Chapter Six

THE ART OF BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THE WORLD OF THE POOR AND THE WORLD OF THE NON-POOR

Else Øyen

If the poor are to participate in civil society, the challenge is to build bridges between the world of the poor and the world of the non-poor, and to secure a two-way traffic across those bridges.

Poverty can neither be eradicated, nor alleviated, without such bridges being established. The poor are marginalized from civil society, but causes and manifestations of poverty are woven into the way social and economic structures are organized in the world of the non-poor. Therefore, poverty cannot be understood as a phenomenon isolated from society at large.

Poverty is a complex phenomenon; an understanding of its complexities is a prerequisite to the development of adequate tools for poverty alleviation. A whole set of interrelated variables are needed to describe the manifestations of poverty and the dynamic processes that sustain it. But for analytical purposes it is necessary to scrutinize variable by variable in order to better understand its impact, and thereby also how it can be susceptible to influence and change.

At the UNESCO/ISSC/CROP Round Table during the UN World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen one of the crucial variables was identified and made the centre of attention: namely the *participation of the poor in civil society*; the assumption being that participation of the poor in the world of the non-poor is a powerful and one of the effective means towards the alleviation of poverty.

Constructing a Bridge

A bridge, spanning rivers and ravines, is a very elaborate structure. It consists of many different elements which have to fit perfectly together, if the bridge is to be trusted. The foundations must be solid, the bridgeheads must be fortified so as to hold the impact of the bridge and the traffic, and girders, cables and pillars must be cut out to carry the load of the entire structure. It is no small task to construct a modern bridge. It has taken a long time and enormous investments in basic and applied research to make possible such an endeavour.

In principle, the quality demands of a psychological and social bridge spanning the world of the poor and the world of the non-poor should not be lesser than those of a physical bridge. Investments in basic and applied research to develop the necessary elements for the building of a social bridge, as well as time and resources allocated for fitting together the elements in an optimal way, testing the bridge and making adaptations, should be as important as investments in physical bridges.

Several of the elements of a social bridge are already available. However, many of these instruments are not working well, which in the present context means that they do not increase the participation of the poor sufficiently to have either a long-term, or a short-term effect on the alleviation of poverty. Democracy, for example, can be seen as a necessary but far from sufficient instrument for opening up the world

of the non-poor to enable the participation of the poor in it. During the last election in Kenya, for example, a vote could be bought for 30 cents. In the United States, even intensive efforts to make poor people register as voters have not been successful. In such a reality, voting is hardly a relevant vehicle for helping the poor slip into the world of the non-poor. When poor people do not perceive the long-term and invisible gains built into voting, there is little incentive for them to vote. Democracy becomes an abstraction and not an instrument designed to improve present living conditions and future participation in the world of the non-poor. So far the blame for non-participation has been put on the poor, with more education as the prescribed remedy. Strangely enough, few questions have been raised about the functioning of the democracy itself. The poor fail to perceive the link between the alleviation of poverty and the participation in the politics of vote that democracy promotes. Questions can be posed whether democracy is the optimal way of organizing a political system, and whether democracy alone is enough to alleviate poverty.

The law of gravity prevents a bridge from being left suspended in the air on its own. In constructing and securing solid bridgeheads we need both knowledge and investments. Without these, the life time of a bridge is limited.

Training, education, health and welfare programmes for the poor can be seen as important fortifications of the bridgehead on the side of the world of the poor. Treating extreme poverty as a violation of the individual's human rights is another powerful investment in a solid bridgehead. Providing material resources to the individual and the household, and creating new infrastructure for the community, are other means of fortifying the bridgeheads.

Bridgeheads on the side of the non-poor world call for other kinds of fortifications. Educational programmes which bring across concrete knowledge about the causes of poverty and induce understanding of what a life in poverty

is like, are necessary investments. The display in media and public life of humanitarian values of empathy and sharing with the less fortunate is another important element for the restructuring of social and economic institutions. Creating consent to political action to redistribute resources is still another necessary element of fortification.

Even a well-constructed bridge with solid bridgeheads on both sides is not enough to secure a smoothly running two-way traffic across the bridge. While it is embedded in the logic of creating a better life for the poor that they gain by participating in the world of the non-poor, there is no similar logic inviting the non-poor to participate in the world of the poor. On the contrary, the non-poor are likely to lose on social accounts if they cross the bridge to the world of the poor. This situation creates a paradox. If the non-poor are to open up their world to the poor, they shall need compassion, social consciousness and more than a theoretical knowledge of the lives of the poor. But without entering the world of the poor, the sympathy and compassion of the non-poor for the poor may be expressed only symbolically.

Three Modes of Poverty Descriptions

Poverty can be described within several modes of thought. The choice of a certain mode is closely tied to the solutions proposed and the exclusion of other modes, or in the terms used above: which part of the bridge to fortify, and how to do it.

The most common trap in poverty research has been to treat poverty as a homogeneous phenomenon, i.e. analytically lumping together groups of poor people, as if poverty were the overriding characteristic when describing these groups. Another shortcoming has been to assume that poverty can be seen as a gradual phenomenon which stretches from the extremely poor to the category of low income people. The need for a simple political instrument, and the dominance of income as an indicator of poverty, have helped

turn a very complex phenomenon into an over-simplified picture of poverty as a gradual and almost uni-dimensional economic phenomenon.

Three major modes of thought can be outlined as follows:[1]

1. *Poverty as lack or scarcity of individual resources.* Poverty in this mode is seen as a result of the individual having little or no access to resources that are vital to overcome poverty. Resources can be defined (a) as basic necessities for survival, (b) as material and non-material means which can lead to a better standard of living, or (c) as access to social goods and participation which gives the individual better control on his/her own life situation. Examples of such resources are food, income, education, housing, access to clean water and health measures, and access to participation in civil society. There is a wide variety of such resources.

   Within this framework poverty is defined as a lack of one or several of these resources so that a transfer of resources to the poor is needed to fortify the bridgehead on their side.[2]

2. *Poverty as related to social fabric and internal forces.* In this mode the focus is on the social organization of the poor and how internal forces in the poor communities create and sustain poverty. Basic questions raised within this mode are whether the way of life of the poor is organized differently from that of the non-poor society taking into account the feeble infrastructure of the poor, and the different norms that govern their lives. In the present framework a relevant question is whether the organization of the poor and the poor themselves prevent their participation in civil society.[3]

Built into this mode of thinking is a model of the dominant society and its institutions as a "better" functioning society which produces less poverty. If the poor are to succeed they have to be reorganized and "educated" into the norms of the non-poor society, that is, fortifications of the bridgehead on the side of the poor go through educational programmes and social control of "unwanted" and dysfunctional behaviour in poor communities.

3. *Poverty as related to external forces and a lack of opportunity structure.* This mode directs the attention towards society at large. Society is seen as a set of opportunity structures which allows individuals to change station in life. Examples of such structures are the educational system, the labour market and availability of jobs, access to land and ownership, openness of social networks, and access to participation in civil society. However, the poor are not in a situation where they can make use of these structures. Examples of barriers to access to opportunity structures range from a class dominated social structure and a religious or military monopoly of politics, to the denial of a general right to vote and speak, and an informal majority consensus stereotyping poor people as incompetent.

Within this mode poverty can be seen as either the general lack of opportunity structures in a society, or as the restricted access to such opportunity structures for people in poverty. Both explanations are important for the analysis of the participation of the poor in civil society, and the searchlight is shifted from the bridgehead on the poor side, to the bridgehead on the non-poor side and the conditions under which traffic across the bridge will be allowed.

The papers presented at the Round Table demonstrate the important role of these three modes of analysis, in spite

of the different cultural and geographical contexts of the papers and the different angles the authors chose in their approaches into the understanding of the participation of the poor in civil society.

Fortifying the Bridgehead of the Poor

The three poverty modes outlined above offer very different roads into the understanding of poverty and call for very different strategies for fortifying the bridgehead of the poor and securing more participation of the poor in civil society. If poverty is attributable to the lack of individual resources, the best strategy for more active participation would be to secure transfer of resources to those in poverty. If poverty is the result of an inadequate social fabric, the best strategy would be to work for institution building among the poor. If poverty is due to a lack of opportunity structures, the best strategy would be to create such structures and make them more accessible to the poor.

The three modes can be seen as complementary, rather than one excluding the other. All the strategies derived from these modes are necessary and have to work in conjunction with one another if participation of the poor is the goal.

The Chapter by Sadig Rasheed on *Poverty Eradication and Participation in Africa* gives a very realistic account of the poverty scene on the African continent and the enormous need for transfer of resources. Whatever poverty measurement is applied, they all bear witness to widespread, intense and continued poverty, in particular in sub-Saharan countries. Although foreign aid has been sizable for many years, both through national and international agencies, and through non-governmental organizations, poverty has increased. Questions can well be raised if the effects of the enormous economic investments have been proportional to the amount of money transferred, if the resources have been sufficient, and if they have been allocated in the most optimal way.

Much of the aid has been given as food supplies, that is, using the first of the three modes of poverty understanding described above — transferring resources to the individual. The short term goal has been to remedy direct hunger and famine, whether as a result of crop failure or internal wars. But the long term results of the short term goals have helped undermine rural production and subsistence farming.

At the same time, Structural Adjustment Programmes intended to have long term positive effects on the national economy have had short term negative effects for the rural poor who should have benefited from the poverty alleviation programmes, thereby demonstrating the difference in perceptions and the conflict of interests between the non-poor and the poor. Devaluation, price increases and liberalization of trade and imports have had negative effects for the poor. The social programmes introduced to mitigate the impact of the structural adjustment programmes have mainly been cosmetic.

The African economy is different from other continental economies, Rasheed argues in the language of the second mode. That in itself calls for an approach which is different from the hitherto Western dominated adjustment programmes. It is necessary to take into account the social and cultural organization of the different countries receiving aid and advice. But if restructuring of the economy is intended to alleviate poverty, then the poor, who form the majority of the population, should be empowered to participate in the decisions affecting them. Democratic institutions have to be developed in political landscapes which for a long time have been authoritarian and repressive. Although the responsibilities do not lie with the foreign aid agencies only, foreign aid should be tailored to the well-functioning of democratic institutions. That in itself will not guarantee the empowerment and participation of the poor in civil society. But foreign aid agencies have a historical responsibility for educating the poor about their democratic rights, for convincing them of the value and benefits of exercising these rights, and for assisting them in practising these rights.

Rasheed also calls for structural changes to open up the world of the non-poor to the world of the poor. At the same time, he also points out the dilemma of foreign aid agencies, namely how far can they go in inducing changes in a country, without unduly interfering in its internal affairs. If foreign aid agencies were successful in mobilizing the vast majority of unhappy and deprived poor people, either many national governments would have been ousted or the foreign aid agencies would have been sent packing.

In the Chapter on South Asia on *Poverty Eradication through Participatory Development* Ponna Wignaraja describes a situation where "in the four decades since Independence national income has increased without significantly alleviating poverty and...agricultural growth has increased food output without affecting the nutritional status of the poor". However, the conclusions run along a more optimistic note. Through a series of studies on the consequences of development without a human face and the many crises facing countries in South Asia, an alternative theory of development is presented, with particular emphasis on mobilization of the poor through the use of local knowledge and participation at the micro level. On the one hand, it is accepted that the open economy and economic growth of the area have run their course. On the other hand, new organizational and economic structures have to be developed where poor people can participate. For example, conventional trade unions and cooperative movements do not relate themselves to the needs of the poor and have to be supplemented with organizations closer to the realities of poor people. The second mode of poverty understanding springs forward. But the first mode is also present: Poor people's resources shall be increased through access to capital and mobilization of savings, and access to primary education, health and protection of children shall be increased.

Much of this is still a long way off. But the discussion has moved up to the non-poor on the national political level,

and the SAARC Heads of States have pledged to draw up Pro-Poor Plans for each country for eradication of the worst forms of poverty within a ten-year period. However, a certain doubt about the stated goal is introduced in the document by the statement that the "Pro-Poor Plan is based on the assumption that the poor are efficient and can contribute to growth". On the other hand, the document also makes the observation that the open economy and the poverty strategies have to be harmonized "to prevent further sharpening of the contradictions in society".

Fortifying the Bridgehead of the Non-Poor

When the focus is shifted to the world of the non-poor, the choice of fortifications of the bridgehead on their side likewise depends on the chosen mode of thought concerning poverty. The three modes call for different strategies and have different consequences for the non-poor as well (taking into account that the concept of non-poor is as diversified as that of poverty). According to the first mode, poverty as lack of individual resources can only be mended through a thorough redistribution of the same in favour of the poor. This will deprive the non-poor of some of their resources and established rights, since they shall have to foot the bill. The second mode of thought, that of poverty as related to social fabric and internal forces, emphasizes the internal affairs of the poor. This mode is less threatening to the non-poor, and can be seen as reflected in the common stereotype that the poor themselves carry the blame for their predicament. The third mode of thought, that of poverty as lack of opportunities and access to the world of the non-poor, is probably the most threatening mode of thought to the non-poor. This mode presumes that power relations and social institutions be reviewed to accommodate for participation of the poor. Rationally speaking the non-poor have most to lose if the first and third mode of thought are applied to poverty alleviation.

There seems little to be gained for the non-poor in bringing the poor closer to their world. It can actually be argued that a certain amount of poverty is functional for the non-poor society.[4] Only the moral obligations towards other human beings and the added costs poverty imposes on society, seem to be weighty arguments in favour of increasing the participation of the poor in civil society.

Physically, the world of the poor and the world of the non-poor are kept apart, through differential land use and ghettoization. Socially, the two worlds are kept apart through differential participation in the labour market, the economy, and the social and cultural institutions. Mentally, the two worlds are kept apart through stereotyping and false images built by tradition and the mass media. The strong emphasis on individual failures as causes of poverty becomes part of an image-building which frees the non-poor from guilt and responsibility. Such an image-building also helps in keeping the distance between the two worlds.

The separation of the two worlds makes for few confrontations, common meeting places and little chances for corrections of false images. The non-poor have limited knowledge of the real world of the poor, and vice versa. Since the non-poor world seems to have little need for more precise information, the real world of the poor remains invisible. Decisions concerning poverty are often based on such incomplete and misleading data. Meanwhile, the role of the state continues expanding in directions which favour the non-poor world and increases the separation of the two worlds.

The Chapter by Robert Chambers on *Poor People's Realities: The Professional Challenge* can be seen in this context. In a thorough analysis he exposes the world of the poor and the two kinds of choices which shape their lives. On the one hand, there are choices created in the world of the non-poor which have a profound impact on the lives of the poor. On the other hand, there are choices which the poor make within the restrictions set by the non-poor world.

Chambers attacks the dominant uni-dimensional stereotype of the poor in a display of the multiple realities of poor people. He argues that the poor cannot be treated as a uniform group, because their poverty takes many different forms; because they — like all other human beings — are equipped with different resources; because they live in different environments and have to cope with different challenges; and because they use their insights and opportunities to create different survival strategies. In order to make themselves and their families survive under cruel conditions, they have to develop more creative skills than most other people. Many of their survival strategies do not conform with the expectations of the majority society, and the majority society stamps their activities as immoral, unnatural and the like. It is not understood by bureaucrats and other representatives from the majority society that the accepted strategies for "survival" in the world of the non-poor are neither useful, nor available in the world of the poor.

Chambers shows how poor people administer a pool of diverse and complex experiences which are unknown to the world of the non-poor. The individual and the household have to juggle several survival strategies at the same time, change strategy immediately if new opportunities arise or gateways close, and involve all members of the household in "seeking and finding food, fuel, animal fodder, cash and support in different ways, in different places, at different times of the year". Such activities unfold under a high degree of uncertainty.

Had the same dynamic activities been applied in the majority society, they could have been compared to the management of a small firm on the brink of bankruptcy. But these skills of versatility are invisible to the world of the non-poor, and consequently neither put to use, nor appreciated.[5]

Chambers draws his examples from many parts of the world, including rural and urban poverty. His major argument is that wherever you go, the realities of the poor are

so different from the realities of the non-poor, that time has come to make a choice between the two. Up to now the realities of the world of the non-poor and their uni-dimensional images of the poor have dominated thinking and policy-making for the alleviation of poverty. The results have been discouraging. If we are to advance further, the complex realities of the poor have to take precedence. Those realities can only be tapped through direct interaction between poor people and those representatives of the world of the non-poor who are responsible for aid programmes and interventions. Those detached professionals, moulded by the centre and trained to look for simple and uniform criteria for distribution of aid, will have to move from the centre to the periphery, from the simple to the complex, from the uniform to the diverse, and into direct interaction with poor people, if they are to succeed. Only by breaking their own dominance over poor people's lives and absorbing the uncertainty of the complex and diversified realities of poor people, can a new paradigm of understanding develop.

Chambers discusses also the vital need to change the dominating role of the professional bureaucrats, planners and experts if a new consciousness about poverty is to emerge. But the professionals are only representatives of the norms of society at large, and it seems that investments in more general consciousness-raising are necessary. A parallel can be drawn to Abram de Swaan who links the continuation of poverty to the lack of a "social consciousness" among the non-poor. A social consciousness exists when the non-poor develop an awareness of the interdependence of all social groups, realize that they bear some of the responsibility for the fate of the poor, and believe that means are available to overcome poverty. He argues that developing a social consciousness among the non-poor is a necessary prerequisite to poverty alleviation.[6]

Educating for a new set of norms is a lengthy process, as shown in the stubbornness of attitudes towards other vulnerable groups, such as immigrants and ethnic minorities.

There is little evidence that educating the non-poor to a new consciousness of poverty is going to be easier. However, going back to the three major modes of poverty mentioned earlier, this strategy seems to involve the least amount of conflict.

Securing Two-Way Traffic Across the Bridge

It may be futile to put forward any expectations that a bridge between the world of the poor and that of the non-poor has to be built for heavy, two-way traffic. Most of the research and policy recommendations on integration of the poor in the world of the non-poor take as their starting point that efforts are needed only to secure that traffic is going from the poor across to the non-poor. Traffic going in the opposite direction is not even an issue. The proposal by Chambers to use the realities of the poor as an instrument for poverty alleviation directly calls for some of the professionals to cross the bridge.

In London, during the bombing in the Second World War, middle and upper class women went into the poor neighbourhoods to help evacuate the children. That in turn led to the Beveridge Report and the formation of the British Welfare State. The women were shocked by a reality they never knew existed, and a new social consciousness was formed among influential non-poor people almost overnight. Now increased internationalization may have some of the same effects. Doctors travelling to epidemic areas, volunteers working in the third world countries, and UN staff stationed in conflict zones have crossed the bridge and are bringing back new information on the world of the poor. The mass media are bringing the lives of the poor into the lives of the non-poor, although much too often in short and dramatic glimpses which evade the everyday realities.

Patricio Aylwin (who made an oral presentation at the Round Table) described a new structure in Chile which brings the non-poor in close contact with the poor and their

lives.[7] Into the structure are built both incentives for participation of the non-poor in coping with poverty problems, and groups of non-poor people who otherwise would have had little or no contact with poverty.

During the past decade Chile has experienced strong economic growth. Despite this, a sizable part of the population is still living in poverty because it has not been able to benefit from the economic success. The first part of the project was to identify the most deprived communities and make them the target of a national, concerted effort to reverse the undesirable development. The next step was to form local committees in each of the eighty communities, consisting of top people from business, politics, voluntary agencies, labour unions, the church, and representatives for the poor. The task of the committees is to give a complete picture of the intensity and forms of poverty in their area of responsibility, to propose and implement measures, and to report to a municipal committee. The municipal committees have the power to take initiatives, survey measures at the lower level, and to report to a national committee which, aided by a group of independent experts, has the responsibility for making proposals at the national level.

It is too early to say anything about how this structure is going to work as to the alleviation of poverty and promotion of participation in civil society. A couple of laws have already been proposed concerning the establishment of small businesses, and more is to come. However, an important spin-off of the experiment is the exposure of poverty and the conditions of the poor which elites at the local, municipal, and national levels are being laid open to. Or, to use the language of Robert Chambers, the realities of the poor are made visible to the non-poor. If the people involved in the Chilean experiment are to succeed, they need to cross the bridge to the world of the poor in order to better understand how poverty is created and sustained.

The Chapter by Elizabeth Jelin, *Towards a Culture of Participation and Citizenship*, raises another set of basic issues on the participation of the poor in civil society when she states that "The sense of belonging and the possibility of interaction lie at the core of humanity. In other words, human society exists when there exists 'the other' and a public sphere of interaction". Then she asks, what does it take to transform a biological being into a human being? Is it enough to provide food and shelter so that a person survives, or is it necessary also to provide a social context where a being can be turned human through interaction, participation and development of social and political skills? Can a "threshold of humanity" be observed when the resourceful refuse the less resourceful access to participation in arenas where such skills are developed and decisions of profound significance for the poor are made?

Jelin turns the problems of poverty alleviation into a broad moral discourse, tying both the absence of basic guarantees for survival and the denial of citizenship to deprivation of human rights. Maintenance of human rights concerns us all. The non-poor who refuse human rights to other human beings are violating central norms which democratic societies have to defend if they consider themselves democratic.

Jelin uses data from Latin America to discuss the different strategies available to those who are excluded from the central arenas. One strategy for the poor is to withdraw into passivity and apathy. Another strategy is to find alternative social spaces and gain a sense of dignity with like-minded people. This is often the route of social movements before they enter the public space. Another strategy may be the open rejection of the norms of the powerful through violence. To go the "acceptable" way and make use of democracy is a much more complicated strategy. It implies, among other things, a sense of social responsibility from poor people who are excluded from those very social and economic spheres which a social responsibility is supposed to embrace.

The actors in the world of the non-poor have changed. Until the seventies, the state was at the centre, and political parties, elections and revolutionary wars were the vehicles for change. Now we are witnessing a growth of parallel activities, collective protest movements and international networks, the so-called *third sector*, composed of non-profit and non-governmental organizations, which are ready to intervene on behalf of the poor. Advocacy organizations working as spokespersons for the poor and intermediaries between the state and the dispossessed have emerged, as have organizations of the poor themselves. This is an essential development for the survival of a broad democracy, as it will involve also the poor who have remained non-participants in the present political process because they have a lower sense of political efficacy, argues Jelin.

Some Final Comments

The papers brought to the Round Table focus mainly on participation of the poor and less on the concept of civil society. Several definitions of civil society can be observed. One of the definitions makes civil society as synonymous with the grassroots, the grassroots being poor people or ordinary people, deprived people represented through NGOs, or people manifesting themselves through social movements. Another definition regards civil society as opposed to a military society. A third definition considers a civil society as extending certain social rights to all its members. A fourth definition treats civil society as that part of a society which runs parallel to the state and state-initiated activities. A fifth definition suggests that a civil society provides public spaces for discussion and dialogue. All these definitions reflect an uncertainty about the role of the State. On the one hand, the State is seen as the best guarantor of poverty alleviation, equity and a fair distribution of resources. On the other hand, the State cannot be trusted, either to be fair, or to promote better conditions for the poor. Therefore, a parallel non-state sector needs to be developed, pushing the State

into changing its course. Because after all, and paradoxically, the State is the most powerful instrument for a redistribution in favour of the dispossessed. Foreign aid agencies are called upon to help achieve this goal, but shy away from intervening in internal affairs. The aborted 20/20 proposal at the World Summit for Social Development, for example, was an attempt to lean on national governments to change their course towards a more humane policy. If the proposal had been accepted it would have had a sizable impact both on the role of the state in developing countries and on poverty alleviation.

What does participation of the poor mean in concrete terms? On which arenas shall the poor be allowed to participate? With their limited skills and knowledge of the larger society, shall they only be allowed to participate at the micro level of their own local arena? Or shall they be educated to the norms of the dominant society before they are allowed to participate? In most countries, poor people are formally allowed to vote, but so far electoral participation is considered an uninteresting arena, for many reasons. How many resources should be transferred to the poor before they are considered equal partners in decision-making? Do we simply have to acknowledge the fact that within the present social and political system the poor people can be let into the arenas of the non-poor only as a token? How far can intermediaries go when speaking on behalf of the poor? Is it enough that non-poor people understand the realities of poor people and react accordingly? Is a middle course feasible, such as the proposal put forward that what is needed is the construction of public spaces for dialogue where respect for others is the rule? And how can such public spaces be, at the same time, incorporated and free of the dominant political system?

Such questions, together with other questions brought out in the previous chapters, have to be linked to the different definitions of civil society outlined above. This will help provide the basic material for constructing new bridges which are sufficiently sturdy to withstand the strong winds

that will blow when the poor try to cross over and participate in the civil society of the non-poor.

There is little doubt that participation of the poor in the important arenas of civil society can be a powerful strategy towards poverty alleviation. But it should not be forgotten that crossing that bridge is a long term journey. Integration of the dispossessed into the world of the non-poor is not likely to happen without resistance, and perhaps not without open conflict. It can be argued that to every strategy which implies a change of power, a counter-strategy will emerge. If this is so, the study of the participation of poor people in civil society should also include a study of the counter-strategies of the non-poor. That would be in accordance with the proposal about a new paradigm for poverty research put forward elsewhere where it is argued that poverty research now needs to focus more strongly on the role of the non-poor and their part in creating and sustaining poverty,[8] including that of barring the poor from penetrating civil society.

Notes

[1]Else Øyen, "Some Basic Issues in Comparative Poverty Research". *International Social Science Journal*, December 1992 (Published also in French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese).

[2]This mode is well described in the vast literature on social indicators, poverty lines and level of living surveys.

[3]This mode is different from the Oscar Lewis concept of "the culture of poverty". One of the differences is the emphasis on the behaviour and organization of the poor as a response to poverty more than a culturally transferred pattern.

[4]Herbert Gans, "The Positive Functions of Poverty", *American Journal of Sociology*, 78 (2), 1973.

[5]But it is interesting to note that in the world of the non-poor, skills of

versatility and survival now are in vogue and are promoted within the highly specialized professions, cf. the new trend to send top people from business on survival expeditions out in the wilderness.

[6]Abram de Swaan, *In Care of the State. Health Care, Education and Welfare in Europe and the USA in the Modern Era.* Oxford, 1988, p. 253.

[7]*Chile. National Report. World Summit of Social Development.* Ministerio de Planificaciún y Cooperaciún, Santiago, 1995, Chapter III.

[8]Else Øyen, "Poverty research rethought", Chapter 1, in *Poverty: A Global Review. Handbook in Poverty Research,* Else Øyen, Syed Abdus Samad and S.M. Miller (eds.). Scandinavian University Press, 1996.