does not reflect Mumbai's, both in terms of physical 'outputs' and social organising and, two, a curtailing of local autonomy.

6.3.2   The politics of replication

This potential is perhaps greatest when groups come into contact with the Indian Alliance, given that the Alliance has been a driver of SDI formalisation and activities, and includes SDI and NSDF President, Jockin. While knowledge is conceived by SDI leaders as changing as it travels, in practice groups occasionally attempt a direct copying of what they have seen elsewhere. This can be problematic. For example, in the Piesang River area of South Africa a member of the Homeless People's Housing Federation "explained that the visitors from India had advised them to build communal water points, as a collective space where women could talk about the Federation – however, the Federation women of Piesang River had their minds set on the conventional on-site access to water, and this had remained their demand" (Huchzermeyer, 1999: unpublished). This indicates a tension in SDI. On the one hand, SDI seeks to encourage autonomy and change as knowledge travels. On the other hand, SDI, by virtue of encouraging the travelling of knowledge, creates the possibility of travelling knowledge marginalising local concerns.

SPARC's Patel, Burra and D'Cruz (2001) point to this tension when they argue the importance of local organisations establishing their own priorities prior to embarking on a programme of international exchanges. It is argued that establishing local priorities creates a basis through which to engage with travelling knowledges, mitigating the potential of travelling knowledges marginalising local concerns. Patel, Burra and D'Cruz (2001: 55) state that "the major challenge [for SDI] is to retain balance between global advocacy and local capacity-building activities". They describe this balance as a "tension" within SDI (*ibid*. 57). This tension is an anxiety over the scale of engagement in SDI,

and it is increasing as SDI - framed as a network focused on local struggles rather than a global policy-making or global lobbying network – becomes increasingly involved in international politics.

The tension is two fold. First, there is an anxiety that the engagement of new SDI member groups with established member groups – such as the Indian Alliance – could lead to emerging groups seeking to directly transport activities (enumerations, exhibitions, a negotiating strategy such as land-sharing, etc.) prior to establishing local organizations in their own place and developing their own priorities. Second, and related to the first, there is an anxiety that lobbying and working with international organisations like HABITAT will detract from the object of struggle, such as local municipal corporations.

Imagining change: local or global?

Edwards (2001: 148) argues that there is a "tendency among some NGOs to focus on global advocacy to the exclusion of national level processes". He argues that there is a temptation for NGOs to focus attention on "global power centers, where it is often easier to gain access to senior officials and achieve a response" (*ibid*). He cautions against this strategy, arguing that it is "a serious mistake":

> There is a danger that the high profile and accessibility of global protests will detract from the real business of local politics, where participation is much more meaningful and NGOs can add real value...(Edwards, 2001: 148)

There is an assumption here that the 'real business' of politics is local. However, this is issue specific. Some organisations may decide the object of struggle should be the nation-state (for example, a gay rights campaign) or international organisation (for example, a human rights organisation seeking international support for a local issue)[125]. SDI have argued that its object of

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[125] Hardt and Negri's (2000), in their influential *Empire*, assert that alternatives to neoliberal globalization must be aimed at the global scale because focusing on the local scale does not effectively combat neoliberalism. Featherstone (2003) argues that their

struggle is the local level – such as local municipal corporations or local developers – and Edwards's worry is that organisations whose object of struggle is local can become detracted by the allure of international organisations. While Edwards argues that SDI has avoided this difficulty through its grassroots focus[126], a tension has emerged among SDI leaders over the scale of struggle. Mitlin argued that one reason for the tension around the increasing level of cross-border activities in SDI is that it has the potential to contradict SDI's "imagery of change"[127]. She argued:

> If you have an organisation that has a high profile [by being associated with successful SDI members like the Indian Alliance]...you will attract a lot of attention, everyone will have high aspirations of it, it will start to be pushed up. So there's a very strong sense that that is not a good way for an SDI group to start...much better is it has to start by very low guidance exchanges, by the poor in that particular context, city or country coming together and defining their own agendas free of anything that's coming from outside: any set of expectations, any high beliefs [about them].

She argued that the reputation that comes from being part of an 'international network' rather than a 'local group' can affect an emerging member. Emerging SDI members may be asked to participate in activities with overseas groups which maybe unhelpful to their own explorations particularly because they come at tentative early days:

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assertion is problematic in that it implies a separation of local and global. Section 7.3 will explore this question of scales of engagement further.

[126] There are implications of this global-local interplay for those who proffer the idea of a global civil society. Edwards (2001: 148) argues that there are lessons from SDI in terms of accountability, legitimacy and structure. In terms of the first two, because SDI is a membership organization, "it can develop formal and democratic internal accountability procedures". Local people and activities are the focus of the organizations, and global activities are the "icing on the cake" (*ibid.* 149). In terms of structure, "SDI is much more a movement of equals than most NGO networks and a majority of its members are from Africa and Asia. This is a mirror image of many global campaigns, which are heavily dominated by Northern NGOs accustomed to the power relations of foreign aid. These power relations make it almost impossible for large non-governmental institutions to stand back, make space for grassroots voices and allow the agenda to be driven from the bottom up" (Edwards, 2001: 149).

[127] Interview conducted with Diane Mitlin, IIED, June 2002.

> They [SDI groups] don't want a context that is so pre-
> determined...they want something that is very free, very open, that
> is about getting people to think creatively about what their problems
> are, what there solutions are, while strengthening their local
> grassroots organisations[128].

Local autonomy, it is argued, can be stifled by too much activity around transnational events which may encourage groups to try to copy what they see internationally[129]. In this sense, SDI activities risk appearing, as Mitlin put it, as a pre-determined "package of development" that could or should be repeated, rather than a set of guidelines for local mobilisation. We can think of this tension in SDI as a politics of replication. Contrary to the mainstream development discourse of knowledge and development examined in Chapter 4, which fails to acknowledge the tensions in politics of representation and politics of replication, SDI leaders wrestle with these tensions. The commitment to local circumstances and local autonomy in SDI mitigates the danger of an SDI member like the Alliance falling into the trap of attempting to replicate 'Official Views' (Ellerman, 2002). The explicit commitment to local circumstances is an implicit acknowledgment of unequal power-knowledge relations, and as such it can serve to encourage groups to develop their own local priorities. However, the danger of attempted copying – of trying to learn directly rather than indirectly - could be mitigated with greater reflection, for example, on Jockin's status and influence and greater caution over how the Indian and international network is sometimes represented by SDI leaders. Maintaining a sensitivity to what emerging SDI groups are doing is also an important challenge in this regard.

Another means for mitigating this tension is to deploy concepts that address it, such as Said's (1983) notion of 'misreadings'. Said, writing in reference to academic theory, argues against the tendency to seek to apply theories wholesale or to dismiss them as completely irrelevant. He argues that the use of theory need not be reduced to this binary construction, and he is regretful that much intellectual work is caught up in anxiety and / or criticism over the question of misinterpretation:

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[128] Interview conducted with Diane Mitlin, IIED, June 2002.

[129] See Routledge (2000) in reference to social movements, and Featherstone (2003) on transnational resistance.

> It implies, first of all, that the only possible alternative to slavish copying is creative misreading and that no intermediate possibility exists. Second, when it is elevated to a general principle...[it] is fundamentally an abrogation of the critic's responsibility...Quite the contrary, it seems to me possible to judge misreadings (as they occur) as part of a historical transfer of ideas and theories from one setting to another (Said, 1983: 237).

The notion of misreading focuses attention on the importance of change and the positive role of using what is witnessed and experienced in one place in a way that need not be about trying to copy and apply it 'back home'. The concept of misreadings directly addresses the politics of replication by emphasising the importance of creativity and local control. The next section will explore the tension between attempting to copy directly and indirect learning in a different context – the links between the Indian Alliance and Groundswell.

6.4   Evaluating North – South exchange: the example of Groundswell and the Indian Alliance

While engagements between civil society groups in the North and South represent opportunities for learning through travel that are arguably more possible today than before (given cheaper air travel and the role of the internet in maintaining rapid contact between groups), there has been little attempt to analyse or explore the challenges of knowledge and learning between North and South. Taking the examples of the exchange between Groundswell and the Indian Alliance and some of the implications of it, the chapter will now go on to explore some of challenges in knowledge and learning between North and South. The section is presented as an opportunity to consider some of the challenges of North-South exchanges.

A Groundswell (2001b) diary report written on the India-UK exchange asserts that all eleven people from the UK who attended the visit felt it had been a "life-changing experience". The report went on to argue that while conditions in India were radically different from those in the UK, commonalities had been identified:

> For the UK group, the work of the NSDF and Mahila Milan had been extremely inspiring, and it was surprising and exciting that they shared many common experiences. Although the problems and challenges of homelessness and poverty might be different, the

192

process for involving homeless people in creating the solutions could be very similar indeed.

This is reflected in the shared discourse of development that the following quote suggests, particularly the reference to the need to learn and incorporate 'experimentation':

> [W]hen charities or governments plan development...[The] reality is the poor are almost never included in project planning, where the 'community participation' component leaves precious little space for experimentation, allows at most a single failure and doesn't support those whose failure could teach everyone else (Groundswell, 2001a).

Other people working with Groundswell who met with overseas visitors at an event in January, 2000 in London commented on what they had gained from an earlier programme of exchanges. These varied from calls to forming a federation to questions of ownership over knowledge, and statements about a sense of solidarity and of gaining inspiration and encouragement. Two examples are shown below:

> We have to join together as the people who are actually living the problem, not the people coming in and telling us what the solution is. If we do that in this country and actually form a federation very similar to what they have in the South then we can actually federate with them around the world and have a unified voice (Newton, 2000).

> I recognise a real spirit amongst the overseas guests and I want to meet people like that. And I like to think that I'm one of those people too. And a lot of people out there, given the opportunity of making the acquaintance of the people that I see over there and I see around me here today, will join in because this is the thing that we've got to do together. We can't do it on our own but we can help other people (T. Smith, 2000).

Clearly, there is an important role for solidarity based around the common experiences of social injustice in forming ties between the UK homeless and India's slum and pavement dwellers (see also Gaventa, 1999). However, the cultural, political, economic and social conditions in the UK were frequently highlighted throughout the duration of the research as prime reasons for why linking with groups in the UK has never been seriously considered by SDI members. For Patel, the Groundswell visit to Mumbai and Pune was an

exploration that was of benefit to Groundswell rather than the Alliance. For her, it was not intended as a mutual learning partnership but as a 'one-off'. No mutually beneficial exchange was considered as a possibility as had been with South Africa and other SDI members. The visit was flavoured by a "romanticising" of "links with the North", said Patel (2001[130]), and Groundswell were always the "junior partner...there was no reciprocity"[131]. However, the exchange was not viewed negatively by the Alliance, as Patel commented: "That's fine, we don't mind" (ibid)[132]. The exchange was useful to Groundswell, Patel asserted, because Groundswell is constituted by people who have fallen outside the welfare (and, often, family) support system: people suffering, for example, from drug addiction or homelessness. While the exchange was not viewed as the beginning of a long-term learning programme, Patel spoke hypothetically about such possibilities. She said that this would only be possible if the UK's welfare system was further eroded[133]. The implication was that Britain's urban poor are more dependent on the state than the urban poor of SDI, and that this makes dialogue less viable. However, if welfare were further eroded, so the argument went, there would then be more need for another support system in the UK and exchange with the Alliance would be more viable. For Patel, mutual learning is more feasible in such hypothetical conditions.

The perception that there was little the Alliance could learn from Groundswell dismisses the possibilities of learning from the start. While this perception impedes the possibilities of learning for SPARC, Patel's rejection of the possibility of learning from Groundswell does not mean SPARC is more concerned with exporting its own ideas than learning from others. Rather, the perception reflects a view that because of the social, economic and political

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[130] Interview conducted November 2001.

[131] This is something of a reversal of the general trend of knowledge traveling from 'rich' to 'poor' countries in the colonial period and in mainstream development (Chapter 4; King, 1991; Mawdsley, et al, 2002).

[132] Patel's view appeared to be supported in conversation with pavement dwellers who had met Groundswell members. Most people appeared to have little to say about the UK beyond a curiosity over the existence of poverty.

[133] On this point, see Peck's (2001) analysis of 'welfare to work' in the US, Canada and the UK, which examines the politics of changing regimes of welfare.

character of the UK, Groundswell have little to 'teach' SDI members about, for example, self-managed construction or large scale participation (of people in their thousands). Indeed, the perception can be viewed as a belief that the discourse of self-management that circulates the SDI network, and the large scale levels of participation that SDI groups can gather, cannot exist in the UK because of the different social, political, economic and cultural circumstances. However, this again points to the tension between direct and indirect learning in SDI. The argument that the Alliance has little to learn from Groundswell appears to be based on the notion that the Alliance cannot 'copy' from Groundswell. This argument that the Alliance cannot directly 'lift' knowledge form Groundswell and apply it to India marginalises what Groundswell may have to offer in, for example, conducting exchanges, mobilising people, or lobbying and working with authorities. This is an instance of a rationalist view of knowledge transfer. However, elsewhere SDI leaders – including Patel – argue the need for knowledge to change in travel. The tension between copying and learning in SDI limits the possibilities of North – South engagements. This is compounded by perceptions of the North, which the next section will go on to explore.

6.5 Perceptions of learning between the UK and India

This section will explore the challenges and possibilities of learning between UK and Indian groups more generally. From the UK perspective, Bill Anderson[134], a highly positioned official at the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and formerly on the board of Homeless International with responsibility for, among other things, implementing ideas in Scotland, argued that in respect to the possibilities of learning, "there are more exceptions than rules" because the "contextual differences are too large"[135]. He gave three main reasons, which I will evaluate in turn. First, self-sufficiency for voluntary groups: "Sheela [Patel] would probably regard the model [of state funding in the UK voluntary sector] as

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[134] The name of this individual has been altered for the thesis.

[135] Telephone interview conducted with Anderson, August 2001.

unsustainable...and would argue the need for self-sufficiency over external funding" (ibid.). In contrast, he argued that this is neither necessary nor desirable in the UK. This is an unfair perception, in my view. Patel's criticisms of the UK are more directly about 'project mentality' and autonomy of groups than self-sufficiency (Patel, 1997)[136]. In addition, the problem of voluntary groups being dependent on donors and their agendas can and does pertain to Indian organisations (Hailey, 2001; Mawdsley et al, 2002). Project limitations and donors agendas are issues in India as they are in the UK (for example, Mawdsley et al, 2001; Cooke and Khotari, 2001; Khotari, 2001). For example, Patel has commented in reference to funding constrictions for work in India that "land tenure is a ten-year struggle, so how do you write it in a project proposal?"[137].

However, Anderson's point does have resonance with Patel's views. With reference to the focus on external funding in the UK voluntary sector, Patel, writing in 1997 following a trip to the UK argued that the sector (i) sets groups against each other; (ii) means that the emphasis is always on the worst conditions, as the more in need a group is the more likely it is to get money, meaning there are fewer possibilities for learning from the 'success stories'; (iii) emphasises and focuses on the short term (a 'project mentality' approach to development involving two to three year projects); (iv) means that community groups and NGOs are too focussed on service-delivery rather than mobilisation – partly because they become, "in a strange sense, sub-contractors" (1997: 22)[138]. Such perceptions have meant networking with groups like Groundswell have barely been regarded as an option, the assumption being that the conditions are too different to merit engagement or stimulate learning. This

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[136] SPARC's D'Cruz, in an interview conducted in October 2001, argued that dependency on donors need not be a problem in and of itself for setting agendas (she does not advocate self-sufficiency), but added that she thought SPARC would not have grown so successfully had it tried to fund work rather than encourage savings or people to find money themselves.

[137] Interview conducted with Sheela Patel, October 2001.

[138] See Morison (2000) for a discussion of the UK voluntary sector and its changing relationship with the state.

perception is found in the UK. John Carlton (2002[139]), the Chief Executive of a Housing Association based in Belfast, and a member of the Board of Homeless International, echoed these concerns when he spoke of his involvement with SDI members through Homeless International events:

> What I have taken is a reminder that getting real involvement of people who will benefit from activities is difficult because of the system and culture here [in the UK], and there is too much of a culture of activating organisations to get money to pay people to do things for people rather than promote real self help. That isn't to say that local groups don't need money and resources; just that the culture seems to act against on-going participation.

Second, and related to Carlton's comments, Anderson highlighted the issue of social security. This is generally poorly provided for in India, he stated, but significant in Scotland, particularly in the form of income support. These conditions do not lend themselves to the relatively high levels of participation in urban poverty organisations in, for example, India and South Africa. SPARC's D'Cruz also highlighted the perceived lack of a "critical mass" of people that can be mobilised for social change by exerting pressure and providing a larger base for new organisations. Such a concern is raised over and over again. For instance, a key member of one NGO based in the slums of Karachi, Pakistan[140], argued at a Homeless International event on learning from 'rich' and 'poor' countries that due to the mobilisation of a "critical mass" of people local government had "no option but to involve us" in decision-making and implementation, while others argued that such mobilisation is not possible in the UK[141]. However, even while participation in urban development in the UK

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[139] Written communication, July 2002. The name of the individual has been changed for the thesis.

[140] A group in contact with SDI through Homeless International but not an SDI member.

[141] The event, *Lessons on Urban Regeneration and Development from North and South*, held in London in September 2001, involved SDI and ACHR members from across the globe as well as Groundswell staff. The event brought together about 60 people (about 40 from the UK, many of whom were second or third generation Pakistani and other immigrant groups) to discuss the scope for ideas to move South to North and vice-versa. In the event, there was not a great deal about this theme during the day. Minds were more focussed on presentations and attempts to draw out common themes, such as the advantages of forming national federations. There was an attempt, however, to engage

involves fewer people than in India, this does not mean there is little that can be learned about, for instance, methods of participation or managing participation, such as ways of coping with local power relations or influential local leaders. Third, he highlighted the role of financial services. While he suggested that microcredit could be one area for dialogue between the Alliance and the UK, he added that because there's more access to banks, building societies and low-interest institutions such as the *Credit Union,* in Scotland than in India, there is little need or desire for savings and credit along Indian lines.

He was keen to point out that there was still potential for learning or benefiting from engaging with India: for example through extending the notion of 'participation' into areas beyond housing, or simply for being energised and inspired. We might point to other possibilities that he does not mention, such as the potential utility of exchanges, enumerations, or exploring different strategies and ideas about, for example, partnership both between NGOs and CBOs and between civil society and the state. In addition, even if we assume, as he appears to, that a relative lack of social security is the cause of high levels of participation with the Indian groups, this does not mean that there are not other ways to secure participation in the UK. There may even be lessons from India here. For instance, the Alliance uses enumeration and housing exhibitions in part to attract new members and increase – might UK groups try something similar?[142]

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with DFID policy, particularly the Urban Strategy Paper, which Ruth McLeod had highlighted at the start of the day as an area to develop during the conference.

[142] There are some examples of 'self-build' housing in the UK. The first modern 'community' self-build scheme was established in St Paul's, Bristol, in the aftermath of the 1980 riots. A group of 12 unemployed Afro-Caribbean young men built a block of flats for their own occupation. Holman and Gillon argue that "by the time construction was completed, all but one of them had gained full time work" (1994:5). Other examples include the successful self-build projects in Maltby, Rotherham by homeless people and residents of poor housing in a former mining area (*ibid*).

Codifying the 'West'

One SPARC official (2001[143]) made a broad distinction between developed and Third Worlds. She argued that there is little potential to learn between Indian and UK groups because of the "socio-political culture" in the UK – that is, the socio-political and cultural circumstances, not the groups themselves. She pointed to the general "lack of community", saying the British were too "individualistic" (*ibid*), and extended this view to groups she had encountered in Japan. She suggested that the UK and Japanese groups may find each other useful given these perceived commonalities. Such comments imply a polarising of 'West' (including Japan) and 'South', where the former stands for individualism and the latter a community focus. Such a simple binary is untrue[144]. Many commentators in the UK do argue that the rise of the 'New Right' in the 1980s has created increased levels of 'individualism'. For instance, Mayo (2000: 37) points to recent work in this area:

> The work of [communitarian] Etzioni has been taken up in the British context, by communitarians concerned to counteract the increasing fragmentation of social capital, social dislocation and excessive individualism which they have identified as the side-effects of

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[143] Interview conducted October 2001.

[144] See, for example, debates around these issues in the context of environmental exploitation in India, Grove (1995) and Guha (1989). Guha (1989) argues that in pre-colonial India, rural people lived in 'harmony' (using resources for subsistence needs over exploitation – see also Shiva, 1988: 55) with the forests around them that were communally managed for the benefit of all. This system was maintained, argues Guha, not by formal management in the modern sense, but by customary restraints on use. Thus Guha asserts that the period of colonial rule was a "watershed" in the ecological history of India. Grove (1995) has challenged such a perspective, arguing that (i) British forest officials were not as vulgarly commercial as some would suggest, indeed there is evidence of an environmental consciousness amongst some; (ii) state intervention and environmental destruction were not a monopoly of the British alone- state control over woodlands was a feature of many Indian political regimes. Guha has criticised Grove's arguments, arguing that his claim that eco-conscious British naturalists exercised 'disproportionate influence' is assumed not demonstrated, and that Grove has not examined the archival records of the State. On the 'exploitatitivness' of pre-colonial India, Guha asserts that "forests were felled here and there, principally to make way for the extension of cultivation. However, there is little evidence either of ecological collapse or of social conflict over forest resources." (1989: 218). However, "little evidence" (an ambiguous phrase itself) does not mean that it never happened and Guha's blanket dismissal of Grove's suggestions is questionable.

increasing marketisation under the New Right in the early 1980s
and early 1990s.

Such fragmentation is less a peculiarly British phenomenon than a product of
the Anglo-American post-welfare settlement (Peck, 2001). Moreover, while
fragmentation in the UK may have intensified with the rise of the 'New Right' in
the 1980s, 'individualism' is not unique to the UK[145]. Nor is individualism
homogenous throughout the UK: some groups and places have stronger social
networks than others. Anwar Rashid, of the Orangi Pilot Project, an NGO
working with urban poverty in Pakistan, told an Homeless International gathering
that he thought "the biggest obstacle to development, both in the UK and
Pakistan, is individualism" (quoted in Homeless International, 2001).

Nonetheless, Carlton (2002[146]), of the previously cited NGO in Belfast, is uneasy
about the prospects for dialogue between the UK and SDI generally, and
commented:

> I'm not sure at all what Sheela and other visitors get from talking to
> the likes of me, other than a feeling of confidence.
> There is a problem of working on the 'world' stage in that the
> experiences Sheela gets are far removed from what her frontline
> members get. The South-South exchanges I think are much more
> valuable for them. There is a conundrum for us [the UK
> representatives on the Homeless International board] in that the
> agenda should be set by the partners and they don't need us so
> much for intellectual input or solution finding. In fact we shouldn't
> want too much of that role. So it leaves the question: what are we
> here for? HI has been taking on much more of a lobbyist match-
> making and very specialist role, I think rightly so, but it makes our
> individual role as participants in HI more difficult. I'm still trying to
> work this one out.

However, perhaps then a fruitful learning process could emerge if these
differences were not viewed in such a way as to, at least in part, almost dismiss
the UK (or never consider it) as a possible ground for direct learning (copying)
and instead use differences as a platform for indirect learning? While there are
clear difficulties in engaging between India and the UK, there are also clearly

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[145] See, for instance, Atkinson (1994, 1995).

[146] Written communication, July 2002.

strong advantages and lessons learned – particularly for those who attended the Groundswell exchange to India – mainly on the utility of exchange, the role of the NGO, the potential of enumeration, and potentials of self-management. The notion of knowledge deformation as an inevitable and important part of the process is actively embraced by most groups in SDI. Yet, in the case of the UK, the perception of SDI leaders appears to be that the extent of the cultural, economic and socio-political differences is such that they form impediments, rather than potentials for translation, to the possibilities of travelling knowledges and learning. This ignores the possibility that cultural, economic and socio-political differences can themselves lead to new critical reflections – as the visit to the UK by Patel in 1996 reveals.

6.5.1 From slums to estates: critical engagement and knowledge production

This visit, which was arranged by the Centre for Innovation in Voluntary Action (CIVA) in the UK in order to gain the insights of an 'outsider' on tenants' participation in the UK, led to the production of a document entitled (1997) *From the Slums of Bombay to the Housing estates of Britain* (see Figure 12), a remarkable exploration of the possibilities of learning through engaging in a different country. It is a significant illustration of the creative power that can result when people in one set of circumstances are asked to think about their concerns in different circumstances in very different countries. Patel's insights are driven by the Alliance's focus and approach in India. For example, regarding knowledge and the role of the poor:

> I sensed that residents who see community social workers with degrees and 'proper qualifications' doing the jobs feel that it is a job for a professional and not for them...There was a negation of the value of the knowledge and life experiences that people have as an asset. It was hard for me to see people who I saw as energetic and talented not feeling they had sufficient skills and capacities to contribute equally or better than the professionals...(1997: 20).

Figure 12: 'From the Slums of Bombay to the Housing Estates of Britain'.

She expanded on these anxieties by arguing that two crucial elements are missing in the UK: one, "an efficient communication network" with a strong sense of "solidarity", and, two, a "critical mass" of people "which the state and its institutions cannot then ignore" (Patel, 1997: 5). Patel engages with dominant discourses of urban regeneration in the UK. She sought to outline her view of participation and to contrast it with what she thought the notion generally meant

in the UK, hoping to provoke reflection. In the UK, she asserted, participation separates people from officials and boxes them into groups that should be consulted: "It was as though participation was the right to choose the tiles, the cooker and the door frame from a selection made by the architect and on display in the model room" (Patel, 1997: 25). This she contrasted with her own view of participation as an intrinsic part of the development process, a process that includes a wide variety of actors and is driven by the poor as self-managers:

> In the world we live in today, we are all inter-dependent to a very large degree. We depend on each other to improve the quality of our lives. Yet each of us has the right to determine what makes us happy, what creates conditions to actualise our aspirations, and develop skills and the capacity to present to others whose interdependency with ourselves requires us to come to a consensus about how things should go forward. That is the process of participation (Patel, 1997: 25).

Such challenging and critical reflections form a basis for dialogue, exploration and learning between NGOs and CBOs in 'rich' and 'poor' countries. Patel's visit to the UK, while being focussed on her views of the UK rather than a two-way learning process between the UK and India, indicates some of the possibilities for learning from engaging in different social, political, economic, and cultural circumstances. The document raises a question in this respect. Why is it that, on the one hand, Patel's comments and her trip highlight possibilities for learning between the UK and India, while on the other hand Patel's comments about the Groundswell exchange dismiss these possibilities? It appears that Patel believes the Alliance has little to learn about urban poverty from the UK but that the UK has more to learn from the Alliance. This is another example of the tension between direct and indirect learning, where the potential to learn from the UK is dismissed because of (often problematic) perceptions about the UK's socio-cultural, political and economic circumstances. The next section will explore the question of North-South exchange by civil society organisations further, and will highlight not the challenges but the possibilities of these encounters.

6.5.2   Learning between North and South: examples from civil society engagements

Engagements between civil society groups in the North and South are rare. A notable exception comes from the work of Gaventa (1999). Gaventa relates experiences he had as part of an American NGO – the Highlander Research and Education Centre – based in the rural areas of Appalachia, eastern USA. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Highlander ventured on a series of explorations with "work for community development and empowerment conducted across the globe" (1999: 27). He highlights several reasons for this. "First, our reading and experience suggested that as a rural region within a wealthy nation, we shared many problems with other poor regions of the world – problems that were perhaps masked by the Northern, wealthy, urban and industrial context in which we were located" (*ibid*). A brief 'look' found "parallel issues and movements in the South, especially around such problems as literacy, land reform, rural development and health care" (*ibid*). Second, "we increasingly became struck by parallels in methods of working from which we could learn", such as with literacy or "empowerment and capacity-building" (*ibid*). Third, "and perhaps most importantly, we increasingly found an inter-relationship between the issues upon which we worked, and those of other countries, to the extent that they simply could not be ignored. For instance, one effect of working with communities affected by the toxic poisoning of water was for the plant to close and move to Latin America, simply displacing the problems to others, rather than solving it" (Gaventa, 1999: 29)[147].

Highlander supported and fostered a series of exchanges with other NGOs both to the US and to other countries, many of which included the 'poor' themselves. Some of these were organised as "international workshops" and "occasionally joint projects" (Gaventa, 1999: 29). As with some SDI affiliates, the groups Highlander linked with had been particularly influenced by the work of Freire (1970), and included groups from Latin America, Nicaragua, Canada, India,

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[147] Much of this is clearly a question of political attitudes, requiring a view less akin to that of not-in-my-backyard to that of not-in-anyone's-backyard, such as that encouraged by Harvey (1998).

Kenya, and Indonesia. In India, links emerged around the movement of a Union Carbide chemical factory from Appalachia to Bhopal, India, and the subsequent tragedy that resulted in the death of an estimated 10,000 people and the maiming of thousands more. Stories and videos of industrial accidents in the US and in India around Union Carbide were detailed through a partnership between Highlander and the Society for Participatory Research in India (PRIA), based in Delhi. Exchanges took place between the groups. In India, argues Gaventa, "the impact of exchange is still being felt. Some 15 years later, Rajesh Tandon of PRIA reflected:

> 'These exchanges triggered off a set of activities focussing on worker awareness and occupational health. When our team visited the southern United States in the aftermath of Bhopal, we were impressed by the initiatives of local communities and workers' organizations. The timing of their visit, the sharing of their experiences and the support resulted in the establishment of our Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health in PRIA, with fifteen years of experience and a lifetime of commitment (personal interview, August 1997).'"

Gaventa details another example of solidarity and support from linking across different cultures that emerged from a visit by a group of women from the Appalachian region to the maquiladora region of Mexico. The visit was partly an attempt by Highlander to respond to the view of some women that people from other countries, were 'stealing their jobs'. Shocked by the poor working conditions in the Mexican factory, the women:

> [W]ho themselves were primarily unemployed or worked in low-wage jobs, pledged to raise money for a van to be used for a new organization of women's workers in Mexico. But more importantly, they began to take action in their own country on government policies which they came to see as part of the reason for their job loss, travelling throughout the state testifying on jobs and trade issues in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) debate (Gaventa, 1999: 33).

In a different example, Gaventa highlights the role of NGOs from Kenya in stimulating action amongst NGOs in the US in relation to the upcoming 1991 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). At a US exchange:

> [A] delegate from Kenya posed the question: 'What will be your position at the UNCED meetings and how are people in your communities feeling about the process?' There were blank stares around the room on the faces of the US activists. 'What is

> UNCED?' they asked. The encounter characterized a critical problem of who speaks for the North in the international arena. While many US-based NGOs were of course working to prepare for the...[conference]...they on the whole were working with Southern partners, not with grassroots communities in the North...The encounter prompted Highlander, working with other environmental NGOs, to invite grassroots voices from the North to share in the UNCED process (*ibid*. 32).

The more we engage in diverse places and the more learning that emerges, the more likely we are to both create inventive strategies of working with poverty (and other issues) and tackle the divisions that reinforce stereotypes of the Third World as an homogeneous less-developed region in need of First World instruction. Writing about the experiences of people from the US in visits to 'poorer' countries, Gaventa (1999: 35) points to the "amazement at the knowledge, commitment and sophistication" participants found – "a reality that did not fit with their received images of 'backward' people." He continues:

> Moreover, they often gained inspiration from the commitment which they saw:...'By getting rid of our myths, we create the desire to learn more. Understanding that we have been taught wrong and then looking at the problems and consequences of that misteaching creates enormous openings. It's like turning a rock into a piece of clay that wants to be malleable by choice' (quoted in Covet *et al*, 1995: 11, in *ibid*).

Groundswell members who visited India reported similar changes in perception. Opportunities for learning from other groups emerge. In most of the examples highlighted above, shared discourses circulate around 'empowerment' and 'capacity-building', and the sharing and exploring of these notions in inventive ways forms one means for linking groups and learning. Links are also formed through joint exploitation, as in the examples of Bhopal and Mexico, and here common discourses on working conditions, worker exploitation itself, and, we find the advantages of forming women's organisations. The pioneering work by NGOs such as those in Gaventa's work or in SDI serve as an example to other NGOs – and to policy makers – who may not, see the potential benefits of engagement between 'rich' and 'poor' countries.

NGOs such as Save the Children have played key roles in facilitating exchanges between North and South on the internet. One example is the UK based *Child-to-Child* initiative that seeks to promote health education. Links have been made between the UK and Mexico, Botswana, Uganda and Ghana, although it

has been problematic because the health and education workers in poorer countries are often under the "misconception" (Pridmore and Stephens, 2000: 81) that it is a programme developed for the UK and exported, whereas it has been an attempt to "adopt a non-directive approach to South-South as well as South-North learning, sharing experiences and stimulating ideas around the world" (p. 287). Still, there is much potential in this work, for example in children teaching each other:

> Working with children as partners in health education could be the most effective way of communicating health messages to other children and young people (as in the case of drugs education in the UK, for instance). The relevance of involving children and young people to communicate with each other and to research the view of other children and young people has been widely recognized now in a variety of spheres, from health education on issues such as drugs and alcohol abuse and the importance of safer sex through to issues in urban regeneration and the world of work (Pridmore and Stephens, 2000: 288).

These rare explorations of linking between North and South highlight the opportunities of such engagements. However, there has been little attempt to explore the challenges. The next section will debate some of the possibilities for learning through North-South exchanges further by analysing some of the implications for the Groundswell – Alliance exchange for Groundswell's work in the UK. It will focus on the challenges that have emerged from the exchange and the products of it.

6.6   Networking in the UK

Groundswell has attempted to learn from the Alliance's experiences. This can be illustrated through examples taken from a Groundswell event held in September 2001, and Groundswell's experiments with exchange.

6.6.1   Speakouts and networking

In September 2001, a Groundswell Speakout event, held in London as the culmination of a week of local Speakout events across the UK, brought together around 200 people from around 25 groups, mostly around the issue of tenants

and homelessness[148]. It sought to strengthen the links between the groups associated with Groundswell around homelessness and related issues of poverty. The event took place in an informal environment in a large hall (including music and dancing performances by buskers) that encouraged 'open', loosely structured dialogue. At this event, Groundswell led debates about poverty strategies, about creating, strengthening and enlarging networks and about affecting change, in the presence of various policy-makers and professionals. In the morning workshop session, Martin, a Groundswell worker who had been on the India visit, began the session by telling the story of his experience in Mumbai and Pune, and how he had found the Alliance's achievements in difficult circumstances impressive and invigorating. Martin highlighted this example as a frame of reference for forming a national learning and advocacy network; a standard to work towards. He wanted to discuss how to organise groups in Britain in stronger networks that he believed could help press for issues such as better housing.

Groundswell's stories from India helped frame these discussions. For instance, Gary Saxton, editor of the weekly pamphlet *The Rhythm of the Streets*, called for a national street count to be conducted by the groups at the Speakout to estimate the size of the homeless population and take these figures to Louise Casey, Director of the UK government's Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI). One senior Groundswell member supported this point by drawing on the Indian example of enumeration: "They [Indian groups] did it and it was successful so we should too", he announced to the hall. Michael Shearsby (2001[149]), of Groundswell, was previously involved in a Groundswell enumeration strategy in Suffolk. The different circumstances in the UK altered the nature of this enumeration: the homeless in the UK are arguably harder to find than in India, due to the phenomena of 'hidden homeless' (for example, in hostels, or through

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[148] Groundswell events such as Speakouts or exchanges bring groups working with a range of issues together and draw out general themes – such as partnerships with the state – for debate and exploration. The events are not about finding a consensus, but are instead a learning process that helps form stronger links between groups creates a basis for further dialogue, and seek to influence or begin collaborations with local or national authorities.

[149] Interview conducted July 2001.

squatting) and travelling rough sleepers[150]. Groundswell and affiliated groups are trying to conduct a national street count that draws on the knowledge possessed by many local voluntary groups of homelessness. This involves detailed knowledge of the movements of local homeless people, of the places they squat, and of the hostels they may use.

6.6.2   Experimenting with exchange

The experimenting with exchange is a product of Groundswell's experiences of exchange with India. Toby Blume said he returned from India an "exchange evangelist" and immediately set out to start the process of "experimental learning" (Blume[151], 2001)[152]. Groundswell exchanges involve groups from one place, such as London, visiting projects and groups in another, such as Glasgow. Whereas in India exchange generally involves one group visiting another group, the visiting and the visited groups in the UK are generally not singular but a range of groups working with homelessness. Groundswell argue that exchanges have had some success in creating "an informal network of people", and that they are "just the beginning of a process of homeless and excluded people coming together and creating change" (Groundswell, 2001). Exchanges have different benefits for different people. Some view exchange as a way to build-up contacts, as Wendy Cooper, from the Isle of Wight has put it: "The contacts made were excellent as it gave me ideas of how I could use such people's skills in the future...I wouldn't hesitate to call them when I needed their ideas or practical help" (Groundswell, 2001a). Others stressed the role of

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[150] For example, Cloke, Milbourne and Widdowfield (2001: 271) argue that enumerating homeless people is difficult in the UK because homeless people can be difficult to locate in urban and rural areas. For instance: "In discussing homelessness in rural areas, most officers pointed to the 'hidden homeless' sleeping on friends' floors or living with family relations". The tendency of rough sleepers to travel further problematises enumerations in the UK.

[151] Interview conducted in July 2001.

[152] Groundswell had been tentatively planning a programme of exchanges – based mainly on what they had heard about SDI through visits from Indians and South Africans – since the early 1990s, wondering if they were able to conduct a national programme of local exchanges successfully.

exchange in critical reflection, as this quote from Lynn Petryson of Luton reveals: "The sharing lifts the blanket of non understanding…it lets you see the wood from the trees, it gives people a new and fresh approach to old situations and stops you from only seeing black and white" (*ibid*). Nigel Parkinson from Macedon Park House, Nottingham, described an exchange in Glasgow as "inspirational", while Sam Brooks from The Pukka Housing Co-op, Isle of Wight described networking with new groups and being able to swap ideas as "very useful" (Groundswell, 2001c).

However, Alan Burns, of Glasgow Drop-In[153], an NGO associated with Groundswell staffed by homeless people, prostitutes and drug users that acts as an outlet for peer support and advice, raised criticisms of Groundswell's handling of exchange. He highlighted the utility of exchange but argued it is more difficult to do in the UK than somewhere like India. First, and as a general point, he argued that in the UK, the need to be able to show progress to donors is "difficult to do with the idea of dialogue". Second, he made a more specific criticism in reference to Groundswell's exchanges. While describing 'horizontal exchanges' as a "very powerful idea" – he attended one exchange in Glasgow - he added that Groundswell must rethink how to conduct them. In Glasgow, he claimed, it was simply a "circus tour" of projects: "If part of it was about sharing skills then we could have hired a hall". The exchange was organised around rapidly visiting different organisations and learning about what they do, he claimed, rather than a two-way discussion aimed at thorough examination of issues. Therefore, Burns did not think the exchange had been very useful. Others have espoused similar views. At the Groundswell Speakout event in London in September 2001, a worker from a Housing Association in Norfolk who attended an exchange in Nottingham, made a similar criticism to Burns' of exchange. She added that the event was not "user-oriented" and that the majority of the exchange involved staff members talking to each other. This was in part a result of the formal atmosphere of the event: each person had to introduce themselves at each project visit, which she felt set apart staff from "users". This only changed when an informal conversation developed between

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[153] The name of the individual and organization in question has been altered for the thesis. Interview conducted in August 2001.

her and 'service-users' at a group called Base 51: "There were no agendas, just people talking," she said.

To take Burns' first criticism, it should be noted that raising funds for exchange from donors has also been difficult for the Alliance and SDI. For instance, Ruth McLeod, Homeless International Chief Executive, commented on the difficulty of persuading donors of the possibilities of exchange when Homeless International and SPARC were planning the first exchanges between India and South Africa. She argued that DFID were very dubious about the idea of face-to-face exchange: "People just thought we were nuts...DFID suggested sending a video instead!"[154]. McLeod stated that difficulties were compounded by the challenge of communicating the importance of face-to-face exchanges to donors and policy makers in a manner conducive to their discourses and protocol: "We didn't have the language to explain it...[but] we knew, somehow, intuitively what we were doing." In reference to the second criticism, Burns' thinking around exchange reflects the creative possibility of translation in travel: he thinks exchange is a good idea, but he wants to use it in a different way. His criticism is not so much of exchange but of Groundswell. For the Housing Association member from Norfolk, too, exchange is a powerful idea but she wants to do it differently. Exchange can and should work differently for different people in different places. It is the perception of Groundswell that impedes the involvement of Burns with Groundswell as much as it is the perception of Groundswell's ideas. This perception is to some extent associated with a perception of Groundswell's association with the Indian Alliance.

6.7   Perceptions of Groundswell

This section will explore perceptions of Groundswell and its activities that impede the possibilities for dialogue and travelling knowledges in the UK. It will draw particularly on interviews with groups associated with Groundswell in Glasgow. While Groundswell has formed a network of varying strength and

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[154] Interview with Ruth McLeod, July 2001.

duration across the UK, it has been criticised for taking knowledge from India and attempting to apply it directly to the UK.

The politics of welfare

One example is the perception by Burns that Groundswell is overly critical of social security and the welfare state[155]. In Glasgow, this perception, along with other perceptions, form impediments to stronger networks with Groundswell. For example, Burns criticised Groundswell for being over-focussed on a direct transfer of ideas from India that constitutes an "anti-welfare state message". Speaking in reference to one Groundswell event, Burns said he felt alienated from Groundswell by a suggestion from one individual that "job-seekers allowance is the biggest anaesthetic going"[156]. For Burns, Groundswell privilege self-help over the state to the extent that they present a stark choice: either poor and marginalised individuals become poorer in order to effect change ("should we all become slum-dwellers?"), or Groundswell tailors a response to the UK. Groundswell, he argues, have chosen the former. Burns' suggestion that an anti-welfare state message emerges from Groundswell and its encounters with India is not without basis. For instance, a Groundswell (2001c) report from the visit of various SDI members to the UK in January 2001 states:

> We asked Jockin what he thought of the Welfare System [in the UK] and he said 'Thank God it has not come to India. Unless you come together the Welfare System that is dividing you will keep you apart. They put you in boxes (druggie, violent, alcoholic, etc) keeping [you] separate. I come here and I see that you're not deciding, someone

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[155] Social security and the welfare state was defined broadly by the interviewees in this section as referring to financial benefits and the role of services in helping individuals to change, for example, their drug habits or health patterns.

[156] Jobseeker's Allowance, a new benefit for unemployed people, was announced in the Budget statement of November 1993. From April 1996, this replaced Unemployment Benefit and Income Support for unemployed people. As a condition of receipt, unemployed people have to be available for and actively seeking work. In addition, claimants have to sign a Jobseeker's Agreement, in which they specify in advance the steps they will take to find work. Jobseekers Allowance, for Peck (2001: 282), is part of a radical restructuring of the British welfare system. He writes (*ibid*): "Under JSA, eligibility for benefits was narrowed and means testing expanded, but more important was the way in which the new benefit system enforced the requirement that unemployed people – as a condition of benefit – engaged in an *active* process of job search".

is deciding for you, and you still say "I want to be myself." You are much more powerful than those people sitting there making decisions.' After the session Patrick [a South African Homeless People's Federation leader] says, 'I have never seen such obedient homeless people.'

In this representation, welfare is portrayed as divisive and disempowering. With echoes of Foucault's governmentality (Foucault, 1978), the state is criticised as creating people as discursive categories – 'druggie', 'violent', 'alcoholic' – that manage people as classifications and disorganises them. A range of institutions and procedures with both a target population and sociotechnical apparatus compartmentalises and governmentalizes the marginalised. Jockin suggests that poor and marginalised people in the UK would be more organised for changing their own lives if they created their own categories of themselves. However, Burns argued that the anti-welfare message goes too far. In his view, Groundswell end up emphasising self-help even when people are unable to do so, and have a tendency to "set people up to fail" due to the extent to which they privilege user-involvement. He highlighted an example of a Groundswell event in which an alcoholic was put in control of organising the event, which led to the event failing when the individual became drunk. "People should participate at the levels they are able... it's the difference between user involvement and user-empowerment. I hate to use the phrase, but it is about capacity-building". Thus, for Burns, Groundswell's approach is viewed as naïve, uncritically informed by Indian examples, and amateurish.

However, the perception of Groundswell as anti-welfare is inaccurate. The key members in the Groundswell office in London are not anti-welfare, although they do place a particular emphasis on self-help. Neither are the Indian groups anti-welfare per se (Patel, 1997). For instance, the Indian Alliance, in order to complement savings, campaign for state subsidies for housing or sanitation, and the Alliance has long campaigned for ration cards for subsidised food and housing. The Alliance is critical of the state's ability to fragment poor people, which Jockin believes occurs in the UK through state welfare categorising, benefits and treatment. Of course, it may be that there are particular individuals involved with Groundswell who hold anti-welfare views, but this runs contrary to the ideas of the Groundswell team based in London. Nonetheless, Burns'

perception constitutes a barrier to further dialogue with Groundswell and the groups in the Groundswell network.

The politics of imaging

Beyond the example of welfare, Burns had other perceptions of Groundswell that impede dialogue. The monthly *Groundswell Newsletter*, sent out to the some 2,000 individuals and groups associated with the NGO across the UK, is a case in point. Drawing on a range of materials and stories, including those of exchange abroad and in the UK as well as of projects across the UK, the magazine is itself part of the organisation's institutional geography. However, this document does not necessarily travel with the potency of, for instance, *We, the Invisible*. Burns said he found the magazine patronising and typical of what he perceived as Groundswell's "hippy" image. He referred to one issue of the magazine with a blank cover and some crayons included, the purpose being to encourage readers to produce their own cover (reflecting Groundswell's general approach to the poor voicing their own views and creating their own solutions). In this example, objects, including even crayons, are enrolled in the institutional geographies of the network and affect both the performance of Groundswell in travel, and the perception of Groundswell itself. On a different register, Burns argued that Groundswell workers are characterised by "woolly jumpers, rope-soled sandals and a pony tail": "I've been studying my homeless people for quite some time – none of them look like that...does that mean you can't participate if you actually like wearing Kappa tracksuits and being trendy?". Again, this perception seems to be incorrect. At the Groundswell Speakout event in London, for example, there were many different types of dress and folk, although clearly Burns feels the people he works with are out of place at Groundswell events.

Another criticism of Groundswell was based on the question of representation. Burns said: "Groundswell will tell you there's this national network...But the

national network is me and Sarah[157] [for Glasgow]...we were going to represent all homeless people in Glasgow not long ago according to Groundswell – no bloody way!". This seems to contradict much of the mood of Groundswell events, which is more to do with groups from different places exchanging ideas rather than 'representing' the places they come from. Furthermore, Groundswell are keen to stress that the network is "loose"[158], and emphasise the diversity of ideas over the 'representativeness' of individuals and organisations.

In concluding this discussion of perceptions, a caveat is required. It would be wrong to suggest that all ideas and knowledges circulating through India and Groundswell would be relevant if only they were changed in the appropriate way. For example, Patel's argument highlighted earlier that there is a need for a 'critical mass' of participation by the poor in the UK may not work in all circumstances. One example is the homeless in Glasgow. Sarah Matthews argued that participation is not possible, at least in the short term, with homeless people because homelessness is strongly correlated with drug addiction in the city. As a result, people need medical help rather than participation. She said: "I have not found that the Groundswell model can be grafted on".

As has been argued throughout the thesis, the notion of travelling knowledges is not meant to imply rigid models moving around. Instead, the notion captures change, translation, and, as Said (1983) puts it, 'misreadings'. However, the perception of Burns of what Groundswell is trying to achieve has limited the opportunities for groups to engage with one another. Of the impediments highlighted in terms of creating a stronger UK network, the issues highlighted above may be specific. The groups who attended the Speakout event in London that I spoke to were more positive about Groundswell than Burns and Matthews and more concerned with creating stronger networks. For instance, one group from Bradford, where a local Speakout had taken place in which groups were

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[157] Sarah Matthews, a crisis worker with the Barnardos Street Team in Glasgow, whose name has been changed in the thesis. The interview with her was conducted in August 2001.

[158] Interview conducted with Blume, July 2001.

brought together and policy makers appeared to engage with the concerns of the participants, said that they were going to try to follow Groundswell's discourse of viewing homeless people as 'part of a solution' rather than a problem, and to continue to engage with Groundswell and affiliated groups[159]. The issues raised by Burns appear to be generally due to false perceptions of Groundswell's work, perceptions that were influenced by notions about the links between Groundswell and the Indian Alliance. The concerns meant Burns and Matthews were suspicious of Groundswell's views, goals and methods and therefore unlikely to make any effort to get involved with Groundswell. In view of this, there may be more room for dialogue and more concrete engagement if these perceptions were to be challenged.

6.8   Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted some of the challenges presented through knowledge and learning through travel, by concentrating in particular on exchanges. The analysis has focussed on SDI and the relationship between SDI and groups in the UK. A range of concerns and questions pertaining to how knowledge travels have been explored, including: the challenge of language differences in SDI; the relationship between knowledge, power and the SDI network; and the relationship between knowledge, SDI and the Groundswell network. The difficulties posed by language differences in international exchange are mitigated through SDI's focus on learning through practices, and for SDI it does not pose a significant problem. The relationship between knowledge, power and SDI has been explored through attention to closely related politics of representation and politics of replication. The tension between attempting to copy from other circumstances and local autonomy will most likely always be a tension in SDI, but one that can be mitigated through a critical awareness of imaginaries of SDI (in, for instance, the representations employed by Alliance leaders) and the role of influential mediators like Jockin, and through a critical consciousness to the travelling of knowledge that emphasises the

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[159] Burns, on the other hand, was critical of Speakouts as simply a means to "lift the lid off the pressure cooker" rather than an opportunity to work out concrete ideas for change, lobbying or sharing information between groups.

productive quality of misreadings (Said, 1983). Similarly, this tension between indirect learning and direct learning in SDI could be mitigated through an explicit awareness and discussion of it in SDI. Such discussion may even encourage reflection on possibilities of indirect learning between countries like the UK and India.

Patel's (1997) analysis of tenants' participation in the UK is one example of how engagements between 'rich' and 'poor' countries can be productive. It shows that despite differences in cultural, economic and socio-political life between countries like India and the UK, these differences can themselves lead to new critical reflections. The chapter has argued the importance of a critical awareness of the role perceptions of places – such as those relating to the 'North', the 'South', or 'welfare' – as significant challenges for the possibilities of knowledge and learning through travel in relation both to the exchange between the Indian Alliance and Groundswell itself and the implications of the exchange, in partly influencing Groundswell's work in the UK. The major challenge that emerges in reference to North – South explorations is that of perceptions of differing socio-political, economic and cultural circumstances. But these perceptions, rather than being a reason for organisations in 'rich' and 'poor' countries not to engage with one another, could be themselves form a site of learning. Differences in circumstances – real or perceived - need not be a reason to dismiss learning opportunities. Indeed, if we conceive learning as indirect – as SDI often does in relation to SDI activities but not, on this evidence, in relation to possible explorations between SDI and the UK – then the question ceases to be whether or not learning can occur in a context of significant differences, but how learning can occur *through* differences. This notion of learning can present new opportunities. Can the stories of exchange, enumeration, or housing exhibitions and building from India translate into valuable ideas for work in the UK? Can the notion of a Speakout inspire thought in India?

Despite the challenges in exchange between Groundswell and the Indian Alliance, the chapter has highlighted some significant benefits that have occurred through Groundswell's translation of the Alliance's idea of exchange. Various people have found exchanges productive and inspiring. The visit to

217

India has also enthused Groundswell and groups associated with it around the possibility of enumerations of homeless people. The chapter has also highlighted possibilities for North-South engagements in civil society in areas away from homelessness and urban poverty, including rural poverty, workers rights, and children's development. The chapter makes a contribution to the rare attempts in the civil society literature to discuss linking between North and South, which has focussed on the opportunities of such engagements. The next chapter will move from an analysis of knowledge, SDI and Groundswell *per se* – the topic of the last two chapters - towards an analysis of the political opportunities created through knowledge in SDI.

Chapter 7

Spaces of Political Engagement

7.1   Introduction

This chapter will explore the creation of spaces of political engagement in SDI. It will discuss the political opportunities created through SDI's activities, and will evaluate the kinds of political opportunities that are excluded. The chapter shows how knowledge can help form new spaces of political engagement, contrary to the apolitical conception of knowledge for development outlined in Chapter 4. The chapter begins with a discussion of what I mean by spaces of political engagement. This discussion theorises spaces of political engagement in two sequential parts. The first, building on an argument made throughout the thesis, argues that the 'space' in spaces of political engagement is relational space, and does this through an examination of recent theorisations of space. The second advances the discussion of spaces of political engagement with reference to citizenship, because SDI is involved in struggles to gain various rights, such as the right to land or a home. I will connect spaces of political engagement with citizenship by exploring enumeration and exhibition as strategies for negotiating rights with authorities. The final section of the chapter explores the kinds of spaces of political engagement that are excluded through the Indian Alliance's approach to authorities in Mumbai, a product of a discourse of 'non-party alignment'.

7.2   Spaces of Political Engagement

I use spaces of political engagement to refer to spaces of struggle and negotiation between authorities and SDI members. These are spaces in which authorities and SDI members are drawn together. These are not just particular meetings or events involving authorities and SDI members, but ongoing attempts to frame the relations between authorities and SDI members and influence long-term plans and policies. SDI often attempts to frame relations

with states as a collaboration in which the poor manage their own development projects. SDI does this in ways that demonstrate the capabilities of the poor, for example by inviting authorities to a model house exhibition (McFarlane, 2004). The next section will explore in more detail what I mean by spaces of political engagement and will be in two interrelated parts. The first will highlight a way of theorising spaces of political engagement. The second uses citizenship as an organisational framework through which to analyse spaces of political engagement.

7.3   Theorising spaces of political engagement: scale, networks and transitivities

Spaces of political engagement can be local, as we will witness in relation to the initial enumeration conducted by the Alliance. However, in SDI, because members are part of a translocal learning network, spaces of political engagement are often relational mixtures of local and global[160]. How should we theorise these relational spaces? Various conceptual grammars of space have been deployed in geography in recent years for this task. I will take two broad examples here: scalar and nonscalar perspectives.

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[160] This is not to say that 'local' is not relational. The local is arguably always relational, in terms of being a product of the subjective relationship between people and place, and the historic porosity of local political, economic, social and cultural borders (Clifford, 1997). Instead, with the concept of relational I am trying to emphasise the ways in which knowledge in a given place in SDI is co-constituted by knowledge in multiple places in SDI.

Cox (1998) explores 'spaces of engagement' in terms of a politics of scale, with particular reference to the ways in which scales are socially constructed[161]. He draws a distinction between spaces of engagement and 'spaces of dependence'. Spaces of dependence refer to "immobilization in particular spaces", and he cites examples such as "local economies, job markets, [and] local government jurisdictions" as part of a shared dependence defined by the social division of labour (Cox, 1988: 6). This dependence is place-specific, and these places are embedded in national and global networks (for example, corporate links). These "broader" processes "constantly threaten to undermine or dissolve them [spaces of dependence]" (Cox, 1988: 2). As a result, "people, firms, state agencies, etc., organize in order to secure the conditions for the continued existence of their spaces of dependence but in so doing they have to engage with other centers of social power: local government, the national press, perhaps the *inter*national press, for example" (Cox, 1998: 2). In doing so, these actors construct a different form of space: spaces of engagement. It is in these spaces that the "politics of securing a space of dependence unfolds" (Cox, 1998: 2).

Spaces of engagement are networks of association that involve the 'jumping' of scale – for example from local to global (or vice-versa). In Cox's conception, then, scales are not territorial units, but *networks* of association (*ibid*; see also Murdoch and Marsden, 1995). For example, local or national states do not

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[161] Theoretical approaches based on the notion of scale have been used to discuss the relations and processes produced and operating between scales such as 'local', 'national' and 'global' (see, for example, Smith, 1993, 1996, 2000; Brenner, 2000; Jessop, 1998; Swyngedouw, 1997, 2000; Marston, 2001). Scalar perspectives focus on the social construction of scale by various groups and agendas, and the associated power relations and exclusions that accompany this. If, for instance, a social movement has taken route beyond the 'local', it is described as 'jumping scales' to, for instance, the 'national' or 'global', and the interspersing of scales has been referred to as a 'junking' of scales (Smith, 1993; Swyngedouw, 1997, 2000). Scales are conceived as "co-constitutive territorial frameworks for social relations" (Brenner, 2000: 364). Scales are constantly being (re)produced and their production is contested. A range of perspectives have examined scale and its social production in recent years. To name a few, there are those inspired by regulation theory (Swyngedouw, 1997; MacLeod, 1999), neo-Gramscian state theory (Jessop, 1998), uneven development (Smith, 1984; 1997), Lefebvrian sociospatial theory (Brenner, 2000), and actor-network theory (Swyngedouw, 1997). This array of literature has focused on the state, political economy, governance, globalization, and to a lesser extent transnational resistance. Marston (2000) provides a useful review of scalar studies in geography.

operate in bounded territories: their borders tend to be porous in a variety of ways. The production of the local or national scale then, is more accurately conceived as a network association rather than an areal production. Cox (1998: 4) is "concerned with the general conditions for the construction of the networks of association which go to constitute a space of engagement".

The networks of association formed or utilized in spaces of engagement, then, seek to create certain types of political arrangements. This is useful for thinking about SDI. SDI is a network of association that seeks to use the network to influence politics locally, nationally and globally. In this chapter, rather than using the term 'spaces of political engagement' to refer to *networks of association per se*, I use the term to refer to the *engagements between* a given SDI member and authorities. These spaces are influenced by SDI as a network of association to varying extents. Thus, I wish to retain Cox's sense of spaces of engagement as networks that cut-across scales, but I wish to focus on the production of spaces of engagement between SDI members and local, national and global authorities. However, Cox's *vocabulary* of a politics of scale is insufficient for thinking about the ways in which networks of association influence spaces of political engagement.

Amin (2002: 388) argues that the multiscalar account is problematic in that it often distinguishes between localised relations and global relations. Amin argues that scalar perspectives make the mistake of ontologically separating place (as 'in-here' and intimate) from space (as 'out-there' and intrusive). At the crux of this is the language employed by scalar theorists[162]. Amin (2002: 387) argues that in scalar thinking:

> [S]ites such as cities and nations continue to exist as territorial units,
> now with different external orientations (for example, as sites in
> global production networks, or places dependent on international

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[162] Brenner (2000: 367), for instance, has argued that one problem for scalar theory is the "lack [of] an appropriate conceptual grammar for representing the processual, dynamic and politically contested character of geographical scale". The challenge, he continues, is to "develop conceptual vocabularies that are capable of representing the rich spatiality of these scaling processes with reference both to the mutual imbircation of differential geographical scales and to the multiple sociospatial morphologies in which interscalar relations are organized" (Brenner, 2000: 368).

investment or competitiveness) and different scalar involvement (for example, national welfare policies, continental trade agreements, global environmental regulations, local tax regimes).

Amin (2002: 386) seeks to offer an alternative analysis that emphasizes "overlapping near - far relations and organisational connections that are not reducible to scalar spaces". Amin argues the need for a more thorough integration of the "ontological presence of both the proximate and the remote at the same geographical level" (2002: 389), and offers a conceptual vocabulary for this task. He argues for an approach to space, place and time that views them as "co-constituted, folded together, produced through practices, situated, multiple and mobile" (2002: 389). This is a reading of spatiality as nonlinear and nonscalar, an understanding of geographies and temporalities as produced through "practice and relations of different spatial stretch and duration" (ibid). Spaces are formed through practices because they do not pre-exist action, but instead are produced through doing, such as in the ways people and objects act. In theorising space, then, "we might begin to think of places in nonterritorial terms, as nodes in relational settings, and as a site of situated practices (of presence and absence[163])" (Amin, 2002: 391). Amin also highlights the role of socio-material actor-networks in producing space.

Amin's vocabulary for thinking through spatialities draws attention to the technologies, practices and mediations that facilitate a "heterotopic understanding of place" (Amin, 2002: 386)[164]. It is a vocabulary that is useful for examining networks of association such as SDI as fluid and multiple, made through practices and always subject to translation. In these ways, Amin's analysis contributes to Cox's (1998) analysis and – emerging from two different sets of literatures – together provide a means for conceiving spaces of political engagement as relational products that are combine the near and far, practices, and the human and non-human. Having outlined how I conceptualise spaces of

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[163] 'Absence' because, for example, memories of previous practices can inform situations.

[164] This heterotopic understanding is reminiscent of Foucault's 'heterotopia', "those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of the others" (Foucault, in Rabinow 1984: 252). A heterotopic understanding of place emphasizes the multiplicity of a given place.

political engagement through a discussion of scale, I will now briefly consider how scale functions as a device for framing the spaces of political engagement in SDI.

7.3.1   Scalar priorities

The scalar ontologies of SDI members effect political strategies, and hence the nature of spaces of political engagement. Attending to the ways in which activists such as those in SDI construct their spatial imaginations is important because these constructions inform the debates and politics of activists. For example, SDI constructs scalar hierarchies of priorities in relation to political engagement, scalar hierarchies that emphasise the paramount importance of the local. Law (2000a, 2004) refers to scalar hierarchies of priorities as *transitivities*. Using a mathematical sense of the term, Law defines transitivity as referring to a set of relations in sequential order. Transitivity is the production of order through a hierarchy, a "distribution that performs itself" (Law, 2000a: 344). SDI leaders, in increasingly engaging in global advocacy (Section 6.4), attempt to construct transitivities that reflect their priorities. Indeed, there route into global advocacy is through reifying the local as the object of struggle (the space of dependence) for SDI members, and the distribution that runs local to national to global.

Patel, Burra, and D'Cruz (2001: 59) write that "when lessons are taken from the local to the global [for example, in engagements with HABITAT], this is to ensure that the experience of the global provides benefit to and strengthens the local", and that "in spite of current global explorations, the focus of the network will continue to be upon the local" (Patel, Burra and D'Cruz, 2001: 58-59). Patel, Burra, and D'Cruz (2001) retain a sense of the global as 'bigger' than the local, for instance in references to 'stepping up' or 'scaling up', but the local remain their priority over the global, even though negotiating between the two presents a tension for them. This is a tension between the space of engagement and the space of dependence, a tension through which they are compelled to reify their space of dependence.

We must remain attentive to how activists such as SDI members construct their own spatial organisations because these constructions inform the debates and politics of activists (for example, around the local as the object of struggle). Scalar ontologies influence political strategies and inflect the nature of spaces of political engagement, such as which authorities are engaged with and the extent of that engagement (for example, activists are forced to ask how much time and effort they should spend with HABITAT when they could be arranging meetings with local municipalities). The production of transitivities by SDI leaders is a process of ordering relational space in accordance with political priorities. Having detailed my conception of spaces of political engagement, the next section will develop an organising framework through which to analyse spaces of political engagement. This organising framework will be built around the rubrics of citizenship. I will use citizenship to consider the question of struggle and negotiation in spaces of political engagement.

7.4   Citizenship and spaces of political engagement

One way of exploring spaces of political engagement in SDI is through attention to citizenship. Much of the Alliance's and SDI's work can be characterised as struggles for various forms of citizenship rights. These struggles are spaces of political engagement that, building on Section 7.3, are often neither local nor global, but relationally constituted spaces. This section will highlight changing forms of citizenship, both in terms of the spatialities of citizenship and the role of struggle in contesting citizenship.

7.4.1   Territorializing citizenship

Citizenship is and has always been varied across space. Different countries have different regimes of rights and responsibilities, and within countries different groups and places experience different manifestations of citizenship, highlighting a disjuncture between *de facto* (or formal) and *de jure* (or

225

substantive) forms of citizenship[165]. However, a general working definition of citizenship is "membership of a political unit" (Marshall, 1950: 28; Smith, 2000: 83). Usually, this unit is the nation-state, which secures rights for it is citizens in return for certain obligations.

The concept of citizenship was perhaps most notably developed by Marshall (1950). Marshall's notion of citizenship was firmly tied to the territory of the nation. He analysed the establishment of British citizenship over centuries, conceiving citizenship as a "developing institution" (Marshall, 1950: 29). Marshall analysed citizenship through *civil, political* and *social* rights guaranteed by the state. The "civil element", Marshall (1950: 10) wrote, "is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom – liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice". The political element referred to the "right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body", and the "corresponding institutions" were parliament and local councils (Marshall, 1950: 11). The social element of citizenship referred to "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society" (Marshall, 1950: 11). Marshall (*ibid*) highlighted the education system and social services as the "institutions most closely connected" with social citizenship. In Marshall's (1950: 14) view, civil rights were developed in the eighteenth century, political rights in the nineteenth and social rights in the twentieth, with some overlap between especially the first

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[165] We may think, for instance, of the experience of low caste Indians compared with high caste Indians, or of political minorities in Western Europe such as 'gypsies' (Kymlicka and Norman, 2000; Sibley, 1981).

two periods. Marshall viewed the development of citizenship rights as a vehicle for the reduction of social inequality[166].

7.4.2   Re-territorializing citizenship

While Marshall's analysis, written during the development of the post-world war two welfare state in Britain, was focussed on the nation and the state, some recent influential developments of citizenship have focussed on 'post-national' citizenship (Soysal, 1994; Rose, 1996; Urry, 2000). These accounts emphasise transnational connections and interdependence, "increasingly overlapping memberships of different kinds of citizenship, and the emergence of universalistic rules and conceptions regarding human rights formalised by various international codes and laws (UN, UNESCO [United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation], ILO [International Labour Organisation], EU, Council of Europe, Geneva Conventions, European Human Rights Convention and so on)" (Urry, 2000: 166). Alternative conceptions of citizenship are emerging that are "citizenships of flow, concerned with the mobilities across various borders, of risks, travellers, consumer goods and services, cultures, migrants and visitors, and of the rights and duties that such mobilising entities should enjoy" (Urry, 2000: 167). These conceptions move beyond and refigure the civil-political-social trilogy developed by Marshall by drawing attention to "new processes and institutional arrangements stretching across different

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[166] There have been many criticisms and developments of Marshall's analyses. For instance, he does not "consider how attacks on, and reversals of, citizenship could occur" (Urry, 2000: 165). Thatcherism, and in particular the reduction of social services and the welfare state, for instance, has often been identified as an attack on the social rights of citizenship (*ibid*). Marshall's account gives little consideration to inequalities of gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality, and is heavily focussed on England. In addition, social mobilisation 'from below' for, for instance, for women's political rights, is excluded from Marshall's analysis (Urry, 2000: 166).

societies" (ibid). Urry (2000: 167) draws attention to six emergent forms of citizenship[167].

First, there is cultural citizenship "involving the right of all social groups (ethnic, gender, sexual, age) to full cultural participation within their society" (Urry, 2000: 167). Second, there is minority citizenship, involving the "rights to enter another society and then to remain within that society and to receive appropriate rights and duties" (ibid). Third, there is ecological citizenship, concerned with the rights and responsibilities of the citizen of the earth (ibid). Fourth, there is cosmopolitan citizenship, "concerned with how people may develop an orientation to other citizens, societies and cultures across the globe" (ibid; Held, 1995). Holston and Appadurai (1999: 306), for instance, have written of a "cybercitizenship" that "draws some into a more tolerant and accessible public realm". Fifth, there is consumer citizenship, concerned with the rights of people to be "provided with appropriate goods, services and information by both private and public sectors" (Urry, 2000: 167). Finally, there is mobility citizenship, "concerned with the rights and responsibilities of visitors to other places and other cultures" (Urry, 2000: 167). Responses to these emerging citizenships are, generally speaking, reactionary or inclusive (Holston and Appadurai, 1999: 198). Reactionary strategies may seek to tightly limit citizenship by, for example, increasing immigration controls in the face of emerging minority citizenships. Inclusive strategies may assert that rights should be "available to individuals regardless of national origins, residence or place of work" (ibid). Examples here include movements for global human rights, which can be characterised as emerging cosmopolitan citizenships. SDI is an example of a transnational membership that impacts on citizenship. Membership in SDI is membership in an international learning network that contributes to struggles for rights in societies. These rights are generally national rights and the state is generally the focus of provision of and negotiation for these rights. However, the

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[167] I am not suggesting that there is now a 'global citizenship' to speak of. There is no clear global organization of rights and responsibilities. I am attempting to draw attention to connections of rights and responsibilities that overlap local, national, regional and global. Neither am I arguing that the nation-state is not important in constituting citizenship as rights and obligations, but that contemporary citizenship is increasingly implicated in processes and institutions that by-pass the border of the nation-state.

recent involvement of SDI with, for example, the UN HABITAT programme, aligns SDI with discourses of global human rights[168].

7.4.3   Contesting citizenship

It is important to consider the power relations that differentiate citizenship. Citizenship is politicised through attempts to construct what citizenship *should* be. Historically, dominant versions of citizenship have reflected the politics of societies: "When social groups succeed in inculcating their own virtues as dominant, citizenship is constituted as an expression and embodiment of those virtues against others who lack them" (Isin, 2002: 21). Dominant forms of citizenship are often in various ways and extents exclusive. One way of thinking through these exclusions is in reference to formal citizenship (rights guaranteed through membership in the nation state) and substantive citizenship (the array of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights people possess and exercise in practice). There is a gap between formal and substantive citizenship (Holston and Appadurai, 1999: 4). Formal membership in the nation-state is "neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for substantive citizenship" (*ibid*). For example, many poor citizens suffer from exclusion through law or fact from substantive citizenship despite having formal citizenship, for example through the denial of a habitat or a ration card (Holston and Appadurai, 1999: 4).

The apparent 'naturalness' of citizenship forms is politicised when they are called into question (Isin, 2002: 21). National and cultural minorities, organisations of the urban and rural poor, racial, religious and ethnic organisations, and sexual-orientation groups, amongst others, often raise

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[168] The question of rights has gained popularity in mainstream development approaches in recent years with the growth of a rights-based approach to development (Cornwall 2000; Sharma *et al* 2000). This has witnessed a growing interest in issues relating to 'citizenship participation' in development: participation as a right (Gaventa and Valderamma 1999:5, cited in Cornwall 2000: 60). Cornwall (2000) argues that the development of the right-based approach should go beyond legal rights to notions of entitlements and obligations of states. A rights-based approach focuses attention on the root causes of poverty, argues Cornwall, and "transforms the idea of 'demand-driven development', popularised in the 1990s, into a process that involves the creation of new compacts and new relationships between citizens and service providers" (2000: 167).

questions about established notions of citizenship[169] or who citizenship is extended to in practice. These movements and strategies are sites of *insurgent citizenship* (Holston, 1999) that can carve new spaces of political engagement with authorities and societies. They call into question what is meant by 'citizen' by questioning established narratives and by campaigning for various forms of recognition and rights. The Indian Alliance's work can be analysed as a form of insurgent citizenship that seeks to extend substantive citizenship to the urban poor by employing new practices and forcing new identities. Before exploring the examples of enumerations and exhibitions, I will give a brief introduction to citizenship in India.

7.5   Citizenship in India

Fundamental rights in India are provided by the Indian Constitution, initially drafted in the early years of post-Independence (Jalal, 1995; Hardgrave, 1980). Seven fundamental rights, which apply to both regional states and the centre, were listed: the right to equality, the right to freedom, the right against exploitation, the right to freedom of religion, the right to education, the right to property and the right to constitutional remedies. In addition to these fundamental rights, the constitution listed a range of 'directive principles'. These principles effectively laid the foundations of India's welfare state (Jalal, 1995: 34). For example, one directive committed the state to "raise the level of nutrition and standard of living" (Jalal, 1995: 34). The principles direct the state, according to Article 38 of the constitution, "to promote the welfare of the people by securing and promoting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life" (cited in Hardgrave, 1980: 52). The fundamental rights are guarantees to citizens, but the directive principles do not necessarily form the basis for an appeal in a court of law. In return for these rights, Indian citizens are obliged to pay taxes and obey the law.

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[169] Witness, for instance, the recent successful campaign by gay rights groups for the repeal of Section 28 in Scotland, which banned the promotion – including the teaching in schools – of homosexuality.

The Supreme Court is "the interpreter and guardian of the constitution", and no law can be passed by the centre or a regional state that the court finds unconstitutional. While the constitution provides the main rubrics of citizenship in India, there is a gap between formal citizenship and substantive citizenship. Jalal (1995) argues that in practice rights have often been violated or the violation of rights has been ignored – for example in the mistreatment of people through caste, religion, tribe or ethnicity[170] (Rosenthal, 1995) - and that the state has often been authoritarian or exclusionary. Others have argued the case for amending the constitution to include new fundamental rights, such as the right to work and the right to information. With regard to the latter, for example, Narula (1999: 78), asserts: "The power widely exercised so far either to suppress information or to indulge in disinformation for electoral or party purposes or otherwise which has rendered the official media a farce has in my opinion diluted national integrity".

7.5.1   Insurgency in India

The Alliance's strategies are insurgent in that they are a means for contesting citizenship.   Holston (1999) develops the notion of 'insurgent citizenship'

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[170] See, for instance, Masselos (1995) on the communal riots in Mumbai in the early 1990s and the refusal of some police officers to protect Muslims from being attacked. On the question of caste, see, for example, Jeffrey (2001) on the continuing importance of caste dominance. On caste-based movements, see, for example, Zelliot (1995) on the case of Mahars (an untouchable Scheduled Caste), a low-status group socially and spatially segregated in villages across Maharashtra that have struggled for rights to government benefits, representation on legislative and political bodies, and constitutional guarantees. One strategy used by the Mahars has been to negotiate through forming and becoming involved in political parties, such as the Republican Party of India's (RPI) unit in Pune. Various social movements have campaigned for low-caste rights, such as the confrontational Dalit Panthers, which emerged in the slums of Mumbai in the 1960s and sought to mobilise neighbourhoods against discrimination and violence (Omvedt, 1993). Caste has influenced politics and regimes of rights in cities like Mumbai, were Brahmins (higher castes) have often dominated political office (Rosenthal, 1995: 337). There have some attempts by the central state to address the substantive rights of low-caste members. For example Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, a Dalit ('Untouchable') involved in the struggle for Independence and subsequently Minister for Law, campaigned for civil service employment reservation for low-castes. In the 1980s, the recommendations of the Mandal Commission – that 22.5% of jobs in central government be reserved for Scheduled Castes and Tribes – was ratified by the state (in 1990 this was extended to 27% of 'Backward Classes').

principally in reference to the United States. He (1999: 166) argues that the US constitution secures "a real measure of insurgence against the state". It "guarantees the necessary conditions for social mobilzatation as a means to include the unintended and the unforeseeable as possible sources of new constitutional interpretation" (ibid). Insurgent forms are found in struggles "over what it means to be a member of the modern state", and they can both derive from the state and exist 'outside' of it (Holston, 1999: 167). For Holston, such insurgent forms include "the homeless, networks of migration, neighbourhoods of Queer Nation, autoconstructed peripheries in which the poor build their own homes in precarious material and legal conditions, ganglands, fortified condominiums, employee-owned factories, squatter settlements, suburban migrant labour camps, sweatshops, and the zones of the so-called new racism" (ibid). These forms can be subaltern or elite groups; they are emerging forms of the social that introduce new practices and identities. Urban movements of the poor, for instance, can be successful in extending rights to the poor, through policy change, legislative change or new state practices[171].

The Indian constitution secures the possibility of insurgency against the state. The constitution's fundamental rights and directive principles can be variously interpreted over time, and are mobilised, for example, by the invocation of rights by groups such as pavement dwellers, campaigning for the right to property or a home, ration cards or basic sanitation, or the right to negotiate with authorities rather than be ignored or (often violently) mistreated. The Alliance's strategies are insurgent in that they engage the state and seek to extend rights to the urban poor by employing new practices and identities. These sites of insurgent citizenship are characterised not by acts of radical resistance or radical alternatives, but by acts of subversion.

Different organisations and movements in India are insurgent in different ways from the Alliance. One example is the militant Maoist Naxalite movement, which aggressively campaigns for state power (Routledge, 1997). This movement

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[171] Responses by dominant classes to such changes often come in the form of "new strategies of segregation, privatization, and fortification" (Holston, 1999: 170), which have taken on a more intense form in recent decades (see for example, Davis, 1990).

emerged in the 1960s and is part of along history in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh of unrest around the land-tenure system, the failure of land-reform legislation, and the failure of the Indian government's agricultural policy (Routledge, 1997: 2168). The movement involved guerrilla squads of poor and landless peasants, tribals, and urban students attacking landlords and moneylenders, and seizing weapons (occasionally, landlords were killed). Further, "revolutionary committees were also established, setting wage rates, redistributing land, cancelling debts, and organizing village defense groups" (Routledge, 1997: 2173). The Naxalite movement is in part a response to a lack of substantive rights and employs new practices and identities, and can be thought of as a militant form of insurgent citizenship. An important difference, however, is that this form of insurgency is less about contesting rights and more about seizing power and wealth. Insurgency is also often thought of as a form of rebellion. Guha (1999), writing about anti-colonial strategies, uses 'insurgency' to refer to the 'consciousness' of rebellion. For Guha (1999: 4), insurgency is "the name of that consciousness which informs the activity of the rural masses known as jacquerie, revolt, uprising, etc." This is rebel consciousness that forms the basis of collective action and the practices of protest[172]. Rather than a struggle over what it means to be a member of the state – insurgent citizenship - these forms of rebellion insurgency sought to overhaul the state.

There are different forms and conceptions of insurgency, from protest to resistance to alternative practices (such as the Naxalite guerrilla committees, or the Alliance's exhibitions). In order to be insurgent, strategies must engage the state and create significant change for those groups often excluded or neglected from the state's regime of formal rights. The notion of the poor being insurgent against an often authoritarian state is rare in India. The next section will briefly

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[172] Historical readings of insurgency in relation to anti-colonialism have been the subject of much critical inquiry. For instance, the subaltern studies school has criticised the reading of movements as simply "contingent on the intervention of charismatic leaders, advanced political organizations or upper classes" (Guha, 1999: 4). For example, "bourgeoisie-nationalist historiography has to wait until the rise of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress Party to explain the peasant movements of the colonial period", negating the mobilisation of ordinary people and presenting history from the viewpoint of the elite (thus reinscribing elitism) (Guha, 1999: 4).

explore citizenship in relation to the urban poor in Mumbai as a backdrop to enumerations and exhibitions.

7.5.2   Citizenship and the urban poor in Mumbai

> Police jeeps and a truck roared down the road and parked across from the chemist's. Sergeant Kesar barked short, sharp instructions to his men; the constables's sticks thudded hollowly on cardboard boxes sheltering sleepers along the pavement; heavy steps in regulation footwear pounded the footpath...The sweep continued, the policemen performing their task efficiently, prodding, poking, kicking. No obstacle slowed them down, not shrieks nor wails nor the comical threats of drunks and lunatics...The drunks and the mentally disturbed were a little more difficult to deal with, refusing to move, creaming abuse, most if it incoherent, and making the police laugh. Then one drunk began swinging his fists wildly. "Rabid dogs!" he shouted. "Born of diseased whores!" The constables stopped laughing and set on him with their sticks; when he fell, they used their feet. 'Stop, please stop!' beseeched the Facilitator. "How will he work if you break his bones?" "Don't worry, these fellows are tough. Our sticks will break, they won't". The unconscious drunk was thrown into the truck. On the pavement, discussion was adjourned with truncheons in the kidneys and, in extremely voluble cases, a crack on the skull (Mistry, 1995: 321-322, 323, 324, *A Fine Balance*)

Mistry's powerful portrayal of the horror and suffering endured by Mumbai's poor during the Emergency - that grim period of Indian history between but not limited to 1975-77 when the Congress government embarked on a programme of slum clearance and sterilisation of Sikhs - is a stark illustration of the historical removal of the fundamental rights of pavement and slum dwellers. Slums and pavement dwellers are often excluded from various rights in India[173]. There is some evidence that attempts to construct urban India as 'globalised' has intensified exclusions. In Mumbai, for example, authorities have sought to represent the city as global for business and tourists. An image of a rich, clean,

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[173] For example, in August 2000, the Maharashtra state government announced a new population control programme that removes access to over 60 state-run welfare programmes to the children of families of more than two children (Swami, 2000). Swami (2000: no pagination) writes: "The state will only provide free school education to the first two children of a family and will even cut off access to subsidised foodgrains, sugar and kerosene through the Public Distribution System (PDS) for any children born after the second one. People who have more than two children will not even be entitled to stand for election to local bodies".

tourist friendly and dynamic global city has been promoted: a modern city "spearheading India's move into the 21st century" (Mumbai, 2000). This image has little place for the disenfranchised that live and make a living on its streets, as Banerjee-Guha (2002: 122) has argued:

> The status of Mumbai as a global city has been earned at the cost of increasing disparity with the policies providing exactly the language needed to effect, in law and design, the elimination not of homelessness or joblessness but of homeless and jobless people...from selective areas[174].

The positioning of Mumbai as 'global' is intimately related here to an authoritarian liberalization in the city. Contemporary urban citizenship is refracted through the positioning of the city. As Roy (2003: 17) writes in the context of Calcutta, "urban citizenship has to be understood at the historical moment of liberalization"[175]. One way in which this 'moment' manifests itself is in new or intensified regimes of spatial regulation and social discipline. Banerjee-Guha (2002: 122) continues:

> During the latter half of the 1990s with further expansion of globalisation, Mumbai's policy became proactive in making the city a significant centre of finance, services and TNC headquarters at the cost of industrial decline in many areas. The poor were pushed out from old industrial cores to the outskirts, ghettoised in peripheral slums leading to massive intracity migration.

Claiming rights relies on documentation such as the possession of a ration card, which is used in claims for rationed foods and cooking oils, as well as often serving as documentation for municipal health and education facilities, voting rights, police protection and housing. However, many of the urban poor do not possess ration cards (Mohapatra, 2003). Even with ration cards, citizenship for

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[174] The elimination of the urban poor also occurs through the statistical measurement of poverty. For instance, the Rationing Control Officer of the Mumbai suburb of Dharavi – reputedly Asia's largest slum with over 85,000 families in a small area with very little sanitation, electricity, water or garbage collection – concluded in 1997 that Dharavi had only 365 poor families. By 1998 the figure was 151 (Swami, 2000). This has been criticised as a cost-cutting exercise (Swami, 2000).

[175] On the question of liberalization in the city, see for example Cambers (1997), Smith (1996), and the theme issue of *Antipode*, 2002, which traces connections between various forms of neoliberalism and urban development in North Atlantic cities.

groups like pavement dwellers, argues Mohapatra (2003: 298), "has been reduced merely to voting". Appadurai (2002: 26) describes slum dwellers in Mumbai as "*citizens without a city*", or "invisible citizens" (Appadurai, 2002: 35), because they are "a huge and constricted population of insecurely or poorly housed people" with "negligible access to essential services, such as running water, electricity, and ration cards for food staples"[176]. Pavement and slum dwellers have access to formal citizenship but highly curtailed substantive citizenship. Before exploring how the Indian Alliance seeks to contest this exclusionary citizenship through creating spaces of political engagement in Mumbai, the next section will show how for the Indian Alliance citizenship is in part constituted through daily savings.

7.5.3 Citizenship and the Indian Alliance

In Section 4.5.1., Rankin (2001) argued that microcredit has the capacity to reconstitute social citizenship in Nepal from a Marshallian sense of social citizenship to a neoliberal, entrepreneurial notion. In this section, I will show how in the Indian Alliance daily savings forms the basis of a social citizenship that, while being entrepreneurial, differs from being simply neoliberal by politicising Alliance members around the collective good of slum and pavement dwellers. A brief comment about the nature of daily savings is first required. Savings and loans are split into three kinds: (i) the MM savings and loans, used predominantly for emergencies, medicine, school fees, housing repairs and so on, a crisis loan available 24 hours per day; (ii) the savings and loans for housing; and (iii) the Rashtriya Mahila Khosh (RMK) (National Women's Scheme), a government loan of a minimum of Rs. 5000 (£60), used, for

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[176] This is despite the importance of pavement and slum dwellers for Mumbai's economy, as cart-pullers, caterers, house cleaners, ragpickers, car cleaners, mechanic's assistants, vendors, temporary workers such as ditch diggers or truck loaders, and so on. SPARC have written: "It is a paradox that the city generates demand for the cheap labour provided by the poor, but does not deem it necessary to house them or provide any space for their shelter" (1985: 23). Elsewhere, the Alliance has written: "If those people, who's cheap labour is so necessary to the city's economic vitality, are denied access to the most basic services, it's bad news for everyone, for the city as a whole" (NSDF/MM/SPARC 1997: 1).

instance, for business purposes[177]. Interest on these latter loans is at 2% per month. 1% goes towards maintenance costs at the ARC and the other 1% goes towards funding MM meetings and exchanges. The other loans are charged at 1%. Around Rs. 470,000 (£5,585) are collected every month in Byculla. If an individual wants a loan of above Rs. 5000 approval must be sought from both MM and NSDF leaders. The individual's local MM leader must accompany the individual to the Byculla office where approval is sought from NSDF leaders Jockin, Shekhar or Putmar. If the MM leader is confident that the individual can pay the loan back then the loan is usually sanctioned[178].

As a means of communication, daily savings is a process of organising the poor through dialogue about individual and collective needs. For instance, Mitlin (2001: 2) has argued:

> As argued by Somsook Boonyabancha [Secretary of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights], savings provide a way in which local groups' capacities can be strengthened and the participation of members deepened. Active membership involvement is encouraged when people invest their scarce funds...Daily savings establishes strong social bonds between neighbours, making it more difficult for leaders to dominate local activities, and helping savers to understand and empathize with each other's needs.

Jockin (2001[179]) argued that through daily savings women are a means of communication between the NSDF leadership and its constituent slum and pavement dwellers. He said:

> It's not individual savings, it's a collective saving, it's a communication system...I can ask the leader 'who is pregnant, who is expecting?'. They know what is happening, who is being beaten by their husband, who has alcohol problems and so on...so I don't

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[177] RMK is a fund of Rs 1.7 billion (£18.3 million) provided by the Government of India and the Ministry of Welfare for women's economic activities. SPARC passes on the money to MM women's savings collectives, who manage collection and repayment. The central government gave SPARC its first line of credit of Rs. 3,200,000 (£38,000) in 2000 and a second is now being negotiated. So far, it has been applied in Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai and Kanpur, a city in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

[178] Loans can be given at twice the amount held in the individual savings account.

[179] Comments at meeting of Ford Foundation, November 2001.

> have to go to the computer to see who is having problems with repayments.

Similarly, individuals like Jockin can send messages through these women to other slum and pavement dwellers. Savings is an "immediate lending facility that is knowledgeable about each family's needs and capacities" (Boonyabancha, 2001: 14). But is it also a means of social control that regulates and disciplines the poor? For instance:

> If one woman has a problem, there will be a meeting of one hundred women...The whole system is social networking...it is complete trust and social control...If one woman takes a Rs. 100 loan, everyone else will know about it and what it is for, like if it is a business loan. If the following day she has a blouse, everyone will know [laughs] (Jockin, 2001 op. cit).

Jockin's comments indicate an element of regulation and control in savings schemes. This is reminiscent of the financial discipline that Rankin (2001) associates with micro-credit programmes. However, while she characterises this discipline as part of a neoliberal 'business' approach to poverty in Nepal, this is not how daily savings operates in the Indian Alliance. Appadurai (2002: 33) has contrasted daily savings in relation to worldwide strategies of microcredit – "a current technique for improving financial citizenship for the urban and rural poor" – and argues:

> But in the life of the Alliance, savings has a profound ideological, even salvational, status. The architect of the Alliance philosophy of savings is the NSDF's Jockin, who has used savings as a principal tool for mobilization in India and as an entry point to relationship building in South Africa, Cambodia, and Thailand. He sees daily savings as the bedrock of all federation activities; indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that in Jockin's organizational exhortations, wherever he goes, federation equals savings. When Jockin and his colleagues in the Alliance speak about savings, it becomes evident that they are describing something far deeper than a simple mechanism for meeting daily monetary needs and sharing resources among the poor. Seen by them as something akin to a spiritual practice, daily savings—and its spread—is conceived as the key to the local and global success of the federation model [that is, of poor people's self-management].

In the Alliance, savings is framed not just as a financial discipline but as a "moral discipline" that "builds a certain kind of political fortitude and commitment to the collective good" (Appadurai, 2002: 34). It forms part of the 'deep democracy'

(Appadurai, 2002: 34) of the Alliance, following a "simple formula: Without poor women joining together, there can be no savings. Without savings, there can be no federating. Without federating, there is no way for the poor themselves to enact change in the arrangements that disempower them" (*ibid.* 33-34). The Alliance's daily savings may, then to some extent foster a neoliberal rationality, but they are marked principally by their ability to foster collectives that politicise development and that embody a political commitment to one another. While savings is used for a variety of purposes, the primary aim for most members is secure housing. Housing forms the basis of a variety of rights, such as ration cards (Mohapatra, 2003). Appadurai highlights housing as a crucial site in the negotiation of citizenship for the urban poor in Mumbai:

> Their [the urban poor's] everyday life is dominated by ever-present forms of risk. Their temporary shacks may be demolished. Their slumlords may push them out through force or extortion. The torrential monsoons may destroy their fragile shelters and their few personal possessions. Their lack of sanitary facilities increases their need for doctors to whom they have limited access. And their inability to document their claims to housing may snowball into a general invisibility in urban life, making it impossible for them to claim any rights to such things as rationed foods, municipal health and education facilities, police protection, and voting rights. In a city where ration cards, electricity bills, and rent receipts guarantee other rights to the benefits of citizenship, the inability to secure claims to proper housing and other political handicaps reinforce each other. Housing—and its lack—set the stage for the most public drama of disenfranchisement in Mumbai. In fact, *housing can be argued to be the single most critical site of this city's politics of citizenship* (Appadurai, 2002: 27; emphasis added).

Indeed, strategies of enumeration and exhibition, the subjects of the next two sections, are driven towards housing.

7.6 Enumerations

The Indian Alliance has attempted to challenge exclusionary citizenship in Mumbai in a variety of ways. They have sought to create greater recognition of the urban poor and their rights. In this and the next section, I will highlight examples that show how knowledge – the drawing on of knowledge, the creation of knowledge, and the communicating of knowledge – help to carve new spaces

of political engagement by helping to form insurgent citizenships. Strategies such as enumerations and exhibitions, 'originate' with the Indian Alliance.

Pavement and slum dwellers are frequently and variously constructed as 'encroachers', 'illegal', 'transitory', 'dangerous', 'subversive', and 'immoral'. While there is a long history of re-housing and slum improvement in Mumbai (Kidambi, 2000; Desai, 1995) two of the most common responses in Mumbai - and indeed across the world - to slums are either to demolish them or to do nothing; both responses in large part justified by such perceptions and stereotypes. In the mid-1980's, the Indian Alliance challenged such 'mainstream' imaginative geographies by conducting an enumeration of the poor – creating pavement and slum dwellers as a body of people and sketching their geographies. It was hoped that this data would help create negotiating platforms with government. Pavement dwellers tend to be overlooked by state planning and policy development in part because they are not included in census data. This is particularly the case for pavement dwellers:

> Although patchy, it is still possible to get some data on the slum dwellers. It seems that since 1976 they have been sporadically included in the census with the objective of bringing them into the policy network of the state. In contrast, it has always been difficult (and relatively speaking, still is) to obtain reliable data concerning pavement dwellers (Mohapatra, 2003: 198).

Mohapatra goes on:

> The state has never included them [pavement dwellers] in any census 'as a matter of policy', because it views them merely as intruders into or encroachers of private / government property. Thus, the state's refusal to recognise them resulted in denying the pavement dwellers their status as citizens...The only way the state approached them was by dislocating them, demolishing their hutments, demonising them and by keeping them away from its network of entitlements and rights (Mohapatra, 2003: 298).

Mohapatra uses 'entitlements' and 'rights' interchangeably. The entitlements to which he (2003: 295) refers include "the facility for drinking water, sanitation, ration cards or a demand to be covered by the state's development". Another

right he highlights is the right to "a space for decent living" (*ibid.* 296)[180]. In 1985, SPARC decided to conduct their own census of pavement dwellers in the city in order to help form negotiations with authorities, and to fight "for the inclusion of the pavement-dwellers in the 'redistributive or entitlement-related schemes' of the state" (Mohapatra, 2003: 295). The census was conducted in Byculla in central Mumbai.

7.6.1   Who counts? Backdrop to the intervention

In July 1981, during some of the worst downpours of the monsoon, the Maharashtran state government conducted a mass demolition and eviction of thousands of Mumbai's pavement dwellers. People were "loaded into buses and lorries and dumped outside the city or at various points along the Maharashtra border" (SPARC, 1985: 6). The events precipitated a protracted legal battle involving the High Court of the Supreme Court. A range of civil and democratic rights organisations in Mumbai campaigned on behalf of the pavement dwellers during the case. They argued that the failure of the state to provide land or housing "violates the fundamental right of a citizen to have shelter" (Desai, 1995: 142), invoking Article 21 of the Constitution concerning the right to life and livelihood. Desai (*ibid*) outlines the arguments advanced by organisations such as the Public Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), namely that:

> [S]nice the state government and Municipal Corporation have disclaimed any responsibility towards the consequences of eviction have failed to provide affordable shelter, have not acquired surplus urban land and housing, their action of eviction and demolition is highly unreasonable as it deprives the poor of their right to life.

The Supreme Court had been "quite severe and critical of the actions of the state government of Maharashtra" (Desai, 1995: 142), drawing attention, for example, to the "callous attitude of the state towards the urban poor" (Mohapatra, 2003: 300). For instance: "[T]he Bombay Municipal Corporation

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[180] This right to a space for living is for pavement dwellers inextricably linked to the questions of dignity and self respect. Mohapatra gives the example of Samina, who has been a pavement dweller for more than 20 years. She said: "The person on the footpath is never treated with respect. But a house-owner, even if he does not have one *roti* to eat, is treated with respect" (cited in Mohapatra, 2003: 296).

argued that the slums or pavement dwellers often indulge in criminal activities in the city. The Court unequivocally rejected this and indicted the state government for harbouring 'prejudice against the poor and the destitute'" (*ibid*). However, the state's argument that pavement dwellers should be treated as 'trespassers' (Mohapatra, 2003: 300) was not rejected. While the Court acknowledged that the eviction from a pavement hutment also meant the loss of employment for many pavement dwellers who lived near workplaces, it argued that it could not be lawfully 'unreasonable, unfair and unjust' to remove people from a public space, "footpaths or pavements are public properties which are intended to serve the convenience of the general public. They are not laid for private use. If for private purposes, they frustrate the very object for which they are carved out from portions of public streets" (cited in Mohapatra, 2003: 300). The Court ruled that eviction of pavement dwellers was legal as long as prior notice was given and the "demolitions carried out in as 'humane' a manner as possible (meaning after the monsoons)" (SPARC 1985: 8). There were no requirements on the state for resettlement.

Mohapatra (2003: 301) argues that "the Supreme Court judgement for the first time put the issue of pavement dwellers in a broad perspective, against a backdrop of values such as justice, rights and minimal entitlements". However, the reaction of the Maharashtran state to these debates was to toughen-up on 'unauthorised developments'. The state government passed a new ordinance amending the Maharashtra Regional Town Planning Act (1966) to "'arm' itself 'sufficiently' to deal with 'unauthorised development'" (Desai, 1995: 142). As Desai writes, the ordinance made squatting an offence and meant that arrests could be made without a warrant: "As one perceptive writer has put it, this ordinance is an 'Unlawful Law' (Srinivasan, 1983)"[181].

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[181] There are parallels here with Don Mitchell's work in the USA on homelessness in which he characterises legislative changes as the 'annihilation of space by law' (Mitchell, 1997, 2003). He shows how in many American cities being in public space is being curtailed through a series of city or state laws "outlawing common behaviour (urinating, defecating, standing around, sitting, sleeping) on public property" (Mitchell, 2003: 170-171).

7.6.2   The politics of (in)visibility

SPARC read these events in terms of a politics of visibility, at the centre of which is a paradox. On the one hand, pavement dwellers are highly visible, living literally on the pavements of the city. On the other hand, pavement dwellers are 'invisible' in terms of their ability to influence authorities, or made 'invisible' through demolitions (SPARC, 1985)[182]. Perceptions and treatment of pavement dwellers were based in part on myths and prejudices, and SPARC believed the most effective way to begin to combat this and to create opportunities for political change was to help make people living on pavements visible through enumerations[183]. Hence, SPARC's first enumeration culminated in the document *We, the Invisible (WTI)*.

The Maharashtra state government had sponsored a census of slums in Mumbai on 4th January 1976. This was a single day head counting operation with the help of 7,000 personnel. It was hoped slums would be identified and people issued with identification cards for the purposes of future resettlement. This census did much to develop awareness of the nature and extent of slums and the people living in them, providing, for example, information on the types of land slums are located on (Table 2), the distribution of slum settlements and employment (Table 3), and socio-economic indicators (Table 4) (Desai, 1995: 139-140).

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[182] This can be compared with Neil Smith's (1993) work on homeless people in New York. Smith (1993: 89) argues that the "visibility" of homeless people is "consistently erased by institutional efforts to move them elsewhere – to shelters, out of buildings and parks, to poor neighbourhoods, out of the city, to other marginal spaces". He goes on (*ibid*): "This ongoing erasure from the public gaze is reinforced by media stereotypes that either blame the victim and thereby justify their studied invisibility or else drown them in such lugubrious sentimentality that they are rendered helpless puppets, the pathetic other, excused from active civic responsibility and denied personhood".

[183] SPARC (1985) highlighted three additional reasons for wanting to carry-out this survey: (i) no previous survey covered a significantly large sample; (ii) previous surveys directed their results only at officials, planners and the media – the surveyed communities never received any feedback about themselves. This could be a means of mobilising people so that they could begin to design their own solutions; and (iii) the census would demonstrate the feasibility of such an exercise at a wider scale.

Table 2: Spread of Slums: Slum Census (1976)

Landowner	Settlement	Hutments	Population
Central government	120	39,404	197,000
State government	415	89,751	448,000
Municipal corporation	309	118,000	507,000
Housing board	47	58,061	262,000
Private individuals (including Bombay Port Trust)	780	322,000	1,450,000
TOTAL	1,671	627,216	2,864,000

Table 3: Distribution of Total Population, Slum Population, and Employment in Municipal Wards of Greater Bombay (1976)

Ward	Total Population (%)	Slum Population (%)	Employment (%)
A	2.72	0.66	18.62
B	2.57	--	6.02
C	4.48	--	7.17
D	5.78	0.91	5.18
E	7.73	0.91	9.25
F	10.29	7.03	9.89
G	13.17	11.59	17.52
Island city	46.74	21.10	73.65
H	9.34	10.93	2.67
K	10.28	7.94	5.56
L	4.68	10.94	3.96
M	5.79	11.83	2.55
N	8.78	9.76	4.96
Suburbs	38.87	51.40	19.43
P	7.09	7.44	3.56
R	4.98	7.08	2.68
T	2.32	12.98	0.68
Extended suburbs	14.39	27.50	6.92
TOTAL	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 4: Selected Socio-economic Indicators of Slums (1976)

Average size of households (numbers of persons)	4.38
Percentage of workers to total persons	32.68
Average number of workers per household	1.47
Average income per month:	
per household	Rs 419.00 (at time, Rs 13.5 approx. US$1)
per person	Rs 94.00
per worker	Rs 285.00
Average rent paid per household	Rs 15.02
Females per thousands males	754
Percentage of households giving rent	47.92

However, the survey was a haphazard operation. SPARC wrote:

> Virtually all analysts agree that the obsessive concern with slums has led to the neglect of pavement dwelling as presenting an equal – if not greater – challenge to urban planning and development...The Government of Maharashtra itself undertook a census of Mumbai's slum population in 1976, but even officials admit that pavement dwellers were not included in this exercise. What is more, unlike for slum dwellers, 'resettlement', 'rehousing' or 'rehabilitation' of pavement dwellers has not found a serious place in the official urban policy either at the State Government or Municipal Corporation levels – at least not until now (SPARC, 1985: 6).

Pavement dwellers continued to slip out of the picture (SPARC, 1985; Mohapatra, 2003). In addition, there was no monitoring or evaluation of either change in the slums over time or of projects based on the census data (Desai, 1995: 139-41). Demolition remained the city's main strategy. Additionally, the preoccupation with 'slums', SPARC asserted, detracted attention from what occurs outside them, including begging and more transient forms of poverty.

The SPARC enumeration sought to produce a fuller data set, argues Mohapatra (2003: 302): "Besides providing the basic data on pavement dwellers it tries to construct a larger picture pertaining to their lives and livelihood". The enumeration included 6,000 households in central Mumbai, and the results were documented in *WTI*. *WTI* did three important things. One, it cast myths and prejudices surrounding pavement dwellers in the city in a critical light. Mohapatra (2003: 302) argues that the document "tried to contest the 'middle-class' vision of the city and a notion of 'governance' (although the word is not used in the document) which was unabashedly elitist and patently illiberal". The document wrote a social geography of pavement dwellers. It challenged mainstream imaginative geographies, for instance in terms of length of stay on the pavements[184]. It is often claimed by authorities that pavement dwellers are highly transitory and this is often used to justify a lack of ration cards. Claims to temporary stay by authorities are also used to justify both demolition and the opposite – inaction - in terms of improving slums.

The figures below show graphs taken from *WTI* on length of stay in Mumbai, state of origin, and pre-migration occupation. Contrary to the popular belief that pavement dwellers are transitory and mobile (Mohapatra, 2003), over 60% have lived on the pavement for more than twelve years, and many were born and brought up on the pavements. Patel (no date: 203) has written:

> The results of the survey were dramatic: most pavement dwellers were from the poorest districts of the country, they were landless agricultural labourers and artisans who had no property or assets in the village, they had come over 20 years ago (in 1985), and more than half the population (more than the national average) worked, and yet earned less than a minimum wage. Most walked to work as a means of subsidising their transport costs, so staying near the place of work was essential.

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[184] For another example of the use of self-census in questioning imaginative geographies, see Sen, Hobson and Joshi's (2003: 611) report of an enumeration conducted by organizations of the poor in Pune which "literally put two-thirds of the slum dwellers of the city on the map of Pune, with their living conditions being documented through maps and statistics". The enumeration has met with varying levels of success; it has aided negotiations for some specific services such as water provision but been ignored by many other junior and senior officials.

Figure 13: Length of stay in Mumbai
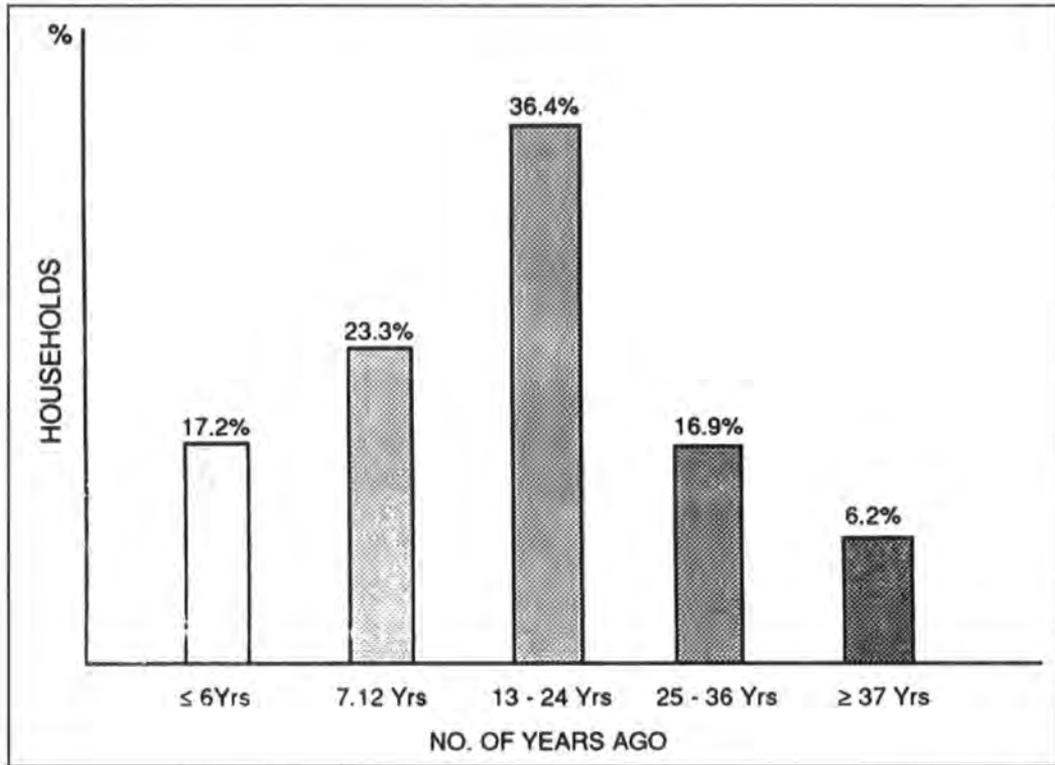
Figure 14: State of origin
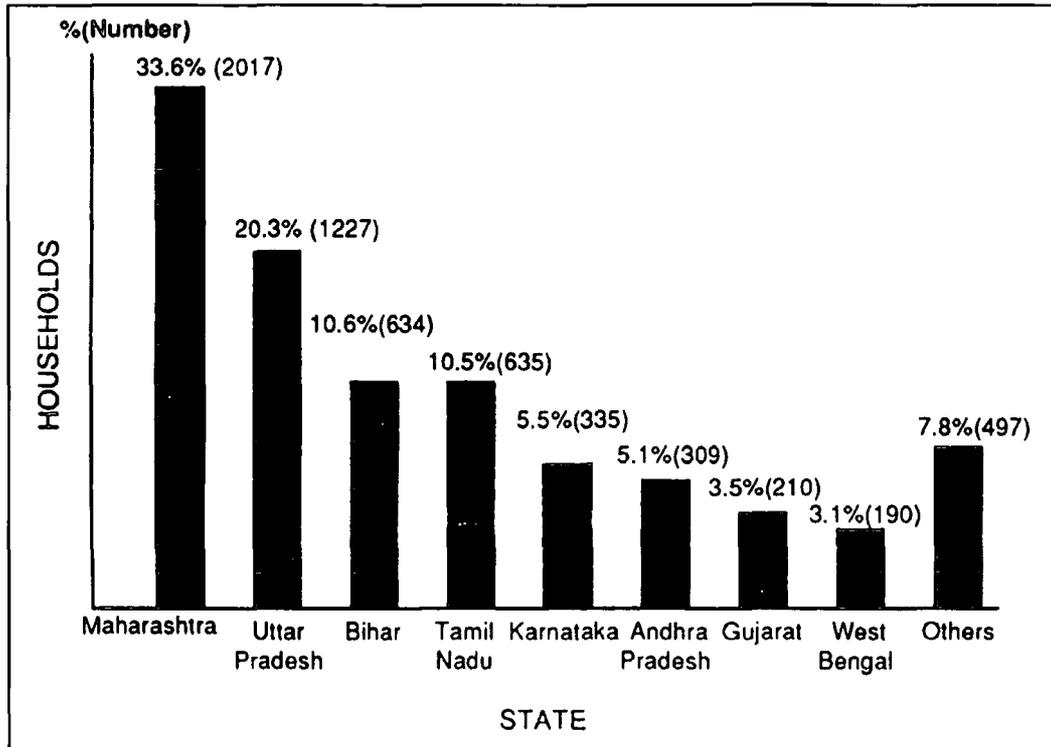
Figure 15: Pre-migration occupation
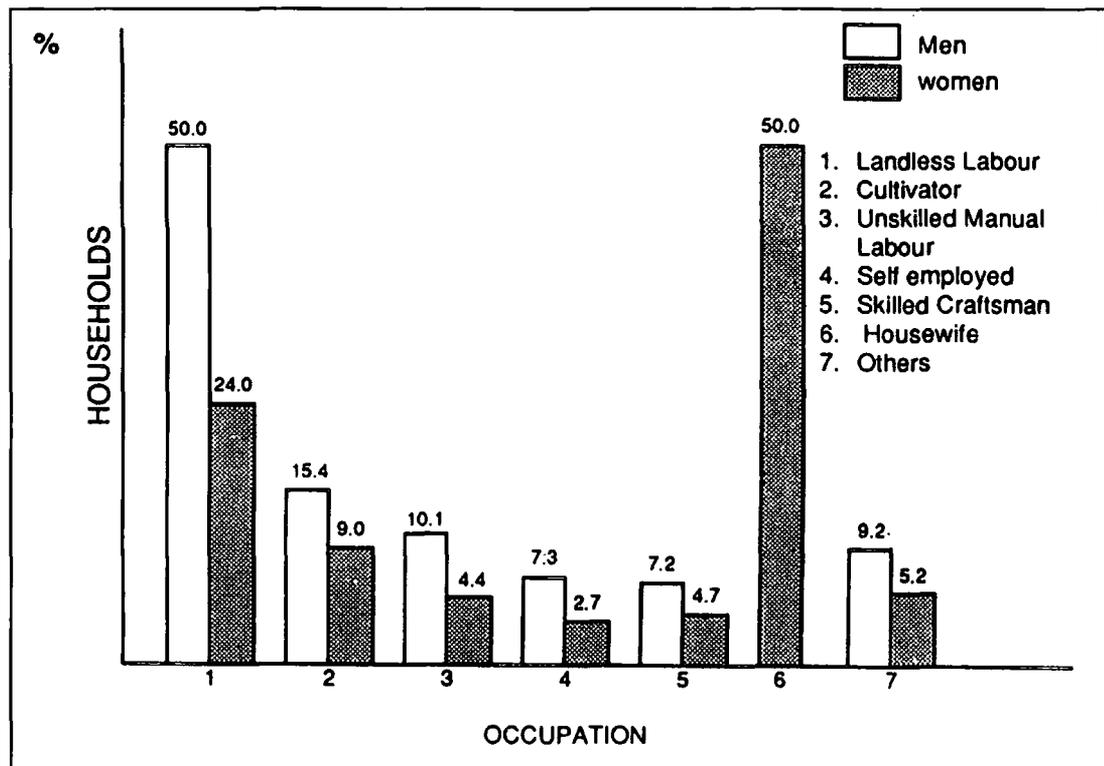
All from (1985) *We the Invisible*.

The document sketched the lives, histories, jobs, and movements of pavement dwellers, and the relationship between pavement dwellers and existing law, policy and institutions. SPARC's cause, part of a range of groups campaigning for rights to the city, represented an insurgent citizenship (Holston, 1999: 167) that sought to introduce new citizenship identities "and practices that disturb established histories" of citizenship. Knowledge in *WTI* is of a form that can *discover* what is already there but usually excluded as much as it *constructs* (for example, through arguments and diagrams), *invents* (new possibilities for slum improvement), *subverts* (for example, census as a tool for interrogating mainstream imaginative geographies) and *insurges* (for example, in attempting to negotiate new spaces of engagement with the state). These modes of knowledge stem from the creation of statistical knowledge by poor people.

Two, it organised pavement dwellers into Mahila Milan co-operatives. For Patel, this was the most significant impact of the report: "[T]he communities...as a

result of this exercise, now began to see themselves as a group with common needs and aspirations and began to explore the possibilities of organising themselves" (Patel, no date: 3). SPARC conducted the survey along with local people who volunteered, and it brought many of the pavement dwellers involved into new understandings of their pavement settlements. Using a Mumbai Municipal Corporation (MMC) map to mark out local boundaries, people walked street by street in concentric circles, marking high-density areas of pavement slums into 'clusters'. They produced a cluster profile. Many people in these clusters were organised through local meetings into Mahila Milan groups. The creation of clusters and co-operatives is a re-imagining of local geographies, and in these re-imaginings new possibilities for politics emerged. People began to discuss together new possibilities for their livelihoods with a new vigour, including plans for housing and collaboration with government authorities.

A third function of *WTI* was to help form a negotiating platform with the authorities and represented, as Patel has put it, "a tool through which they [pavement dwellers] were talking to the rest of the city" (no date: 3). The MM groups - with the assistance of awareness-raising sessions run by SPARC at Sunday meetings in the (recently acquired) SPARC owned ARC on, for instance, ration cards and rights – attempted to pressure local authorities and forced new terms of political engagement. As this quote from one prominent MM member, Lakshmi, from Byculla, indicates:

> The municipality used to come and demolish [our huts] everyday. Now that is stopped since we formed our Mahila Milan. Earlier they did not make ration cards for us, they said that the person living on footpath does not have any right to a ration card. Now, after coming into Mahila Milan, we have become brave. Now we talk to the senior, to the inspector, everyone in the police station. We have learnt this after Mahila Milan came (Mohapatra, 2003: 305).

Rights such as the right to a place to live, or the right to a ration card, have been successfully campaigned for in part through using statistical knowledge. Each person received a copy of *WTI* in their own language, and the document was sent to decision-makers at local, state, and national levels. It also became internationalised – gaining attention among donors and professionals, for example. Enumeration is an example of a travelling idea, and it has travelled through exchanges. Explaining the document and the steps of enumeration

inflect 'teaching' about enumeration during exchanges. The strategy has moved and changed through India and cities as diverse as Cape Town, Victoria Falls, and Phnom Penh. For instance, Jockin started planning an enumeration in Mbare, an inner city area in Harare, Zimbabwe, with local federation leadership during an exchange: "The Zimbabwean Federation would survey all 30,000 residents and in so doing mobilize them into the new federation" (Chitekwe and Mitlin, 2001: 92)[185]. The Namibian Federation, who were visiting Zimbabwe, helped in this enumeration. This required a great deal of work:

> On most days, more than 40 Federation members from around the country would gather in a small office borrowed for the duration. Several groups took questionnaires around the blocks of flats. One group of some ten people remained in the office, collating the results by hand and aggregating the findings. Residents came out to find out what was happening; they were curious about the questionnaires. Many were excited when they found out that this was being done by residents like themselves and they were anxious to be included. Nightly meetings introduced residents to the idea of savings schemes and explained how they too could organize themselves. Within two weeks, 12 savings schemes had been formed (Chitekwe and Mitlin, 2001: 93-4).

Enumeration subverts the more general notion of census as a tool of governmentality (Foucault, 1978), as Appadurai has noted (Appadurai, 2002: 36). It is subversive in that while it administrates a population and creates data about it that can be managed by the state, enumeration in the hands of the Alliance is a means for attempting to alter the terms of engagement with the state and negotiate for rights. Statistics here are less an instrument in the government of populations, and more an instrument for enabling the poor to

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[185] Enumerations, then, often occur alongside exchanges. Exchanges themselves can help force new spaces of political engagement. Exchanges can create opportunities for involving and influencing authorities, particularly when they become large events with overseas visitors, which often attract media attention. One example is the meeting of savings groups that took place in Harare, Zimbabwe, and included people from Cambodia (including local authorities), India, South Africa and Namibia. The Zimbabwean Minister of Local Government and National Housing attended the meeting: "The presence of international guests had been successful in making the minister recognize that the urban poor were important and should no longer be ignored" (Chitekwe and Mitlin, 2001: 92). This meeting allowed the poor to define the agenda for discussion and federation members were able to communicate their own experiences and argue their own potential and rights. This had impacts: "The government had already called a housing convention to launch the start of a new housing policy discussion and the Federation was invited to attend" (Chitekwe and Mitlin, 2001: 70).

mobilise themselves as a population and influence authorities. The enumeration represents a means to try to create space for themselves in urban planning, as Patel (no date: 2) has argued: "Statistics are means through which planning is done, and cities, especially those in the south, tend to plan for the citizens who live in formal housing, attempting to ignore, and thereby not cater to, those who live in informal settlements".   And following the survey, she continues: "Interestingly, in the past all possible resources allocated by the state to the poor excluded the pavement dwellers. Now the demands for their inclusion began, because the survey also demonstrated that they were indeed the poorest and the most vulnerable" (*ibid*. 3). This recognition extends beyond the state to "researchers and practitioners at institutions and NGOs, who had hitherto not seen these people as a 'population'...and [now] increasingly began to include the pavement dwellers as a category among the poor" (*ibid*).

In Foucault's 1978 lecture on governmentality, he describes how census statistics in the 17th century rendered possible the de-centering of the notion of the family and the centering of the economy for states. He argued that statistics began to reveal that:

> [P]opulation has its own regularities, its own rate of deaths and diseases, its cycles of scarcity, etc.; statistics shows also that the domain of population involves a range of intrinsic, aggregate effects, phenomena that are irreducible to those of the family, such as epidemics, endemic levels of mortality, ascending spirals of labour and wealth; lastly it shows that, through its shifts, customs, activities, etc., population has specific economic effects: statistics, by making it possible to quantify these specific phenomena, also shows that this specificity is irreducible to the dimension of the family (Foucault, 1978: 99).

The creation of a statistical population though the Alliance's act of self-governmentality produced the 'urban settlement' as a scale that could be used for negotiation. This production of scale simultaneously decentres the idea of a scrambled mass of temporary households, and centres a range of mapped clusters, with data attached, that the Alliance can than attempt to mobilise in negotiations for housing, sanitation, ration cards, water provision, garbage collection, and policy formulation.

7.7 Exhibitions

Exhibitions are subversive strategies. Appadurai (2002: 37) argues that housing exhibitions "are an example of the creative hijacking of an upper-class form – historically developed for the display of consumer goods and high-end industrial products – for the purposes of the poor". More than this, through exhibitions poor people enter into, Appadurai suggests (*ibid*):

> [A] space of public sociality, official recognition and technical legitimation. And they [do] so with their own creativity as the main exhibit. Thus, technical and cultural capital are generated collaboratively in these events, creating leverage for further guerrilla exercises in capturing civic space and areas of the public sphere hitherto denied to [the poor].

A toilet exhibition, for instance, is, for Appadurai (2002: 37) "[a] performance of competence and innovation, in which the 'politics of shit' is (to mix metaphors) turned on its head, and humiliation and victimization are transformed into exercises in technical initiative and self-dignification[186]." Sanitation and dignity are intimately combined in Mumbai, for example: "Less than half of Mumbai is linked to sewers. In most slums the residents either defecate in the open or – in the few locations where they exist – use community latrines. Municipal maintenance is infrequent and poor, and the number of users per toilet is far too high. The toilets are dirty, uncared-for, overflowing and often unusable" (Patel, 1996: no pagination). Some women have developed health problems as a result of not wanting to relieve themselves in public. For Appadurai (2002: 37), the 'politics of shit' "presents a node at which concerns of the human body, dignity and technology meet, a nexus the poor are now redefining with the help of movements such as the Alliance". A festival in Pune was organised by the

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[186] While these 'moments' are significant and can have long-term effects (on relations between authorities and slum dwellers but also on the ways in which slum dwellers consider themselves), toilets do not then necessarily then become transformed into sites of dignity or respect. While the vast majority of people showed toilet blocks with an indication of pride and achievement, in some settlements people didn't want me to visit toilet block constructions because they felt it wasn't clean.

Alliance and former Commissioner Ratnakar Gaikwad for the opening of a toilet block – such as this one[187]:

Figure 16: 'Prasadsan Palace' toilet block, Pune, November 2002.

Source: Author's collection.

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[187] Prasadsan Palace is a newly constructed toilet block in Siddharth Nagar in South Pune and the biggest in the city. It is a functional building with 66 toilets (the average for the blocks in the city is about 20), two caretakers living upstairs, and a central partition wall to separate them into male and female, with two washing areas in each section. There is a children's area decorated by ('Western') cartoon characters and four commodes for the elderly and the sick. These 66 toilets are meant to serve 6000 households in an area of 10,000 households (some of which have their own private toilets). The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) aim is to get at least one toilet for 25 people. The block is similar to most of those in Mumbai. Each household makes a contribution of Rs. 20 per month to the maintenance of the toilet, from which the caretakers are funded. While there was no local labour involved in the construction (even 'desludging' was conducted by the PMC), in other instances federation labour is used in construction. For instance, the federation's work in Hyderabad most notably began with toilet building in 1996. The Alliance has written: "70 families chipped in money and labour, NSDF helped plan and the city's first community-built toilet block began. City officials watched and discussions are now on to find other areas for toilet building. The exchanges, training and other learning strategies are why this happened. Now, 28 toilets have been built in Hyderabad: two 5-seaters and one 10-seater at Ambedkar Nagar, and an 8-seater at Yousuf Bazaar" (NSDF/MM/SPARC 1997: 26). The role of people's labour (sometimes voluntary, sometimes paid) in the federation's work is an issue that could be explored in further research, including, for example, the influence it can have on future employment prospects (Patel and Mitlin, 2001: 22-23).

Putting 'toilet' and 'festival' together, argues Appadurai, turned "the lives of the poor on their head" because the poor had previously been treated "like toilets", but toilets were now a symbol of their own achievement and potential (Appadurai, 2001: no pagination). Appadurai skilfully explored how the notion of 'toilet' had changed: it now belongs, he argued, with words like "community", "technology", "progress" – "its very environment has changed" (ibid). These attempts to de-centre, indeed to seize 'expert' knowledge, bypass distinctions of social and physical[188].

Through the attendance of authorities at toilet and housing exhibitions, the poor are drawn into the sphere of politics, and officials at exhibitions are drawn into the sphere of the poor, where the poor influence the terms of the engagement and themselves find a dignity and pride through construction. Exhibitions, then, are insurgent strategies. They offer attempts to subvert mainstream knowledges and activities and to employ the knowledges and imaginations of the poor (Appadurai, 2001: no pagination). In the hands of 'grassroots' groups, they are examples of the insurgent citizenship sketched by Holston (1999: 167), insurgent forms that "are found both in organized grassroots mobilizations and in everyday practices that, in different ways, empower, parody, derail, or subvert state agendas" – in this case state agendas of either ignoring the poor are pursuing demolition. Further, they add an "extraordinary practical vividness", to

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[188] This effort to sanitise poor urban spaces is subversive in that it mobilises sanitation to demonstrate the agency of the poor through a conventionally middle-class territory of exhibition. This effort is distinct from the politics of colonial efforts to sanitise both public space and the poor. For example, Anderson explores how American public health officials in the early part of the 20th century sought to sanitise public space in the Philippines. He shows how the imaginations of Americans living on the islands were marked by images of Filipinos as forms of pollution, threatening public space through a "promiscuous" defecating (1995: 642). This discourse was associated with the construction of an unruly, delinquent and immoral poor that represented the frightening vector of illness's and diseases like dysentery, typhoid fever, and cholera. Anderson traces the medical production of colonial bodies and colonial spaces through attempts to reform and hygeinise the urban poor, and places such as the marketplace and fiesta (see also the special issue of Postcolonial Studies [2002] that in part explores the relationship between modernity and sanitation). Such efforts are reminiscent of attempts in Victorian London to sanitise poor urban spaces (Sibley, 1995). While the Alliance's effort is not distinct from discourses asserting the need to sanitise the urban poor in Mumbai, it is different in that it, one, conflicts with any assumption that the poor are content with a lack of sanitation, and, two, in that it is the will and action of the poor themselves to sanitise urban space, and not the effort of a modernising colonial or contemporary state.

quote Raymond Williams, to the prospects of individual and common improvement (cited in Harvey, 1996: 30), by bringing the prospect of a new house or toilet block closer to home.

The spaces of engagement formed by exhibitions are geographically relational. The 1998 housing exhibition in Kanpur, in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, for instance, involved 7000 people, mostly from the local area but also from various Indian cities and from South Africa, Namibia, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, Nepal and Indonesia (Figure 17 shows a photograph taken by the South African Alliance of a model house in Nairobi).

Figure 17: Model house, Nairobi (People's Dialogue, 2004[189])

The pressure of large numbers of people and media often forces officials to make commitments that organisations can then hold them accountable to. Exhibitions have taken place at key international events, such as the UN HABITAT conference on urban poverty in 2001. Members from different parts of SDI built several full-size model houses and toilet blocks in the lobby of the UN building in New York, as Figure 18 shows. This marks an attempt to literally

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[189] Permission was given by the SDI Secretariat to use this image, taken from People's Dialogue's website.

seize space in global decision-making, to make visible the often invisible knowledge and capacities of the poor.

Figure 18: Exhibition in New York (Homeless International, 2001: no pagination)

Appadurai (2002: 38) comments:

> [Kofi] Annan was surrounded by poor women from India and South Africa who sang and danced as he walked through the model house and toilet that had been placed at the heart of his own bureaucratic empire. It was a magical moment, full of possibilities for the Alliance and for the Secretary General as they engaged jointly with the politics of global poverty. Housing exhibitions and toilets, too, can be built, moved, refabricated and deployed anywhere, thus sending the message that no space is too grand – or too humble – for the spatial imagination of the poor.

This 'moment', of course, should not be over-stated or romanticised: SDI members were generally excluded or marginalised at the conference and the exhibitions are not representative of a shift in international politics. Sharma (2001: 9) argued that:

...the space given for the model house was not matched by a space for those who built it to be heard in the formal discussions. These were held in the basement of the UN building on issues that are central to the concerns of women like Rehmat and Shahnaz [pavement dwellers in Mumbai], and even the [homeless] women on the New York street. Yet, the structure of the meetings could not make space for the voices of these women to be heard.

That said, in the exhibition, people from the margins of the contemporary urban landscape had come together to seize space at one of the centres of political globalisation, a capture suggestive of what Keck and Sikkink (1998: 22) might refer to as 'symbolic politics'. Exhibitions, then, combine a variety of scales – the body (clothes for measurement, for instance), the house, the settlement, the city, the country, and even the globe – and yet at the same time defy such scalar distinctions, often appearing as assemblages of over-lapping networks at once local, national and transnational. These networks are what Cox (1998) would term 'spaces of engagement'. The spaces of political engagement formed through exhibitions appear temporary and short-lived, whereas enumerations appear more as strategies for long-term negotiations for housing, sanitation, ration cards and other services. However, exhibitions can have long-term effects. Often, state officials invited to exhibitions use the opportunity of large numbers of people in one place to make an announcement – perhaps for vote-winning purposes - for example on government subsidy for housing. The practical illustration of the possibility of house-building by the poor also encourages authorities to commit to joint housing or sanitation projects with the poor for slum improvement, and to commit subsidies. For example, toilet exhibitions in Pune helped influence authorities in the city to subsidise MM Pune in managing sanitation construction. This was aided by the commitment of the Municipal Commissioner, Ratnakar Gaikwad, in particular. His tenure began in May 1999 and he had been "a key official in a sanitation drive and had overseen the construction of some 100 toilet blocks" in Mumbai (Hobson, 2000: 55). The subsequent commissioner showed less commitment to sanitation construction, and the programme has stalled. The next section will briefly outline some of the achievements of the Alliance in Mumbai to date.

7.8   Influencing the state

The pace of influence for the Alliance has been slow, but the organisations have become increasingly influential in recent years. Speaking about the Alliance's achievements, Jockin (2001[190]) emphasised the time and difficulty involved. The Alliance has "been preparing for 15 years – bringing the legislation and simultaneously organizing the people...with these two together, you don't lose". The years between 1984 and 1988 were particularly frustrating. It took four years to stop the demolitions in the key areas in which the Alliance works, and even now they continue - there was a demolition in Mankhurd in January 2000.

Many of the pavement dwellers that the Alliance now works with have essential documents such as ration cards and even bank accounts. In the early days, one of the biggest achievements for the women was to gain ration cards with their own names on them. Alliance members with ration cards were few prior to the mid-1980s, whereas now a "majority"[191] carries one, but it took four and a half years to get the first one (Jockin, 2001 *op. cit*). Closely connected to ration cards are the ration stores themselves. These are usually run by government and are often corrupt, for example by being doctored in various ways so that people get less food or pay more. The Alliance is increasingly trying to bring such stores under the control of local people, and they have been successful in Wadala and Mankhurd in Mumbai. On the question of land, the Alliance has identified 75 hectares of available land in Mumbai to counter claims by authorities that there was little land for resettlement: "For 25 years the government said there was no land, now there is land" (Jockin, 2001 *ibid*). The Alliance has identified land and won funding for construction of apartments near railway and airport slums, built through collaborative projects with authorities (see below). Moreover, the organisation of groups of the urban poor in the

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[190] Comment made to group in meeting with Ford Foundation, November 2001.

[191] Interview with Lopez, SPARC worker, Byculla, Mumbai, October 2001.

Alliance – which often takes place through enumerations and exhibitions[192] – has increased the opportunities for local people to negotiate with authorities. The Alliance claims that it has developed credibility with authorities: "The government now trusts this network" (Patel, 2002[193]). The Alliance's growing credibility has created increasing room for it to influence authorities, as well as to be used by the government for the development of policy and the implementation of housing and sanitation projects. The Alliance has engaged the state in a variety of ways. Enumerations and exhibitions are significant and insurgent features of this engagement. In the following final two sections of the chapter, I will critically evaluate the conception and forms of spaces of political engagement emerging from the Alliance's activities.

7.9   Practices and spaces of political engagement

The Indian Alliance seeks to negotiate the question of rights through practices. Appadurai (2002: 34) has described the Indian Alliance's strategies as a "philosophy of do first, talk later". The concept of precedent-setting, often used by Alliance leaders, is used to capture the use of practices by the Alliance. Practices such as enumerations and exhibitions, for instance, are not new in themselves, but they are highly unusual in the hands of the poor. Through them, the Alliance is setting a precedent: the poor "use these practices to show donors, city officials, and other activists that their 'precedents' are good ones and encourage such actors to invest further in them" (Appadurai, 2002: 34). Patel and Mitlin (2001: 26) assert their view of the nature of these engagements:

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[192] For example, toilet design can have 'knock-on' effects. For example, the construction of toilets in one area of Mumbai began with discussion about toilet design and then the demolition of old toilets "and the need to organize the desludging" (Alliance 2001: 5): "As the stink and dirt began to be cleared, people began to demand that the garbage also be cleared. In many areas, garbage not cleared for months finally left the settlements. People began to consider 'if we can manage toilets why not garbage?' Since each toilet block covers over 250 households they have begun to behave like a co-operative informally" (ibid). These informal groups often become organised into formal MM and NSDF collectives.

[193] Interview conducted January, 2002.

Inevitably, the rules and regulations which restricted the participation of communities of in these processes are breached by new practice. This in itself is more significant than a new policy because most administrations operate on precedent. Community access to this process expands, and direct possibilities for engaging the state expand in favour of communities who, at the time, are ready to play their role. Further, because communities have already developed the solution, their empowerment expands through subsequent negotiations and the scaling up of the initiative.

It is through practices that the Alliance is seeking to negotiate the rupture between formal and substantive citizenship rights. They are not addressing this rupture through street protests (a former NSDF strategy) or through attempting to invoke constitutional rights (such as the right to property) in verbal negotiation with authorities, but through demonstrating the capacities of the poor through practices. Exhibitions are practical illustrations of the capacities of the poor to build houses. Enumerations are illustrations of the ability of the poor to conduct a census through collating information by walking streets, interviewing people, and compiling maps and graphs. Membership in the Indian Alliance thus becomes the route through which there is an attempt to extend rights to the urban poor. This can be illustrated through the following diagram:

Figure 19: Negotiating citizenship through practices
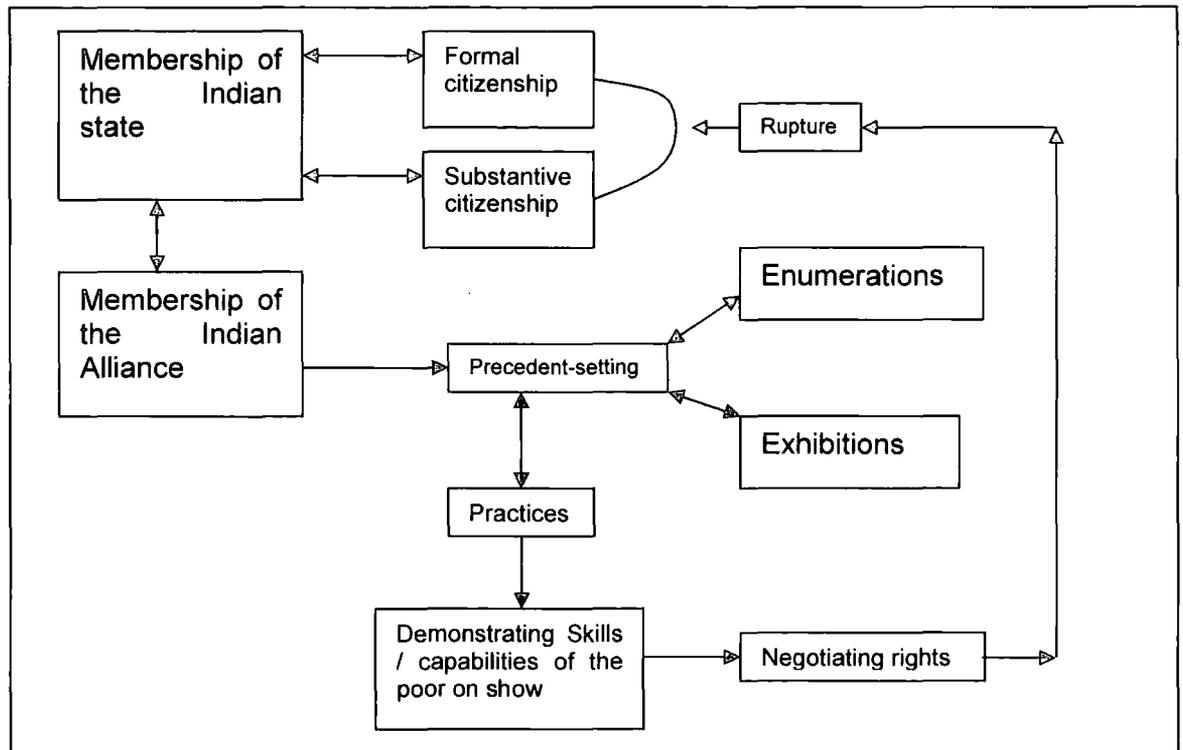
The attempt to negotiate for rights with authorities through practices does, however, raise questions around the Alliance's construction of the identity of the poor and conception of social change. The Alliance seeks to re-imagine the poor as a skilled, capable group of people. This contrasts with the imaginative geographies of the urban poor as criminalised 'Other' popularised in Mumbai. It is a (re)conceptualisation of the poor connected to the Alliance's imaginary of social change, which asserts that this skilled, capable group should be managing their own development, and could be doing so if the opportunity was given to them. One alternative to the Alliance's – and SDI's - conceptualisation of the poor is the poor as an exploited class (the poor wage labourers) or as a set of classes (Patnaik, 1999), with labour power it can use or withhold. Why is the Alliance mobilised around the first concept? Why, for example, have pavement dwellers not been mobilised around struggles for living wages, employment security, free education and free healthcare?

Part of the answer here is simply that the Alliance's politics reflects the desires of the poor that make up the organisations. In Mumbai and in other cities visited

in India, members said their biggest concerns were for ration cards and housing. Ration cards cannot be attained without a formal registered address, which makes housing the centre of activity for the Alliance, along with negotiating for land with authorities. It has been the desire of the majority of Alliance members to negotiate with authorities rather than to protest by, for example, withholding labour, or taking to the streets over free health care. David Satterthwaite[194] commented:

> One of the most revealing moments was when the pavement-dwellers were threatened with eviction, many local NGOs thought that the best response was to demonstrate and publicly fight against such an eviction. But SPARC asked the women's savings groups and cooperatives that were formed by the pavement dwellers what they wanted, and their suggestion was, please do not fight; whenever we fight we lose. Help us negotiate. Similarly, some local NGOs have campaigned for the right of the pavement dwellers to live on the pavement - but the pavement dwellers do not want to go on living on the pavement and want to develop their own homes. There is a housing complex underway for an initial group of pavement dwellers that they designed and whose construction they are managing. Thus, many NGOs have good intentions but are not learning to listen to and support the organized groups of the urban poor. SPARC supports NSDF and Mahila Milan in making decisions and taking action so it's these movements that make choices.

That said, SPARC has also been responsible for mobilising the poor in particular ways by encouraging, for instance, housing finance. SPARC identified housing finance as important and encouraged the poor to save to those ends. Patel (1999: 163) found that few NGOs (four of the 18 involved in community finance) have prioritised housing finance, an area deemed important by SPARC. There is a particular conception of social change that is emerging from the Alliance, one that mobilises the poor around their own skills and capacities, and that seeks to build collaboration with government officials through demonstrating these capacities, rather than lobbying government officials to provide development (for example, free health care) or going on strike (Das, 2000). It could be suggested that this conception of social change generally works with the symptoms of poverty rather than the causes. The next section will explore this in more detail.

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[194] Interview conducted March 2002.

7.10   Contesting spaces of political engagement: the discourse of non-party alignment

This section will highlight spaces of political engagement that are closed off by the Alliance's work.   It will explore these through consideration of a shared discourse in SDI: that of non-party alignment.   Non-party alignment refers not to a withdrawal from politics but to an undiscriminating engagement.   It is a strategy of negotiating with whoever is in power, of avoiding party politics, avoiding ideological debates, and seeking out collaborations and partnerships with the state.   In part, then, this is a strategy for attempting to avoid co-optation and clientelism[195].   This also marks a shift for many SDI members, such as NSDF, from oppositional politics towards the state to negotiating roles with the state.   One professional, in an interview in March 2002, associated with SDI framed SDI's approach to the state as indicative of a shift from politics with a big 'P' to politics with a small 'p'.   For the Alliance, it amounts to a "politics of accommodation, negotiation and long term pressure," what Appadurai refers to as "realpolitik" or a "politics of patience" (2001: 29).   The Alliance has been criticised by other NGOs and political figures in Mumbai for this approach, with some suggestions that in practice the approach has led to clientelism and a masking of the causes of urban poverty.   As a discourse, the commitment to non-party alignment frames an approach to the state and by doing so facilitates the formation of particular spaces of political engagement while excluding other possibilities.

7.10.1   The Slum Rehabilitation Authority scheme

Criticisms of the Alliance have emerged through its involvement in the controversial Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) scheme in Maharashtra.   This scheme funds free apartments for the poor through private investment, and

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[195] For Desai (2002: 119), co-optation occurs "when the leader [of the organisation] believes, often mistakenly, that formal affiliation will further the interests of those whom they represent by providing better access to the agencies distributing resources". Clientelism refers to relationships of patronage between local leaders and politicians or administrators "who control limited resources required by the community or members of that community" (2002: 120).

involves civil society organisations in the moving of poor people. The poor who have been involved with the Alliance in the resettlement have had significant levels of control over the management of resettlement, in for example the choice of the location of temporary transit camps and the management of the camp through NSDF and MM co-operatives, despite the often evident desire of landlords to forcibly evict them without compensation.

Free housing was a controversial election promise from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-Shiv Sena alliance. The government's financial participation in the scheme is "zero", as one official put it – the idea is that the scheme pays for itself. The free apartments are cross-subsidised through the sale of around half of the constructed apartments on the open market, and all the constructions are tower blocks, such as that shown in Figure 20. The SRA scheme is an example of land-sharing[196], an increasingly common strategy for tackling urban poverty in cities in 'low-income countries'[197].

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[196] Land sharing has received considerable attention in the last 20 years. UNESCAP (2002: no pagination) define land-sharing as a system in which "the landowner and the land occupants (squatters or tenants) reach an agreement whereby the land owner develops the economically most attractive part of the plot and the dwellers build houses on the other part with full or limited land ownership. Land-sharing offers several advantages as Governments are finding it increasingly difficult to find land for sites-and-services and other public housing schemes in locations where there are income-generating activities nearby, and eviction is increasingly becoming an unacceptable method to clear land for development projects. The landowner can obtain the most desired land and the occupants can continue living in the area".

[197] In order to encourage construction away from congested central locations, the consumption of floor space is limited and priced geographically. The scheme employs a Floor Space Index (FSI) to cost the relationship between location and floor space. The maximum (and minimum) floor space for an individual house is 225 sq feet in a rehabilitation tenement (for the poor), but there is no restriction in a sales tenement (for sale on the open market). FSI is limited to 2.5 for in-situ construction. If 2 FSI are used for the construction of rehabilitation tenements then 0.5 must be used privately to subsidise the development. But, because an equal amount of FSI must be used for private sale, another 1.5 would remain that could not be used in situ. This 1.5 is sold as Transferable Development Rights (TDR) that can be sold anywhere in Mumbai. However, due to pressures for land in the city it was decided that rather than having an equal relationship between rehabilitation and sales tenements the ratio would be 1: 0.75. Construction is encouraged outside by having an equal relationship in the suburbs of greater Mumbai and a ratio of 1:1.33 in vacant or marshy areas.

Figure 20: New Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) buildings in Mankhurd, Mumbai, November 2002

Source: Author's collection.

The scheme is a capitalist entrepreneurial housing strategy, and can be understood as a space of liberalisation. It has been severely criticised by a range of voices, including academics, NGOs and political figures. For instance, Banerjee-Guha (2002: 124) has written:

> An outright real-estate oriented proposal, this scheme intended to use land as a resource by offering additional FSI [Floor Space Index] 'in excess of 2.5 to attract private builders' participation. This blatant trading of urban land with an added aspect of transfer of development rights (TDR) led to drastic reduction of open space in the project areas and increase of commercial space. The success of the scheme depended on high property rates, to benefit large developers and builders who thus became instrumental in evacuating slums from the prime lands of the city.

State officials in Mumbai have frequently defended their record on housing in the city by pointing to land scarcity, rapidly increasing populations before and since Independence, and high-land prices (Desai, 1995: 111-112). However, this is only part of the explanation. Desai (1995: 112) argues that "land is poorly used in Bombay even in the most congested areas. Not only is land socially distributed in a most unequal manner, but it is in general used carelessly". Furthermore, many urban development and shelter programmes, argues Desai (*ibid.* 146), "have foundered on the rocks of institutional incapability and

management deficiency", notably in the failure to direct urban growth in more spatially equitable ways. She goes on (*ibid*):

> On top of this, the type of housing taken up by the housing authorities on the acquired land was such that the cheapest tenement could not be afforded by 60 per cent of the population, and was largely inappropriate to their needs...The urban planning of Bombay has not only been lop-sided and without a vision to foresee the needs of this city, it has also been highly discriminatory against the poor in terms of making provisions for their accommodation facilities and the basic services needed for their everyday existence.

P. Desai (2002) has argued that the SRA scheme faltered in practice. Few projects were actually started or completed by 1997 (the SRA was launched following the 1995 election) though there were many proposals. The SRA has failed because it was designed in a vacuum, claimed P. Desai, underestimating the power of builders and developers to influence its progress[198]. Sheela Patel is the sole NGO representative of a 16 strong board of people that constitute the steering group for the SRA scheme. Many NGOs were sceptical of the free housing feature of the SRA scheme on the basis that it would give the impression of solving the problems of urban poverty while not altering structural conditions in the political economy of real estate in Mumbai, while simultaneously fragmenting political movements of slum dwellers. It has been claimed that Patel did not communicate this to the government. The director (2002[199]) of another Mumbai-based NGO working with urban poverty, suggested that "[Patel is] not always representing the best interests of the slum dwellers". These criticisms were strongly echoed by one official at the Maharashtran Housing Board. He described the cross-subsidy scheme as "ill conceived, badly formulated, wrongly drafted – a recipe for disaster" (2002[200]). He elaborated:

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[198] In 1998, in an attempt to improve this "abysmal" effort (P. Desai, 2002: 41), the scheme was reinvented as the Shiv Sena Punarvasan Prakalp (SSPP), a fully owned government body with an unclear relationship with the SRA. Going back on earlier proposals for massive private finance, they government insisted upon returning to a provider role (P. Desai, 2002: 42). Bharucha (2001) argued that the scheme had turned into a "finance scheme of the builders, for the builders and by the builders" (P. Desai, 2002: 42).

[199] Interview conducted in January 2002.

[200] Interview conducted in January 2002.

> SPARC owed responsibility to slum dwellers [and it supported a plan] that...was entirely for the purpose of the builders...but [Patel] said 'as long as there is some scope for NGOs to be incorporated in the scheme then let them [the state and the builders] have their own agenda'...Perhaps she was right because she realised she couldn't do anything beyond that, but I thought that was a major set-back for the whole movement of slum dwellers.

He added that despite the protests of every other NGO associated with urban poverty in the city, SPARC's support has meant the waste of a potentially critical voice that could have raised important issues and challenged the hegemony of the builders at a critical time. Instead the "system", he asserted, remains in the long-term. In his view, SPARC should have campaigned for the regulation of builders – which, in his opinion, is what some other NGOs in the city working with slum dwellers do and would have done if they were in SPARC's position[201]. In this reading, the Alliance's commitment to non-party-alignment amounts to co-optation not by a political party but by 'the system'. David Satterthwaite (2002[202]) suggested that:

> SPARC can hardly have let down the slum dwellers movement when NSDF and the slum federations that are within it have chosen to align with SPARC and work with them. The relocated families do face difficulties in their new sites but they would not return to live on the railway tracks if given the option and there is a pride in how they managed the process and in their new apartments.

My interviews in Mumbai support these claims. For example, Sheikh Faruk Mohammed (2001[203]), who sits on the United Central Committee that coordinates the 48 small cooperatives in the temporary transit camp in Wadala, Mumbai, asserted that the organization of people into cooperatives "means we

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[201] Similar criticisms have been made of the South African Homeless People's Federation. One sociologist based in Cape Town commented: "The Homeless People's Federation professes to be a pragmatic rather than political movement. While its achievements in securing the uTshani Fund agreement [a government fund for housing subsidies] in various provinces must be highly acclaimed, the apolitical nature of the Federation does mean that it lobbies primarily for concessions rather than a fundamental review of the policy on housing and governance. The fact that the Federation is based on active membership (qualified by daily savings), implies that only its active membership stands to gain from the policy concessions" (Huchzermeyer, 1999: 72).

[202] Interview conducted March 2002.

[203] Interview conducted October 2001.

are united". The camp is saving towards resettlement in new tenement buildings next to the camp. He said: "I was born in 1967 and was living in the railway tracks my whole life, and then SPARC came. We never dreamt that we would be able to get a living in buildings...we thought our children would be living along the railway tracks". The cooperatives organise the maintenance of services such as water and electricity. The process of building and maintaining community organizations, argues Faruk, builds a sense of togetherness and potential that hadn't existed previously and changes the way the slum-dwellers view themselves. Savings is one important mechanism through which people are brought together, argued Faruk. More broadly than this, there is a sense that people must depend on each other. The cooperatives have helped create a sense of 'community' despite differences in religion or place of origin. For example, a temporary Muslim mosque has just been constructed for Ramadan "in between Hindus". There is also a clear sense of dignity and pride emerging from, for instance, the construction of sanitation blocks or from daily savings. For example, one woman in Byculla said that daily savings was important not just for school costs but because it "maintains our dignity"[204]. Another MM member in Kanjur Marg spoke about confidence she gained from her role liaising with a contractor in a sanitation construction programme. Patel commented: "She demanded it [this role]...we want to help them realise their aspirations"[205].

In addition, to say that the Alliance is not influencing the activities of builders, or to suggest that the Alliance is subservient to builders, is mistaken. For example, the Alliance helped influence a recent decision by the Municipal Corporation to increase the height of dwellings from nine and a half to 14 feet (4.3m): "The communities that first designed their own 14-foot high ceiling house with a mezzanine are now assisting communities to do the same, not only in India but in other countries as well" (Patel and Mitlin, 2001:14). The extra space allows for houses to be split into two tiers, creating more room for families. There have also been a number of instances in which the activities of individual contractors

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[204] Comment at a meeting involving pavement and slum dwellers, SPARC and NSDF leaders, and the Ford Foundation in Byculla, November 2001.

[205] Comment at a meeting with Ford Foundation, November 2001.

has been influenced or in which relationships have become hostile.   For instance, in Pune one contractor's attempt to charge a MM groups for materials it had not delivered resulted in MM terminating the contract.

The *kinds* of political engagements that are emerging from the Indian Alliance's work are contested and pose some difficult questions. The Alliance's approach is, very crudely, an entrepreneurial approach to urban poverty that seeks to go with what works. In the short-term, the Alliance is making 'material' progress. However, is it progress in the longer term? In the long-term, the Alliance is involved in the development of poor people's confidence and abilities, in challenging the politics of patronage that often constitute relations between the state and the slum dweller by creating and mobilising organisations of the poor around negotiations with the state, and attempting to build a process of long-term transformative change in women. The approach is not striving to radically change the long-term politics of private and state interests, though it is radically attempting to renegotiate the relations of power between these bodies and the poor.

Through its conception of the poor and social change, and its commitment to non-party alignment, the Alliance is working with symptoms of poverty, in that it is not engaged in radical long-term structural changes in the control of builders and developers over resource distribution in Mumbai, echoing the Marxist argument that co-operatives are good at showing there can be alternatives to the 'mainstream' but that they won't change society (North, 2003, unpublished). The Alliance conceives its position in reference to the structure – agency question and poverty reduction through a discourse of empowerment and control. Patel (2002[206]) situated the Alliance's emphasis on agency in relation to the relationship between structure and agency, arguing that a successful negotiation between the two can only result from an organized collectivity:

> All of this is a new way of thinking and doing...obviously none of us have complete control over our lives. The larger circumstances in which we live dictate these things. But different circumstances make us feel more comfortable, more in control, more able to

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[206] Interview conducted January 2002.

271

> dialogue and negotiate...options increase, choices expand.   All
> these are...variables that contribute to our sense for having more
> control versus less control.   So what the federation philosophy is, is
> that poor people cannot expect that kind of control out of some
> individual empowerment, it has to come out of collectivity.

The Alliance is challenging the terms of engagement with authorities, but not the control over urban planning and development that these authorities have. This is, however, a grey area, principally because it is precisely through challenging the terms of engagement with authorities that the Alliance is seeking to challenge the authorities control over planning and development. In addition, Patel (*ibid*) stated that it is the long-term objective of the Alliance to construct houses as much as is possible without the assistance of builders: "Yes that's what you want to do but when people build you need longer time scales. And that you don't have this time. That's our long-term aspiration."

As an example of a development alternative rather than alternative development, the Alliance is not attempting to structurally alter the course of development in the city through schemes like the SRA, but instead is seeking to ensure that programmes such as the SRA scheme are implemented with a strong element of people's participation. However, the Alliance is beginning to make substantial gains in Mumbai for the poor, and I would argue that its 'realpolitik' (Appadurai, 2002: 29) represents a more plausible general approach for poverty alleviation than the more oppositional approaches of some other NGOs in the city. Enumerations and exhibitions are development alternatives that are insurgent in that they engage the state and represent a basis through which the Alliance attempts to widen rights to the urban poor.

7.11   Conclusion

This chapter has shown how knowledge in SDI can contribute to the formation of spaces of political engagement involving the urban poor and state authorities. It does this by analysing spaces of political engagement through the lens of citizenship and drawing on examples of enumeration and exhibitions. Strategies of enumeration and exhibition are sites of insurgent citizenship, struggles that "engage the problematic nature of belonging to society" (Holston, 1999: 167).

272

Enumerations and exhibitions challenge existing imaginative geographies of the poor, and seek to create alternative imaginative geographies. These have very real effects. For instance, Appadurai (2000a: 636) has written in reference to the work of the Alliance that terms like "'pavement dwellers' and 'slum dwellers' are no longer external labels but have become self-organizing, empowering labels for large parts of the urban poor in Bombay".

Such engagements are evident not just in SDI but in a whole range of new social movements campaigning for rights to the city (Mitchell, 2003) and rights to difference, such as those organised around gender, sexuality, or ethnic and racial minorities (Appadurai, 2000a: 636). Writing about movements of the urban poor, Holston (1999: 170) argues that:

> These movements are new not only because they force the state to respond to new social conditions of the working poor – in which sense they are, indeed, one important consequence of massive urban poverty on citizenship. They are also unprecedented in many cases because they create new kinds of rights, based on the exigencies of lived experience, outside the normative and institutional definitions of the state and its legal codes.

The extension of MM and NSDF membership through enumerations and exhibitions also influences spaces of political engagement in that a large membership is more likely to be paid attention to by local municipal and state authorities – if for no other reason than voting potentials – and by police authorities. For this reason, references are frequently made in SDI literature to the need for a "critical mass" of people (ACHR, 2000). However, there are important difficulties with the kinds of spaces of political engagement that the re-imagining of the poor help create. Spaces of political engagement are driven by practices, and in the efforts by the Alliance to demonstrate the capacities of the poor a particular conception of the poor and social change emerges. This conception of social change, underwritten by a commitment to non-party alignment, reflects the Alliance as representing broadly not a form of alternative development but a development alternative. While the Alliance's work broadly represents a development alternative, its strategies are sites of insurgent citizenship in that they are acts of subversion that engage the state and that are significantly improving the rights of the poor.

The notion of spaces of political engagement is one that captures the relationality of space in SDI. It emphasises the role of membership in SDI in influencing the political engagements member groups are involved in with their respective states. Relationality also highlights the mediation of rights through membership in SDI, a mediation that contributes to insurgent citizenships in SDI. The notion of spaces of political engagement is useful more widely in the study of transnational networks that campaign for a whole range of rights. Its attention to changing forms of citizenship and space – and the relationship between the two – makes it particularly useful in this regard.

Chapter 8

Reflections, conclusions and future research

8.1   Introduction

This thesis began by asking the following questions:

- How are knowledge and learning conceived and created in development?
- How does knowledge travel?
- What are the opportunities for learning about development between 'North' and 'South'?
- What political spaces are created through different kinds of knowledge?

This chapter will consider these questions in light of the theoretical development and empirical engagement made in the thesis. The chapter is in four parts. The first section will provide a summary of the thesis in reference to the questions above. The second section provides an evaluation of the conceptual framework I have used in the thesis, discussing its strengths and shortcomings. The third section will evaluate implications of the research, including concerns that have not been explored in the thesis. I will examine the implications for mainstream development, development studies, policy-learning, global civil society, and interdisciplinary research.

8.2   Re-visiting the research questions

While I will deal with each of the research questions in turn, there is overlap between questions, in particular the first two – 'How are knowledge and learning conceived and created in development?' and 'How does knowledge travel?'

8.2.1   Conceiving and creating knowledge and learning in development

In Chapter 4, through a survey of conceptions of knowledge in mainstream development, I argued that there is a need for a greater sophistication in understanding the complexities of knowledge and learning and the relationship between travel, knowledge and place in development. These conceptions are important because they have consequences for development practices. For instance, the tendency of knowledge for development conceptions to privilege knowledge in line with neoliberalism, and to marginalise the knowledge of local people, has implications for the ways in which development practice proceeds. It has consequences, for example, for the types of projects that are funded by donors (Ellerman, 2002). I argued the merits of a range of literature and perspectives that in various ways point new directions in conceiving knowledge and how it travels, deployed in the hope of developing a greater understanding of how knowledge for development is created. These perspectives seek to ground knowledge by drawing attention to its embodiment and partiality, building on Haraway's (1991) notion of situated knowledge. I also drew attention to the conflictual nature of negotiating different situated knowledges in development. These perspectives emphasize the complexity – the ecology – of knowledge production through attention to the role of practices and materiality. Attention to local circumstances requires the recognition that in the creation of development knowledge, the material is important because of how it contributes to the kinds of knowledge that people have about development. In the examples of urban environments, for instance, the role of knowledge about the material (including the knowledge of the poor), and knowledge about the ways in which people interact with the material, is critical for constructing development priorities.

Chapter 5 explored how knowledge is drawn upon and mobilised, created and communicated in SDI. In analysing the creation of knowledge, the chapter highlighted the utility of the SECI schema developed by Nonaka et al (1999), and added to it by emphasising the importance of developing this model to include both spatial relationality and relational materialism in knowledge creation. The examples of exhibitions and enumerations were used to advance this discussion. The chapter argued that in SDI learning is conceived as occurring through the participation of people in groups. Wenger's (1998) notions

of communities of practice and constellations of communities of practice were demonstrated to be useful analytical tools here. His emphasis on the relationship between experiences and competences is useful for analysing learning in SDI. For example, the dialectic helps us understand how learning about the practicalities of daily savings and housing construction occurs in SDI.

Through examination both of mainstream development and SDI as a development alternative in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively, a post-rationalist theoretical framework emerged for analysing the conception and creation of knowledge that builds on the introduction in Chapter 1. This framework highlighted various interrelated themes, including: the importance of a non-linear and non-functionalist conception of knowledge and learning; the crucial role of practices in knowledge creation and learning; the importance of conceiving learning as a social process; the need to recognise the labour involved in knowledge creation; the need to recognise the uncertainty of learning rather than assuming that learning will follow a pre-determined course, pointing to the utility of thinking in terms if indirect learning rather than direct learning; the need to recognise spatial relationality in knowledge creation rather than assuming an often inaccurate 'in-here' (local) 'out-there' (global) ontology of knowledge creation; the insights that emerge when the material is considered alongside the social as a critical ingredient in knowledge creation; and the importance of recognising the role of power in shaping discourses of knowledge and learning for development, whether from the World Bank or SDI.

8.2.2   Knowledge, learning and travel

Chapter 5 provided a contrast with Chapter 4 and argued that, far from travelling in a linear way - a conception of knowledge in which knowledge can travel untransformed - knowledge always changes as it moves. Knowledge always undergoes translation when it travels. In addition, materials are important in the travelling of knowledge: for example, model houses travel through SDI. The relationality of space is also important in the travelling of knowledge. The 'mixing' of different spaces creates new and shifting alignments of competence and experience in an (uncertain) learning process.

Chapter 6 explored a range of concerns and questions around how knowledge travels, including the challenge of language differences in SDI, and the relationship between knowledge, power and the SDI network. The challenge of language in exchanges is mitigated through SDI's focus on learning through practices, and for SDI it does not pose a significant problem. The tension between attempting to copy from other circumstances and local autonomy will most likely always be a tension in SDI, but one that can be mitigated through a critical awareness of imaginaries of SDI (in, for instance, the representations employed by Alliance leaders) and the role of influential mediators like Jockin, and through a critical consciousness to the travelling of knowledge that emphasise the productive quality of, for instances, misreadings (Said, 1983).

8.2.3   Opportunities for learning between North and South

In Chapter 3, I made a broad survey of mainstream development that argued that categories of North and South function in ways that can act as barriers to learning between 'rich' and 'poor' countries. I argued for a conception of development that recognises global geographies of wealth and poverty and that is aware of the potential for connections to take place beyond categories of North and South. The opportunities for learning are related to how learning is conceived. Conceiving learning opportunities in terms of direct transfer (a rationalist conception) make learning less likely (because knowledge and ideas get accepted or dismissed wholesale) and less fruitful (because the basis of learning is an attempt to copy). Conceiving learning as indirect (a post-rationalist conception) involves the understanding that knowledge and ideas must change in new circumstances, and creates the opportunity for learning to occur in creative ways. For instance, specific development strategies in 'poor' countries, like public works, food policy or participation may appear to offer little opportunity for learning for 'rich' countries if the approach is to ask whether the strategies can be transferred directly, but may appear to offer more if the approach is to engage in debate without a rigid predetermined notion of whether or how such strategies could be useful. More general debates about the nature of development, such as those concerned with the meaning and measurement of terms like 'poverty' and 'social exclusion', or about the possibilities of

employing a livelihoods approach to development in 'rich' countries, also offer a basis through which indirect learning may occur.

Chapter 6 highlighted Groundswell's translation of the Alliance's idea of exchange, and the possibility of enumerations of homeless people in the UK, as two specific examples of learning from the Indian Alliance. The chapter explored some of the challenges for learning between Groundswell and the Indian Alliance. This discussion contributes both to the question of how knowledge travels and to the question of opportunities for learning about development between North and South. It also makes a contribution to global civil society literature given that there have been few attempts to explore the challenges of knowledge and learning in travel.

The question of learning between India and the UK was shown to be problematic because of the role of perceptions in affecting whether knowledge travels. These perceptions include those relating to the possibilities of learning between India and the UK, and perceptions of Groundswell that are in part associated with Groundswell's involvement with the Indian Alliance (for example, the question of welfare). The chapter found that there is a tension in SDI between direct and indirect learning, and that direct learning is the basis for conceptualising learning opportunities with Groundswell. The chapter argued for a conception of indirect learning. I argued against a conceptualisation of learning that dismisses possibilities because of (real or perceived) differences, and for a conceptualisation alert to the possibilities that learning can occur *through* differences. This notion of learning can present new opportunities and prompt innovative thinking.

8.2.4 Knowledge and political spaces

Chapter 7 explored how knowledge in SDI contributes to the formation of spaces of political engagement involving the urban poor and state authorities. It did this by analysing spaces of political engagement through the lens of citizenship and drawing on examples of enumeration and exhibitions. The notion of spaces of political engagement emphasises the role of membership in SDI in influencing

the political engagements member groups are involved in with their respective states. The relationality of spaces of political engagement highlights the mediation of rights through membership in SDI, a mediation that contributes to strategies of insurgent citizenship such as enumeration and exhibition. While knowledge can help to open up of political engagement, discourses can help to close of other possible forms of political engagement. For instance, the Alliance's discourse of non-party alignment, which involves a commitment to collaboration with whoever is in power, has been criticised for excluding forms of politics that might, for example, attack the nature of real estate politics in Mumbai. The notion of spaces of political engagement is useful more widely in the study of transnational networks that campaign for a whole range of rights. Its attention to changing forms of citizenship and space makes it particularly useful in this regard.

8.3   Re-considering the conceptual framework

I have taken a post-rationalist approach to knowledge and learning for development. This approach had strengths and weaknesses. The conception of knowledge and learning as a social process has proven useful in analysing knowledge and learning in SDI because SDI is committed to learning in groups, and the concept of relational materialism has shown that this social process is never only human, and that the material is important in knowledge creation. The concept of spatial relationality has been useful for conceiving how learning takes place not simply in one place but through the connections between places, and the concept of translation has proven to be highly useful for analysing the conversions and movements of knowledge, and for emphasising indirect learning. An emphasis on indirect learning rallies against the dismissal of, for instance, a place, knowledge or an idea as wholly irrelevant, and draws attention to the creative and uncertain possibilities of what Said (1983) termed misreadings. The approach has developed ways to theorise knowledge and learning for development that aim to be cautious but productive, and that aim to place the knowledge and lives of the poor at the centre of the process. A post-rationalist approach could also be fruitful in application to different networks. Its perspectives might be used, for example, in reference to environmental

networks, social movements, global civil society networks, policy networks, corporate networks (see, for instance, Amin and Cohendet, forthcoming), and ethnic networks, amongst others.

However, there are difficulties with a post-rationalist approach. There is a difficulty with the general concept of translation in that it risks implying that any example of development can be potentially useful as long as it is altered to suit local circumstances. I have tried to argue in the thesis not that every potential development example related to, for instance, urban poverty, has something to offer every other, but that certain conceptions and approaches to knowledge in development exclude the possibilities of learning from different situations. I have argued for a consideration of, for instance, the knowledge of local people in mainstream knowledge for development strategies, or of learning from 'poor' countries for development in 'rich' countries and vice-versa. Nonetheless, there may be a tension here in the concept of translation.

There is question over the emphasis on spatial relationality in the thesis that raises the question of scale. A potential shortcoming of emphasising spatial relationality in knowledge creation in networks like SDI is that it risks marginalising knowledge about development that is less a product of cross-border engagements. I have sought not to make this mistake in the thesis - for instance by drawing attention to the creation of local statistical knowledge in *We, the Invisible* - but it is a potential consequence of conducting research that seeks to analyse relationality. A relational perspective risks marginalising the ways in which certain spaces of political engagement become tied to ontologies of scale (the local scale in the case of SDI). Section 7.3.1 argued that activists have their own scalar priorities. It is important that a relational perspective does not marginalise these important scalar hierarchies because these hierarchies inflect the nature of politics for activists, but there is a potential of this in an emphasis on spatial relationality.

One consequence of the emphasis on the material in knowledge and learning is less space for people. While the approach has sought to demonstrate the

important role of the material, the more space devoted to it, the less space for considering the role of people in knowledge and learning in development[207]. The analysis of the production of enumeration documents like *We, the Invisible*, for instance, would have been different if I had focussed on the traditionally 'social' aspects of its production. I sought to show the ways in which objects are mobilised in the production of travelling knowledges, an alternative would have been to focus simply on knowledge as produced by people, which would have meant more space for people's views on this gathered in the course of the research.

More generally, there is the question of what an analysis of SDI may have found if I had taken a more 'traditional' development approach. This could have involved an analysis of how the Indian Alliance provides an example of the challenges and opportunities of the contemporary governance of urbanization (Satterthwaite, 2002). This would have involved an examination of the nature of urban life for the poor and the challenges facing authorities. It could have explored, for example, the changing nature of state responses to urban poverty through schemes such as the *Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) Scheme*. It may then have sought to show how the international scale impacts upon the Alliance's work through a discussion of SDI. However, while such a study has many merits in itself[208], and while I do not seek to criticise such studies, this approach would have limited the spaces through which the analysis could travel. The post-rationalist approach has allowed a more thorough consideration of how knowledge travels, changes and becomes imbued with urban politics.

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[207] This has also been a criticism of actor-network theory (Hetherington and Law, 2000; Bingham and Thrift, 2000). ANT has also been criticized as being "studiously neutral and, as a result, it bypasses questions of unequal power" (Bingham and Thrift, 2000: 299). While there is a danger in relational analyses inspired by literatures such as ANT that the crucial role of power is marginalized, I have sought to avoid this by adopting a critical perspective in reference to the agendas and questions of power involved in traveling knowledges, and to the ways in which knowledge is always political.

[208] The questions of urbanization in reference to SDI have been explored elsewhere – see for example the special issue of *Environment and Urbanization* from 2001.

Theoretical approaches from actor-network theory, Said's travelling theory[209], and organisational learning have proven useful in developing a conceptual vocabulary – including translation, misreadings, the SECI schema, and communities of practice – that is fit for analysing travelling knowledges. While a 'traditional' development approach would have spoken more to questions of the nature of the urban and how the urban is governed today in low-income cities, it would have been less equipped to examine the relationality of knowledge, space and urban politics. Beyond the question of the post-rationalist approach itself, there are other gaps in the thesis that could form the basis for further research.

Gaps in thesis

One gap relates to the question of gender. Given SDI's emphasis on women in development reflected in, for example, the Mahila Milan groups in India, the research could have focussed on the relationship between SDI groups and gender in urban settlements. There are a range of important questions that could have been explored around the topic of gender, knowledge and development, including: how does knowledge and learning in SDI affect gender relations in SDI member groups and settlements? How does gender affect the creation, form and communication of knowledge? The decision to focus the research on different conceptions of knowledge and learning in development meant that the question of gender *per se* was a peripheral feature. However, this could form the basis of future research.

Another gap relates to the question of identity formation. The ways in which personal and collective identities are negotiated and related to one another through shared knowledge and learning was not explored in the research. Wenger's (1998) study of communities of practice makes a convincing argument for the role of learning in identity formation. He shows how learning in groups helps people to develop ways of engaging with one another and understandings

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[209] Said (1983) gives two examples of 'travelling theory': one the travelling of a theory from Revolutionary Budapest to Paris and the other of Foucault's theory of power, and argues for the importance of thinking cautiously over whether theories from elsewhere are relevant and how they can be changed for a new setting.

of how to work together that lead to people becoming part of and identifying with a group. Outside of organisational theory, the links between knowledge, learning and identity have been examined in approaches to policy formation. For example, Sabatier's (1998) work on advocacy coalitions and Hajer's (1995) work on discourse coalitions argue in different ways those coalitions create collective identities[210]. The advocacy coalition framework conceives linkages within the coalition in terms of "shared interests, beliefs, and worldviews", and discourse coalitions conceive linkages as a "shared understanding of the policy problem" (Bulkeley, 2000: 735). These approaches emphasise the important connections between knowledge and identity.

8.4 Research implications

This section will start by exploring some implications of the research for mainstream development, before going on to ask about implications for development studies with reference to the constructs used to describe 'rich' and 'poor' countries. It will then explore implications of the research for policy-making. The final parts will consider the implications for analyses of global civil society and interdisciplinary research.

8.4.1 Mainstream development

As argued in Section 4.3.1, participatory development strategies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) hold great potential in development and have made some significant advances in including the poor in the planning, management and implementation of development projects. However, such strategies need to be considered in relation to concerns of political economy such as those relating to the state or trade, and there is a need to debate how

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[210] The advocacy coalition framework aims to take into account the importance of various coalitions between certain policy-makers, influential actors and pressure groups in policy change working towards shared interests and goals. The discourse coalition approach aims to analyse not so much shared interests and goals but "shared terms and concepts through which meaning is assigned to social and physical processes and the nature of the policy problem under consideration is constructed" (Bulkeley, 2000: 734).

knowledge and learning are conceived and to be alert to how they are imbued with politics. These criticisms apply to knowledge for development strategies more generally.

The thesis has demonstrated the importance of considering how knowledge and learning are conceived in development. It has done this by: critiquing the conception of knowledge and learning in mainstream development such as that found in the 1998-9 *World Development Report*; engaging with knowledge and learning as it is conceived in SDI; and through the development of a post-rationalist approach to knowledge. In particular, the thesis has argued the need not to attempt to copy knowledge and ideas from one place in another and, correspondingly, the utility of conceiving knowledge as necessarily always changing in potentially productive ways. In this conception, knowledge is no longer a technology existing as part of a free-floating global 'stack', but dynamic, social, and grounded in the messy realities and contingencies of everyday life. It is important that mainstream development approaches do not marginalise the knowledge of local people (despite the rhetoric often claiming the opposite) but seek to engage with them in ways that put the 'targets' of development at the centre of the process. The potential and success of poor people's knowledge in the Indian Alliance is an illustration of this need. Finally, a stronger recognition of the role of practices and the material in conceptions of knowledge and learning in mainstream development would place an emphasis on the productive potential of learning-by-doing and the ways in which the relationship between the material and the social contributes to knowledge.

8.4.2   Development Studies

There are implications emerging from this thesis for the use of conceptual constructs such as North and South in development geography and development studies more generally. The thesis has argued that there are opportunities to learn between development experiences in 'rich' and 'poor' countries. The analysis of the connections made between Groundswell and the Indian Alliance, for example, provides insights into some of the opportunities and challenges of engagements between 'rich' and 'poor' countries (McFarlane,

forthcoming). These opportunities to learn depend to a large extent on how knowledge and learning are conceived, and how they are conceived in travel. The thesis has highlighted some conceptual tools that I hope can contribute to debates about these conceptions and attempts to learn between places for development. In particular, the concept of translation can contribute to this debate. Translation can, for instance, contribute to the rare attempts to conceptualise general possibilities for learning between 'rich' and 'poor' countries in development studies, such as Maxwell's (1998) useful attempt.

Maxwell (1998: 21-28) has suggested we examine potential new relationships between the North and the South in terms of 'comparisons', 'convergences' and 'connections'. By 'comparisons', Maxwell is referring to similarities and differences in approaches to poverty and social exclusion. For example, he asks: "Are there not lessons for the developed countries in the developing country emphasis on secure and sustainable livelihoods, rather than jobs?" (1998: 23). In another instance, he points out that "policy initiatives in the North about how to remedy food poverty seem sterile by comparison with those in the South: overly preoccupied with small-scale, local initiatives, nutrition education and the like, too little concerned with macro-economic issues, national food-pricing, and the geographical distribution of shops" (Maxwell, 1998: 24). By 'convergences', Maxwell is referring to how different areas across the globe are converging in various ways, for instance, in share of manufactures of GDP, general shifts towards income tax, or growing literacy rates. By connections, Maxwell (1998) is referring to the myriad economic, social, political and cultural connections often associated with 'globalisation', including the linking of NGOs and the common causes of poverty. He sees opportunities to develop theories and perspectives that mirror transnational trends in that they move beyond divides of North and South (1998: 26). Such perspectives must be informed by globalising tendencies, he asserts, and must avoid homogenising and meta-theories, instead emphasising multiple perspectives not bound to the 'rich' or the 'poor' countries:

> The poverty experienced by a small-scale pastoralist in semi-arid
> Tanzania is not of the same character, and does not have the same
> causes, as that experienced by a landless family in a cash-cropping
> area of the same country, let alone that experienced by people
> carrying similar labels in other countries, or by those carrying

> different labels altogether. Multiple realities need multiple theories –
> across the North – South boundary.

To Maxwell's (1998) useful schema of comparisons, convergences, and connections, I would add the notion of translation in order to highlight the necessity and creative possibility of adaptation in learning. While Maxwell's notion of comparisons gets to this to some extent, the notion of translation is more explicit and places greater emphasis on the potential value of indirect learning, thus drawing attention away from the potential to focus on simply whether knowledge or an idea can be transferred directly or not.

The conceptual re-organisation of development that I am arguing for through notions like translation does not simply seek to move from a North – South divide to a 'rich' – 'poor' divide, recreating a binary geopolitics of development. Instead, I am arguing in favour of a critical approach that seeks to deconstruct and avoid creating or sustaining geopolitical development categories, because they can act as barriers precluding learning (as well as serving to reinforce stereotypes of 'West' – 'Orient', or 'Self' – 'Other'). This argument for a change in the conceptual imaginaries of 'rich' and 'poor' countries does not extend to arguing for an organisational change, so that the remit of, say, people working in development studies, goes from 'poor' countries to 'poor' and 'rich' countries. Instead, the conceptual changes that I am arguing for involve a willingness to engage in examples of development not just in 'rich' countries (or 'poor' countries), but also in 'poor' countries (or 'rich' countries). This might involve, for example, urban geographers focussed on 'the West' engaging with literature and colleagues working on the 'Third World city', and in ways that go beyond simply 'adding-on' a case study (see Robinson, 2002; 2003a; 2003b). In reference to development studies, Maxwell (1998: 28) suggests ways of negotiating this challenge:

> There is one route I think we should not take, which is that each of us should try to merge all our work into one, covering North and South. The world is too big, and the intellectual complexity too great. Instead, people who specialise on the North or South will continue to do so, but should make new efforts to learn from each other, to explore common problems brought on by convergence, and perhaps to develop new theory together. The best place to start might be with specific topics, like public works, food policy or participation – indeed, with the meaning and measurement of terms

like 'poverty' and 'social exclusion'. This will enable collaboration to
be built inductively, from the bottom-up.

The attempt to move beyond conceptual divisions of North and South in development, however, raises a question: should we stop using terms like North and South altogether? In terms of conventional usage, the question is a moot point. People will continue to use notions of North and South, even for no other reason than their familiarity. A more productive task is to seek to, first, critically engage with notions of North and South, and, second, to advance alternative concepts that seek to capture geographies that move beyond such a simple division, that unsettle "easy categories" through a "politics of ambiguity and multiplicity" (Bowker and Starr, 1999: 305).

In the thesis I write of 'rich' and 'poor' countries as a short hand. However, these are themselves rather blanket terms, suggesting homogeneity rather than the incredible diversity that characterise the countries it signposts, hence the inverted commas designed to emphasise the instability of the terms. There are rich and poor in all countries. 'High and low-income countries' is another shorthand that could be employed, but I am less comfortable with this because it reduces development questions to economic considerations. Labels of 'rich' and 'poor' in inverted commas possess more potential of inviting the reader to think of wealth and poverty beyond finances, to consider political, historical, cultural and social issues.

Massey's (1991) arguments for a "global sense of place" form one possible point of entry into an understanding both of the complexity of many contemporary political, economic, cultural and social landscapes, and the political project that an embracement of this 'mixing' and 'messiness' can embody. Global sense of place emphasises connection and responsibility that bypasses divisions of North and South. On a more abstract level, Delueze and Guattari's (1978) notion of the 'rhizome' is a metaphor that could be useful, "conveying as it does an image of movement that can come temporary to rest in new places while maintaining ongoing connections elsewhere" (Bell, 1999: 9). The rhizome, argue Deleuze and Guattari, has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, "between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 25). An emphasis on the creative possibilities of connections with elsewhere creates an image of

development as a meeting place for a global development studies, rather than an area-based development studies[211]. These are concepts that are less inclined to view the world as made-up of dichotomous blocks such as North and South, and more of multiple braids of varying lengths and natures. They emphasise openness to difference, and to the creativity of misreadings (Said, 1984) that characterise engagements with different examples of development.

To take one example, Appadurai (2000b: 14) has theorised the question of openness to difference in development studies by comparing 'weak internationalization' with 'strong internationalization'. In the former, researchers working in 'rich' countries engage with researchers in poor countries on the basis that the research ethic of the latter – their methodologies, writing forms, referencing patters, and so on – is similar to or should change to become similar to their own. However:

> The other ['strong internationalization'] is to imagine and invite a conversation about research in which...the very elements of this ethic could be the subjects of debate. Scholars from other societies and traditions of inquiry could bring to this debate their own ideas about what counts as new knowledge and what communities of judgement and accountability they might judge to be central in the pursuit of such knowledge (Appadurai, 2000b: 14).

The notion of strong internationalization is one that embodies a progressive outlook to the possibilities of learning and that argues for a reorganising of the conceptual domains of development studies. In a similar vein, Slater (1997) has provocatively argued that:

> In a world increasingly configured by global connectivity, a strong case can be made for posing the significance of another three Rs-respect, recognition and reciprocity. If our geopolitical imagination in the field of knowledge is going to be open, nomadic, combinatory, critical and inquiring, it can displace the hold of Euro-Americanist thought and find ways of learning from the theoretical reflexivity of different writers and academics from other worlds and cultures. In such an endeavour, there will always be the need for a negotiation of respect and recognition with a critical sensibility that can assist us in evading essentializations of either a positive or negative tint. Mutual respect and recognition must include, if they are to be of any

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[211] See also Appadurai (2000) on area studies in the USA, Robinson (2002) on urban studies, and Slater (1992) on social theory.

> meaningful ethical value, the right to be critical and different on both sides of any cultural or intellectual border. Reciprocity and dialogue can only emerge if there is a will to go beyond indifference and historically sedimented pre-judgements; to engage in analytical conversations with others in ways that can make the outside part of the inside and vice-versa has the potential to engender mutually beneficial encounters.

The implications of the argument for the reorganisation of conceptual domains of development extend to a variety of fields. For example, Robinson (2002: 532), in promoting "a more cosmopolitan approach to urban studies", argues that the construction of categories such as 'global city', 'world city' and 'third world city' creates a division between urban theory and urban development. Instead, she argues for an approach without categories that seeks to bring more cities into view in urban studies. This is an approach that conceptualises cities as 'ordinary cities', "understood to be diverse, creative, modern and distinctive, with the possibility to imagine (within the not inconsiderable constraints of contestations and uneven power relations) their own futures and distinctive forms of city-ness" (Robinson, 2002: 546). This thesis makes a contribution to the question of a development studies beyond North and South by highlighting empirical examples of engagements between the UK and India, and by developing a theoretical framework for analysing the movement of knowledge through 'rich' and 'poor' countries[212].

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[212] A related and (at least) equally politicized semantic is the trope of 'poor people'. This is not a concern I have been able to explore in the thesis, but I hope that the role of the thesis in arguing the need to destabalise categories of 'rich' and 'poor' would indicate that I do not straightforwardly accept the construction of 'poor people' as a homogenous and "fetishized category, whether this is cast in the image of Third World victimhood or in the new-found rationale of efficient policy targets" (Roy, 2003: 19). Roy's (2003) study of gender and poverty in Calcutta is significant in that it explores "the ways in which the very category of 'poor women' comes to be constructed", for example as an essentialised object enrolled in discourses that produce the city itself through a gendered politics of poverty.

8.4.3   Policy-learning beyond North - South

The thesis has implications for learning between 'rich' and 'poor' countries in policy-making[213]. Rose (1991, 1993) has argued that lesson drawing focuses on the experiences of others "across any boundary of space and time" (1991: 1). He writes: "Given an authoritative policy goal, lesson drawing seeks to use knowledge from other times and places to improve current programmes" (Rose, 1991: 6). While Rose's notion of 'lesson drawing' is a rationalist conception, I use   lesson   drawing   as   interchangeable   with   the   post-rationalist conceptualisation of learning in the thesis (see, for example, Section 1.5.3). Policy-learning can be positive as well as negative: as much as we can learn what to do, we can equally learn what not to do; both can be as valuable. Policy-learning is often conceived as a rational transfer of knowledge and ideas, detached from relations of power that effect the movement of knowledge and ideas (Freeman, 2003). The contribution of the thesis here is to emphasise translation in policy-learning, which emphasises the need for adaptation to the extent that it makes no distinction between adaptation and adoption (Freeman, 2003).

In the case of the UK, policy-makers appear almost instinctively to look to countries such as Canada, New Zealand and particularly the USA when attempting to draw lessons about policy. These are the countries where, as Rose argues, policy makers perceive 'common values'[214] [for instance, that of a capitalist democracy, or a similar culture] to be constant: "Elected officials searching for lessons prefer to turn to those whose overall political values are

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[213] Following Jones and Newburn (2002: 105), 'policy' has several different dimensions that include policy goals, content, instruments, programmes, institutions, ideologies, ideas and attitudes. The actors involved in policy movement do not simply involve policy-makers (bureaucrats and politicians) but also non-state actors like NGOs, think-tanks, CBOs, and academics that have inputs into the policy-making process. In analysing policy movement, Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) usefully distinguish between 'lesson drawing' from abroad, which they view as usually voluntary, and 'policy transfer', which at its most extreme can be coercive and forced (in, for instance, policies attached to aid).

[214] Suggestive of what Appadurai (2000: 7) has referred to as 'trait geographies' (Section 3.2.1).

consistent with their own" (Rose, 1991: 17). Without the radical step of including countries as diverse as India (in say policy development about federalism in the EU) as an option in policy-learning, policy improvements can only come from a limited group of countries. Attempting to learn only from the 'usual suspects', such as the USA in relation to federalism, does not necessarily diminish the quality of policies, but it does necessarily negate a range of experience across the globe that could prove useful. 'Usual suspects' are often organised in networks of policy-makers that limit the possibilities of learning to the knowledge of one another[215]. The basis of my argument here is that these options are rarely if ever considered.

Dolowitz and Marsh (1996: 353), while conceiving knowledge in a rationalist sense that imagines knowledge travelling from place to place instrumentally, confirm the central logic of this argument:

> If policy makers are looking to draw lessons from politics which are similar in institutional, economic and cultural makeup, it might be argued that, instead of expanding the number of ideas and actors involved in the decision making process, policy transfer enhances the power of a relatively small circle of actors who consistently draw lessons from each other.

De Haan and Maxwell (1998: 5) contend that it is "foolish to deny the possibility of learning across geographical boundaries". Their work highlights another advantage to engaging with very different countries: it can lead to a questioning

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[215] These networks can be thought of as 'epistemic communities'. Haas's (1992) notion of epistemic communities echoes the tendency to search for commonality in lesson drawing. Epistemic communities are networks of experts in a particular policy domain. According to Haas, they have shared normative and principled beliefs which provide the value based rationales for their action, shared causal beliefs or professional judgements, common notions of validity based on inter-subjective, internally-defined criteria for validating knowledge, and a common policy enterprise. Dowding and King (2000) define a 'policy community' as a "common culture and understandings about the nature of the problem and the decision-making process within a given policy domain". However, more appropriate than epistemic communities to the question of learning about policy is 'transgovernmental networks (Risse-Kappen, 1995: 4), "networks among state officials in sub-units of national governments, [and] international organizations". Both epistemic communities and transgovernmental networks "have a major impact on the global diffusion of values, norms and ideas in such diverse areas as human-rights, international security, or the global environment" (Risse-Kappen, 1995: 4), although they have varying effects. For instance, Risse-Kappen (1995: 4) asks: "Why have 'epistemic communities' and INGOs been able to set the agenda on global warming in Japan and in many European Union (EU) countries, but apparently less so in the United States?".

of policy assumptions. For instance, in an example of the potential for learning for 'poorer' countries from 'richer' countries, de Haan (1998) and de Haan and Maxwell (1998) suggest that attention to the notion of 'social exclusion' can contribute to debates conceptualising solutions to poverty. In the (1998) Institute for Development Studies theme issue *Poverty and Social Exclusion in North and South*, de Haan and Maxwell ask (1998: 1-2):

> [D]oes the new debate [on social exclusion] in the North offer opportunities for dialogue between the North and South? Does the debate on social exclusion in the North offer new lessons for the South? Conversely, are there insights from the South that will enrich debate in the North?

They highlight three possible answers to the questions. First, that the debate on social exclusion, which they remind us is wide-ranging and variously interpreted, adds little to debates on poverty in poorer countries either in terms of *describing* poverty[216] or *explaining* poverty[217]. However, they argue that social exclusion can contribute to debates about *solutions* to poverty in 'poorer' countries. This is because social exclusion "puts institutional processes at the heart of the poverty debate…[which] helps to focus on the institutions and actors involved in the processes that cause deprivation. It thus has immediate implications for policy" (de Haan and Maxwell, 1998: 5)[218]. De Haan (1998) argues that the main benefit of the notion of social exclusion is that it always comes back to the actors

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[216] There is a consensus in development approaches 'rich' and 'poor' countries that poverty is multi-dimensional, and social exclusion is a similar notion to the UNDP's Human Development Index (UNDP, 1997), Sen's (1977; 1981) influential work on capabilities and entitlements – although a social exclusion approach "goes beyond an entitlement framework by looking at processes behind entitlement failure" (de Haan, 1998: 15) – and Chambers' (1997) work on vulnerability and livelihood's (de Haan, 1998: 15). Similarly, Gaventa (1998: 51) points out that the definition of 'participation' employed by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is similar to that of social exclusion. Here, participation is "the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements from those hitherto excluded from such control" (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994: 5).

[217] There is a rich debate in development across the globe about the causes of poverty.

[218] Harriss (2002b), however, reminds us that 'mainstream' development economists such as those working at the World Bank generally adhere to a neo-classical economics that, argues Harriss, negates wider inequalities precisely because of a particular kind of neoliberal focus on the role of institutions in and for development.

and institutions that exclude, and that this focus makes a useful contribution to attempts at addressing poverty. De Haan and Maxwell (1998: 5) make two further points about 'rich' and 'poor' countries together: one, the notion of social exclusion might be a useful way of putting traditional concerns about 'social justice' for all back on the international agenda, and, two – and most importantly of all for them – the 'discovery' of social exclusion in 'richer' countries opens opportunities for increased dialogue between 'rich' and 'poor' countries[219]. The main contribution of this thesis to these debates lies in the exploration of how knowledge and learning could be conceived and how knowledge and ideas travel. The emphasis on indirect learning through translation is particularly useful in emphasising the possibilities of engaging in different policy situations.

Another contribution in relation to policy production emerging from the thesis is the question of the material. In relation to the topic of policy formation, a post-rationalist approach draws attention to the question of the link between the material in knowledge and learning, and policy. Policy research examining the question of networks could benefit from engaging in a material analysis. I argued the importance of taking knowledge about the material seriously in development policy in Section 4.7.3, and discussed the role of the material in knowledge and learning in Section 5.6. However, I did not discuss, for example, how the World Bank could begin to integrate the role of the material in knowledge and learning with their policies. Challenging questions around how the two are bridged could inform future research.

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[219] On a different register, Copisarow (1999) has suggested lessons for regulating micro-credit in the UK that would make it easier to launch microcredit schemes. She argues that "there is really no appropriate legal structure or regulatory framework for the micro-finance industry" in the UK (1999: 24), and makes some suggestions as to what kind of regulations might be useful based on her view of experiences in 'poor' countries: "1. The ability to use up to 100% of its [the microcredit scheme's] loan capital on unsecured lending. 2. The ability to start lending with a very small capital base. 3. The ability to take client deposits. 4. The ability to lend out of borrowed funds as well as out of its own capital or grant monies. 5. The freedom to make loans or take deposits without the restrictions imposed on, e.g. credit unions or mutual credit societies (1999: 24)".

8.4.4   Global civil society, knowledge and learning

Global civil society literature tends to gloss over questions of knowledge production and learning in travel. It is often assumed that knowledge travels straightforwardly between places in, for instance, transnational social movements, and that learning occurs as a necessary consequence of the transfer of information or knowledge. This functionalist assumption of unproblematic knowledge transfer constitutes an important gap in the global civil society literature. One major exception here is Eyerman and Jamison's (1991) *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach*, which seeks to demonstrate the importance of knowledge in the views, interpretations, social and political identities, and transformations of both social movements and the topics in which they intervene. However, the focus of the book is on the ways in which the cognitive practices (the ideas and debates through which social movements, in interactions with them and others, develop knowledge) translate concerns and present new ideas about topics. Eyerman and Jamison attend to knowledge as socially constructed and generative of meanings, identities and politics, but not to the ways in which knowledge travels or too the multiple forms of knowledge and learning. The book is more concerned with how knowledge influences debates than how it travels.

There have been few other attempts to analyse knowledge in social movements and evaluate its importance in various forms of global civil society (see Betsill and Bulkeley, forthcoming; Comor, 2001, for other exceptions). Indeed, even Kaldor's well-received (2003) *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War* implicitly assumes that the coming together of groups in transnational social movements leads to an unproblematic mutual addition of knowledge to the resepective 'tool kits' of organisations. Kaldor makes reference to 'transnational civic networks' as "forms of communication and information exchange" (2003: 95), and to the "importance of dialogue" (2003: 63) between social movements in the 'East' and 'West' during the Cold War, but ignores the question of how knowledge travels and what travelling does to learning. This is not just a conceptual issue: the power relations between different groups in a social movement influences what knowledge takes precedence, what knowledge is marginalised, and how learning affects political positions over time.

Other noted surveys of global civil society, such as Edwards and Gaventa (2001) or Keck and Sikkink (1998), marginalise questions of knowledge production and learning that contour the nature of the politics of global civil society. Keck and Sikkink (1998) highlight the importance of communicative action in transnational advocacy networks: "Modern networks are...vehicles for communicative and political exchange, with the potential for mutual transformation of participants" (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 241, cited Taylor, 2002: 343-344). They also argue that "[a]ctivists in networks try not only to influence policy outcomes, but to transform the terms and nature of the debate" (1998: 238-239). However, they appear to assume a rationality to these processes: there is little consideration of how knowledge travels and what the opportunities and challenges of knowledge in travel are. The post-rationalist theorization of knowledge and learning in the thesis can contribute to this literature.

8.4.5   Interdisciplinarity: travel as methodology

There are implications emerging from the metaphor of travelling for how we think the growing concern with the territories of academic disciplines at a time when interdisciplinary work is becoming increasingly popular. Academic thought is increasingly formulated outside of the domains of individual disciplines. Ideas and literatures are increasingly fluid, porous and co-constituting, conferences and journals are increasingly populated by numerous rather than single disciplines.   Harriss (2002b: 494) defines multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity under the banner of 'cross-disciplinarity'. The former refers to the deliberate bringing together of perspectives from different disciplines, the latter "refers to more rigorous attempts to integrate the frameworks of different disciplines and to explore research questions" which are unlikely to arise within the boundaries of a single discipline. There are enormous potentials in such attempts. For instance, a development problem is not simply about institutions if institutional economists are introduced to neo-Gramscian influences on development. Economists, geographers, anthropologists and political scientists, can bring different perspectives that may help identify the myriad dimensions of development problems (and this notwithstanding the great diversity within these respective disciplines) (Harriss, 2002b).

However, boundaries and specialisms remain in tact in geography – and are becoming stronger (Thrift, 2002). Geographers have been slow to respond to moves towards and the benefits of interdisciplinarity. Thrift (2002: 295), reflecting on the future of geography, sees "a certain lack of ambition and general unadventurousness" in the subject: "Some geographers would still, I suspect, like to hide away from these interdisciplinary days, spending large amounts of time considering histories of the discipline, circulating through the same old conferences and thereby generally confirming geography's presence as themselves. I can think of nothing more lethal". This is despite some notable exceptions: Macleod (2003: 166), for example, attributes much of the innovation that has helped foster in recent years an "intellectual renaissance" on research and writing on cities to a "transcendence of any disciplinary straightjacket"[220].

The metaphor of travel as a methodology offers one way to negotiate the conceptual challenges of interdisciplinary adventures. Writing about the difficulties of negotiating "the labyrinthine land of humanities boundaries", Bal (2002: 8) argues that "such a land can only unify through travel, through learning foreign languages, through encounters with others". Moreover, Bal argues that in the field of 'cultural analysis', notable for its interdisciplinarity, the 'analysis' part of the term is at stake in the focus on 'travel'. Travel becomes the practice of analysis of 'culture' because culture is itself a set of mobile practices: "It would be presumptuous to pronounce on what 'culture' is, except perhaps to say that it can only be envisioned in a plural, changing, and mobile existence" (Bal, 2002: 9). Similar statements can be made in reference to development studies. We can think of travel as a means of doing development research as we move through foreign languages (both linguistically and conceptually). In this sense, travel becomes a means for thinking and researching development as a field of contested knowledges, with echoes of Haraway's (1991) 'situated knowledge'.

Casting the metaphor of travelling more generally, Latour (1999) insists that society should be conceived not in terms of structure and agency but in terms of

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[220] For an example, see Amin and Thrift's (2002) *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*, an eclectic book with a broad philosophical influence that includes writers like Serres, Deleuze, Latour, Lefebvre, Benjamin, de Certeau, and others, and informed by geography, sociology, urban studies, cultural studies and politics.

circulation. By focussing analysis on the ways in which different elements are brought into relation with one another, Latour's work is necessarily marked by interdisciplinarity:

> [T[rained as a philosopher and as an anthropologist, after field studies in Africa and California, he [Latour] has moved effortlessly from laboratories (Latour and Woolgar, 1979) to paintings (1988), and thinks nothing of using ancient Greek philosophy to expose the sterile foundations of the contemporary so-called 'Science Wars' (1997). It is also he – in We Have Never Been Modern (1993) – who has perhaps most clearly articulated that the catholicism of these displacements (those of Serres as well as his own), far from being an indulgence, is rather a very necessary response to the crumbling of 'the modern constitution' that has propped up our culture of purification and critique...Boundaries must be crossed" (Bingham and Thrift, 2000: 295-296).

Through notions such as translation, or 'creative misreadings' (Said, 1983), one imperative of this thesis is to encourage an intellectual itinerary. For academics interested in thinking beyond their local 'knowledge-production industrial complex', reproduced through the geographies of publishers, markets, circulation and citation (Robinson, 2003b), the metaphor of travel is potentially a more progressive way of conceiving the research endeavour than that of disciplinary specialism or boundary. In this sense, the question, subject and metaphor of travel, explored in this thesis in relation to conceptualising knowledge and learning, to rethinking geopolitical constructs of development, and to considering the imbrications of travel and politics, contributes to a range of emerging debates around interdisciplinarity in geography and social science more generally.

<u>Appendices</u>

Appendix 1: Interview details

Interviews conducted in first trip to India:

- Dr Saraswati Raju, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

- Dr Vikram Menon, UK Department of International Development, Delhi

- SK Sharma, Development Alternatives (NGO), Delhi

- Lalit Kumar, Planning Commission, Government of India, Delhi

- Johan Fagerskiold, UNICEF, Uttar Pradesh

- Professor Ajit Kumar Singh, Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow

- Ram Advani, Bookshop owner, Lucknow

- Parul Soni, Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), Delhi

- Dr Mark Robinson, Governance and Civil Society, Ford Foundation, Delhi

- Shipra Narang, Network Coordinator, UNDP Urban Management Programme, Delhi

- Atreyee Cordiero, Programme Director, and Pankaj Burra, Society for Participatory Research in South Asia (PRIA), Delhi

- Sundar Burra, Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), Mumbai

Interview details from second Indian trip:

Mumbai:

- Sheela Patel, SPARC Director, Khet Wadi, Mumbai.

- Celine D'Cruz, SPARC, Khet Wadi, Mumbai.

- Sundar Burra, SPARC, Khet Wadi, Mumbai.

- Panchali, SPARC member, Khet Wadi, Mumbai.

- Assena, SPARC member, Khet Wadi, Mumbai.

- Lopez, SPARC member, NSDF office in Byculla, central Mumbai.

- Lackshmi, Mahila Milan leader, Byculla, Mumbai (and various other MM members informally).

- Jockin Arpuram, NSDF President, Byculla, Mumbai.

- Shekhar, NSDF leader, Byculla, Mumbai.

- Sheikh Faruk Mohammed, President, United Central Committee, transit housing camp, Wadala, Mumbai.

- Mike Brown, Moral Rearmament (MRA), Mumbai.

- Anonymous official, Department of Housing, Government of Maharashtra.

- Anonymous NGO Director, Mumbai.

- Arjun Appadurai, Academic, Mumbai.

- Jorge Anzorena, SELAVIP, Mumbai.

- Joshi, Slum Rehabilitation Authority, Housing Board, Maharashtran Housing and Area Development Authority (MAHDA), Mumbai.

Pune:

- Sharad Mahajan, Architect, Maharashtra Social Housing and Action League (MASHAL), Pune.

- Varsha Sharma, Architect, MASHAL, Pune.

- Suha Sushak, Engineer, MASHAL, Pune.

- Meera Bapat, SPARC governing body, Pune.

- Sanita, MM leader

Hyderabad:

- David Sukamar, Executive Secretary, Integrated Rural Development Services (IRDS), Hyderabad.

- Ramesh Pendker, IRDS, Hyderabad.

- Devika, IRDS, Hyderabad.

- Formal and informal meetings with other MM and NSDF members

Chennai:

- Nerhudasan, General Secretary, Tamil Nadu Slum Dwellers Federation, Chennai.

- Dr Nagappan, former civil servant, Chennai.

- Formal and informal meetings with other TNSDF members

Bangalore:

- Thomas, Bangalore District Mahila Milan, Bangalore.

- Rajesh Mathew, Bangalore District Mahila Milan, Bangalore.

- Lacksmi Shanmughan, Bangalore's Mahila Milan, President.

- Formal and informal meetings with other MM and NSDF leaders

Interview details from UK research:

- Ruth McLeod. Chief Executive, Homeless International, Coventry.

- Kim Mallard, Homeless International, Coventry.

- Malcolm Jack, Homeless International, Coventry.

- Toby Blume, Co-ordinator, Groundswell, London.

- Kara Carter, Network co-ordinator, Groundswell.

- Michael Shearsby, Groundswell.

- Steve Stott, Groundswell.

- Mike Baker, Your Works, Bristol.

- Bill Anderson, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Glasgow.

- Sarah Matthews, Barnardos Street Team, Glasgow.

- Alan Burns, Drop-In, Glasgow.

- Samantha, Drop-In.

- Bob Holman, Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse (FARE), Glasgow.

- Andrea Denevin, Homeless Persons Team, Glasgow City Council.

o Nick Hopkins, Glasgow Council for Voluntary Services (GCVS).

o Mike Carrick, UK One World Linking Association (UKOWLA), Worcester.

o John Carlton, Chief Executive of an anonymous Housing Association, Belfast.

o Diane Mitlin, Institute for International Development (IIED), Manchester.

o David Satterthwaite, Institute for International Development (IIED), London.

o Tamsyn Barton, Social Development Advisor at the Rural Livelihoods and the Infrastructure and Urban Development Department, Department for International Development (DFID), London.

o Ilias Dirie, Infrastructure and Urban Development Programme, DFID.

Appendix 2: Interview Guides

India:

- What is your personal involvement with the Alliance?
- Why and how?
- What ideas were used and how?
- Where did they come from?
- Have they been changed?
- What affects have they had?
- What encounters have you made with others in the Indian network?
- What are the relations between you and these different groups and individuals?
- What is the nature and strength of network of which you are part?
- What are the similarities and differences?
- What are the different interpretations?
- Have they been receptive to similar ideas?
- If ideas moved, do you think they changed as they moved?

Interviews with Groundswell followed a similar structure. As with some members of the Indian groups, questions were often more directly asked about the nature of the India-UK exchanges. For instance:

- What was the purpose of the exchange?
- What did you learn?
- What have been the affects?
- What scope in there for learning between groups like you in India and the UK?

Policy-makers

These were interviews with donors or government officials, and included the following areas:

- What is your organisation's relationship to the Indian Alliance / Groundswell?
- What are the similarities and differences?
- What have you learnt from encountering the Indian Alliance / Groundswell?

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