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The dimensions of poverty

by

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The Dimensions of Poverty

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1: Introduction: The Issue

While the concept of 'poverty' is often taken to refer simply to economic poverty, it has long been realised that when properly understood, 'poverty' has features that transcend this simple concept. For example, it has social aspects (which has led to the debate on the concept of 'poverty culture') and political features. The question that occurs, then, is what are the dimensions of poverty? That is, what are the different aspects of poverty that are important features of the phenomenon, yet are in a significant sense independent of each other?

The aim of this paper is to explore this question. In essence we are asking, what are the different kinds of poverty? Supporting the view that the concept one is trying to grasp is wider than is expressed in the phrase 'economic poverty', it is proposed that there are indeed other dimensions that should be distinguished, and which are important enough to be denoted by specific names. It will be argued that specifically distinguishing these aspects and applying their names to the situation, when appropriate, is a significant step both in clarifying the nature of poverty in general, and in analysing specific situations where the label 'poverty' is applicable in particular.

2: The Basis of Welfare

Our starting point is the general concept that 'poverty' denotes lack of welfare to such a degree as to represent severe deprivation, - therefore making action to improve the situation imperative. Thus one needs to consider on the one hand the nature of welfare, and on the other how one can determine severe deprivation of welfare. We consider the first question in this section, and the second in the sections following.

Defining or measuring welfare as such is well known to be very difficult. One can more easily measure many of the features that cause a high level of welfare, or that result from a lack of welfare. That is, one can examine the causal basis of welfare, and measure many of the main features of the causal system that determines the living conditions and hence the welfare of any particular group of people. In particular, one can characterise conditions acting as a barrier preventing them from attaining goals they see as important for themselves, and so improving their welfare situation (see [1], [2]). This conceptualisation of the causal nature of welfare can then be used as a basis for analysing the nature of poverty.

The major feature used to order this understanding is that causal levels determining the welfare of a group of people, where the welfare status of the group at each level is determined by factors at the preceding levels. This idea will be explained first, before returning to consider the nature of poverty.

First, the people to be considered must be clearly identified. The word 'group' used here is not intended to imply that they necessarily act together as a coherent social unit, or perceive themselves to be such; rather it denotes the collection or 'collectivity' of people whose welfare we wish to consider. Normally their boundaries will be defined on the basis of planning criteria (i.e. they will be defined as a collection of people, it is sensible to consider as a unit for the purpose of making planning decisions, e.g. they live in the same area and so will be affected together by decisions made about schools, hospitals, clinics, etc); but one will in general try to choose the boundaries so that the collectivity thereby defined also have reasonably uniform social characteristics and status. Variations within the group so defined will then be represented by variations in welfare indicators across that group; if these variations are too wide, this may be an indication that an inappropriate group definition has been used, and should be reconsidered. The issue of choice of boundaries defining the group is an important one, and may itself be the subject of conflict and negotiation between interested parties.

Given the choice of the group, their basic level of welfare is that of the State of Welfare; we call this Level 0 (see Figure 1). This is a state of the group at a particular instant in time, and is the quantity 'welfare' we are ultimately concerned with. It can be considered as consisting of two major components, one

concerned with material well-being and one with socio-cultural well-being. As mentioned above it is in the main difficult to assess (although some components, e.g. 'Somatic Status' [3], are relatively straightforward).

It is easier to measure aspects of the first level of control, namely the Level of Living (Level 1). This is concerned with the deployment of the available flow of resources and amenities which make possible the maintenance and improvement of the State of Welfare. Thus one would find here, for example, the way available income is used in expenditure on food and medical services; on rental or other payments to maintain shelter; and so on. However the concept of resource-usage implied here is not a narrow financial one; it encompasses all resource usage leading to increased welfare, using the term 'resource' in its widest sense to include for example clean air and quiet, unspoiled countryside, sonnets and symphonies. The definition of a resource, therefore, will be taken to include any quantity or feature whose use or deployment can be controlled to improve the group's welfare. Thus an art gallery is a resource which I use ('enjoy' or 'consume') when I visit the gallery; a beach or wilderness park is a resource I am able to 'consume' if I am able to visit it. Again, both 'organisation' and 'knowledge' are resources which can be used or 'consumed'. Overall, this level is concerned with all the ways the flow of available resources is used to increase the group's welfare. The main four categories of such resource use are, resource use for physical welfare and safety; for future security; for 'higher' needs; and for organisational purposes.

What can be achieved by choices at this level is determined by the total flow of resources available to the group. The second level of control is therefore that specifying the quantity and nature of resources available to the group (level 2). We can consider these resources as divided into, natural resources; human resources; economic resources; technological resources; and enabling resources. Resources may be convertible to other resources at some 'exchange rate' or 'terms of trade' (e.g. by a manufacturing process, or by trading). Because of the convertibility of money, it is one of the most important of resources, and so personal incomes are clearly one of the major components of the 'financial resources' section. Each available resource can be 'consumed' in various ways at the 'level of living' level to increase immediate welfare (e.g. personal income can be used for buying clothes, for entertainment, for food, etc); or can be saved in various ways.

The resources available to the group are in turn determined by the group's access to the power structure in the society. Thus the third level of control is that of access to power (level 3). By definition, 'power' here consists of those features of the social system that can lead to allocation of new resources to the group's benefit, or that shape the conditions under which that resource allocation takes place. Such power can be exerted by virtue of coercion, trust, standing or authority in the communi-

ty, or other essentially political mechanisms. The access to power need not be direct, as long as it is effective. Institutional forms and controlling regulations are particularly important organisational resources in modern society, so the ability to control these features - which to a considerable degree determine the effective resource availability to the group (imposed restrictions may prevent 'available resources' from being 'usable resources') - is an important aspect of power. The basic aim of this level is to characterise those communication channels through which the group can influence or change the allocation of resources in society (whatever those channels might be).

The three higher levels so far discussed ('access to power', 'resource availability', and 'level of living') each control the level below, and so determine the zero-level (the 'state of welfare'). The final level in the main set is the 'minus one' level, which lies below the state of welfare, and will be called the Level of Pressure. This is the level manifesting the results either of a good state of welfare, or the lack of it. The two main kinds of pressure are what one might call 'consequential' pressure (automatic results of the state of welfare, e.g. a high death rate following a poor health situation), and 'societal' pressure, which may act through institutionalised channels or in other ways (e.g. protests may be sent to officials, or complaints laid 'through proper channels'; public protest meetings may be held; or general discontent may exist and be manifested in opinion polls, or features such as high crime rates). We find at this level the subjective indicators of happiness.

The final element in the main set of levels is what will be called the Goals of the group. This comprises those factors acting as a reference signal, determining the direction in which the group wishes to influence events. Comparing this desired state with the actual state results in control signals (evidenced in the 'level of pressure') which flow through three major feedback loops to the top three levels of control, thereby attempting to direct the group's future in the desired direction (cf [1], [2]). Thus the model proposed views the welfare of any particular group in society as controlled by a Welfare Feedback System (similar to any control system *), whose efficacy determines how adequately their needs and desires are responded to. Note that this view does not necessarily imply that society has been consciously or deliberately fashioned to function in this particular way, but rather is a model of the way society in fact functions relative to the welfare of the group concerned. It is a 'Black Box' model, that is, it does not attempt to explain why society functions in this way**, but rather merely aims to

* The name 'cybernetic' is often used to describe such feedback control systems, which form the basis of control in all engineering and biological systems [20].

** This is of course an important question which has to be investigated, but it is conceptually distinct from the question we investigate here.

categorise that functioning as experienced by the group. One should note here that there may be many different channels available to the group, or sub-groups of that group, to use in improving their welfare situation; and that these channels are not static, indeed the group may succeed in forging new channels by suitable activity and old channels may decay through lack of use. However their total ability to improve their welfare at a particular time is characterised by the total of these channels available at that time.

Although this is not necessarily the way in which they will work, it is convenient to think of the three main feedback loops as operating sequentially. Suppose the parents and headmaster of a school agree that smaller classes are desirable for the pupils. First, the pressure generated (meetings with the headmaster, Parent-Teacher Association meetings, and so on) will result in feedback to level 1, where it is considered if the need can be met by revised use of the existing flow of resources (a room can be used as a class room instead of a store room; teachers can be asked to teach extra classes, instead of doing library duty; and so on). If this turns out not to be a feasible solution to the problem, the second feedback loop (to Level 2) is activated. That is, it is considered if other resources from the stock of resources available to the school might be brought into play to provide the extra teaching needed, if necessary through appropriate conversion of the form of those resources (e.g funds set aside in a development fund are used to build a classroom; school buildings can be hired out at night, creating extra income that can be used to pay salaries; and so on). Suppose it is not possible to meet the need in this way, because the school has already (within the possibilities allowed by the institutional framework) allocated all its resources that might help. Then it is required, in order to solve the problem, that new resources be made available to the school. The third feedback loop (to level 3) is then activated; the authority with the relevant power (the local education authority) is asked if it will make more resources available to the school. This department will then in turn consider action through the main three feedback loops: it will consider if it can re-allocate its existing flow of resources to deal with the problem (actions are considered that are 'without financial implications', eg. teachers are transferred from another school); it may bring into play unallocated resources (e.g. it may allocate funds in hand to pay new salaries); or it in turn may apply to its relevant resource-providing authority (perhaps the local authority executive committee) for further funds needed. That body in turn may go through the same three steps. Obviously there are not just one but many feedback loops of each kind that might be brought into play; if a direct request to the executive committee to make more money available for education fails, for example, then perhaps a public meeting might be called to air the situation. In general, the first level feedback is of a 'social' nature, the second level feedback is 'economic', and the third level feedback takes on a 'political' nature.

To complete the overall picture of the feedback system, three further significant features must be mentioned (see Figure 2). First, an important mode of resource consumption is the use of a resource flow to build up further resources. That is, investment may take place. This covers many broad ranges of activity where a resource flow is not used for immediate improvement of the state of welfare, but is put to uses which will build up resources (at the second level) and so increase the capability of later increasing welfare. For example, pupils are trained to become teachers by use of resource flows which could have been used for more immediate benefit - for example, the instructors could have been manufacturing transistor radios instead - in order to build up a resource which will pay off in the long term, namely a supply of qualified teachers. In particular, this covers production and exchange processes; it also covers most of the usage of resources for security, that is, to ensure the continued functioning of the group in the future. Investment may also take place through a flow of resources to the third level, representing political investment (e.g. expenditure on a political campaign or on union officials).

Viewed in this way, trade is one form of investment. It is important to characterise flows of resources to other groups (exports or loans), as well as resources becoming available to the group from outside or being held by the group but regarded as owned by others (imports and loans). These represent resource links to other groups in society; if they are very strong, this indicates strong resource dependencies on outsiders, and might imply that the chosen group boundaries should be reconsidered to see if they should include these other groups.

Second, when obvious malfunctioning occurs in any of the three major feedback loops, action may be taken to correct the situation through specific Error Correction mechanisms in society. These operate through review boards, appeal procedures, and so on; they have the general nature of a 'legal' process, acting back on the feedback loops themselves. Because this level can in principle control aspects of the political process, we call it level 4.

Third, the goals that are set by the group concerned, or that are implied by their actions, are influenced by a variety of factors; they partly depend on the group's welfare situation, but also reflect psychological, ethical, ideological, and other features. It is clear that this influence is of significance in the functioning of the overall system. However we do not wish to commit ourselves to some particular view of the nature of these influences at this stage, and accordingly all such influences have been lumped together under the label ideology (which is just a symbolic label for all of them). Inclusion of this label reminds us that the functioning of the system - probably even the perceived levels of welfare - can be altered by changing these features (e.g. through propaganda or by an advertising campaign). The causal links by which they are altered are schematically represented in figure 3; they depend on perception of the situation by the group and will be influenced by many variables. It

may be difficult to even decide what these variables are, let alone to characterise the nature of the interaction.

To obtain a clear picture of the feedback system determining the welfare of a particular group, one should make a clear identification of, (1) the society which is the context within which the group's welfare is to be considered; (2) other groups in the society significantly affecting, or affected by, the group's welfare; (3) the level of detail at which one wishes to describe the group's situation, and the time scale over which the description will hold. Given such choices, the proposal is ([1], [2]) that the scheme outlined above (and depicted in figure 2) will give an essentially unique classification of the different feedback loops operating to improve the welfare of the group; the nature of this classification is indicated in Table 1 (and discussed in depth in [1]). There will be similar feedback systems for each group comprising the society, and indeed the each group's welfare will be determined by competition and cooperation between these systems as mediated by the social, economic, political, and legal systems of the society (see Figure 4); it is this interaction that determines the characteristics of each group's welfare feedback system (which is just a causal model of how successful society is in meeting the needs of that group).

This discussion has made explicit the concept of the various causal levels in the welfare feedback system (summarised in Figure 5; note that we have thereby distinguished the 'inputs' and 'results' of welfare that are referred to in discussions of interlinkages and Basic Needs). It is convenient also to refer to the various domains or sectors of welfare; these are particular concerns such as housing, health, transport, education, etc, for each of which there is a welfare sub-system (contained within the overall system already discussed), which itself has each of the causal levels discussed above (e.g. there are social, economic, political and legal aspects to the housing welfare sub-system). Finally it is worth noting the developmental aspects of the welfare feedback system. At any one time, a major choice facing the group concerned is whether they will use the flow of resources at their disposal for immediate gain, or for future benefit. This choice is determined by the time-discounting of expected future benefits as compared with possible present benefits. Development is concerned with investment in those economic features that will bring major benefits in the future. Thus it particularly refers to investment in education and training (developing human potential in the future), but also to major determinants of future economic performance such as economic and industrial infrastructure, and technological hardware. The usual development indicators essentially aim to measure these features of the welfare feedback system.

According to this model, what actually determines the group's welfare at a particular time and place, is the functioning of its welfare feedback system in its given environment at that time and place. Thus it is proposed (see [1], [2]) that the overall quality of life situation of that group can be estimated

in terms of the efficacy, within reasonable limits, of the welfare feedback system in attaining the group's desired goals. Brief consideration will show that this proposal embraces all the normally proposed definitions of welfare, in a reasonable way. This then leads to the understanding of poverty as being a result of major inadequacies in this system, to such a degree as to cause severe deprivation. We shall in the next section examine how this formulation helps clarify the dimensions of poverty.

3: The Dimensions of Poverty: The Major Aspects

In view of the causal structure outlined above, it is reasonably clear that any measurement of the overall welfare of a particular group should make at least some attempt to represent their situation at each of the main levels in the Welfare Feedback System ([1], [2]). That is, welfare is a concept that should properly be regarded as having a minimum of six dimensions (or independent separately measurable aspects). This suggests that a similar statement should be true for the concept of poverty. However there is a significant difference: the usual sense of the word 'poverty' refers to the causes of a lack of welfare, rather than the lack of welfare itself or its consequences. Thus one may initially suggest that the basic dimensions of poverty are those four aspects directly related to the causal levels that determine welfare which may be described as economic poverty; social poverty; political poverty; and legal poverty. These will be discussed in turn.

1) Economic poverty

The concept here is that of a lack of resources that can be deployed to increase the group's welfare. This can be measured directly by determining the stock of resources available to the group, and comparing these with suitable reference standards. In doing so, one should use the broad concept of resource discussed above (thus the name 'economic poverty' entails a broader use of the word 'economic' than merely encompassing financial concerns; it implies consideration of all the kinds of 'wealth' that can increase human welfare).

There are then various divisions of the concept that might naturally arise, e.g. a poverty of financial, natural, human, or technological resources; and in many cases it may be useful to make some of these distinctions. Probably the most significant feature is that some resources are essential in determining future rather than present welfare, i.e. are developmental resources; clearly a poverty of these resources has major implications for the future, whatever the present situation may be. The most significant of these are natural resources on the one hand and human resources (people with technical skills, managerial ability, resourcefulness, initiative, etc) on the other. While it is clearly not identical, an important indicator of the general quality of the human resources is the educational level attained. Thus one might well subdivide the general concept of 'a poverty of resources' into that of a shortage of resources needed for immediate consumption or production; these could be labelled consumption poverty and productive poverty respectively; and a lack of resources needed for development, or developmental poverty, the major components of which could be labelled natural resources poverty (or just resources poverty), and human capital poverty.

This usage suggested is a natural one. A group suffers consumption poverty if either its income falls below the Poverty

Datum Level (or PDL), or if the goods needed to satisfy their needs are not available even though they have the income needed to purchase them; and suffers productive poverty if it has none of the capital equipment needed to run any significant industries. Natural Resources Poverty will refer primarily to lack of commodities such as precious metals, coal, iron ore, and oil. Human Resources Poverty refers on the one hand to lack of 'education' understood in a broad sense, including training in specific skills and the learning embodied in developing managerial and entrepreneurial abilities; but also to qualities more difficult to measure, such as leadership, ingenuity, judgement, etc. In measuring resources, it is obvious but must always be kept in mind that it is usually the per capita supply of resources that matters. Thus propaganda sheets explaining that vast sums of money have been spent on housing, education, etc, for some 'beneficiary' group convey no information about the possible increase of welfare implied, until these figures are converted into per capita figures, and the distribution of these resources amongst that population has been made clear. The real per capita distribution of such resources amongst the members of the group considered should be compared with those for other groups, to assess the relative benefits provided.

2) Social poverty

Next, one has a poverty that may be implied by the mode of use of the flow of resources to create welfare. Poverty could be due to a sheer lack of resources to utilise; however that aspect will already have been covered under 'consumption poverty' as discussed above (e.g. if incomes are classified as below the PDL). The further aspects result from the social ordering and constraints that control possible patterns of consumption and savings. These may be so restrictive as to prevent one from obtaining much of the benefit that should be available from the resources utilised. Thus one can talk of social poverty if on the one hand there is a lack of the social networks and supportive structures that make productive use of opportunities possible; or on the other, if there are inhibiting factors preventing one from making use of the opportunities that would otherwise be available. Such factors might be external (e.g. bureaucratic or legal constraints preventing one from using opportunities) or internal (where the group concerned are internally constrained against doing what would in fact be of benefit).

An example of the first kind of social poverty is the situation of the Coloured people displaced from District Six in Cape Town to the Cape Flats, or Africans moved from settled communities to resettlement camps in the 'Homelands' of South Africa; in each case their previous rich social networks have been destroyed during the process of resettlement [4]. The second kind is exemplified by the situation of Africans working in Cape Town on contract, who are provided with (minimal) accommodation, but are not allowed to have their wives or families living with them. Thus although accommodation exists, legal and bureaucratic restrictions prevent its use to fulfil their major social needs

[5]. The third kind of social poverty has been described in writings on poverty and in debate on what has come to be called the culture of poverty [6], and is evidenced for instance in the new townships on the Cape Flats [7].

3) Political poverty

Here one is concerned with the degree of access to power enjoyed by the group, relative to that available to other groups in the society. The way in which power is accessed (by formal political systems, by informal contacts within a power structure, by the wielding of economic power, or whatever) is irrelevant; the question that arises is on the one hand to what degree the group is able to gain access to its fair share of any resources that may be available to the society as a whole, or more broadly to take part in determining what use is made of those resources; and on the other its ability to share in shaping the constraints within which the society will operate and the rules by which its affairs are governed. The group is in a state of political poverty if it is unable to affect these issues to any significant extent.

Examples of political poverty are the situations of urban blacks in South Africa, on the one hand, and blacks on the 'white farms' in that country, on the other. They have no representation whatever in the Parliament that decides all their working and living conditions [8], and are presently excluded from all proposals for reform of that political system in the future [9].

4) Legal Poverty

The issue here is the extent to which the group has access to legal structures or to procedures that operate within the existing social, economic, or political systems and are able to correct errors (in the sense of violations of their established rules) that may occur in the functioning of the those systems. Again it is irrelevant why access is not possible or is futile (this could be for social, economic, or political reasons); the group suffers legal poverty if it has no reasonable recourse to corrective procedures that can in fact correct the situation, where illegal or incorrect actions have taken place.

An example of legal poverty is the situation of any person detained or banned under South African security legislation, or liable to such action (which therefore includes the entire population of the country except the Security Police and their political masters). There is no effective way to query these decisions; there is no obligation on the authorities to provide reasons for their actions, let alone evidence that it is indeed necessary. The person affected has no method of obtaining a fair hearing of his case (indeed the legislation concerned is specifically designed to prevent this, for its purpose is to prevent the courts from having a hand in these decisions). It is entirely possible that even within their own terms of reference serious mistakes are made by those responsible for enforcing this

legislation (for considerable doubt may be expressed about the quality of information on which their decisions are based); and there is no mechanism of appeal that has any likelihood of correcting such errors [10]. The terms of reference themselves are highly disputed and there is no effective way for them to be changed by anyone outside a highly restricted circle representing a very small minority of the country's population.

Considering each of the types of poverty mentioned above, it is clear that one can set up both reasonable definitions of deprivation, and methods of measurement of the conditions concerned (relative to suitable yardsticks) to enable one to determine if a poverty situation exists or not (cf [6],[11]). The definitions proposed are operational, and are not predicated on a particular political outlook (in the sense that one can aspire to measure if such deprivation exists whether the society is labelled as capitalist, communist, socialist, or whatever). In most cases, measurement would be via suitable ordinal indicators (see e.g. Drewnowski [3] for a discussion); no serious difficulties should arise in setting up such measurements. The major problem that does arise in each case is the choice of suitable standards - what level of deprivation will correspond to a 'poverty datum level', below which the situation is regarded as intolerable and the word 'poverty' is the appropriate description? This problem arises in any use whatever of the word 'poverty'. The only reasonable statement is that the standards implied cannot be absolute, but are determined by a process of negotiation between the parties involved; they have to be generally accepted as reasonable standards, and are open to change as the social situation changes. Clearly the determination of these levels is an important issue, and whether the group concerned is able to influence them is itself an indication of whether they are in a state of political poverty or not (cf [12]).

One might expect that in the long term, many societies settle down to a quasi-equilibrium state where there is a close correspondence between the different levels of the welfare situation of each group, and so between the different aspects of poverty discussed above; if a group suffers from political poverty, one may expect that they will suffer from all the other facets of poverty as well. However in a dynamic situation (where transient behaviour is dominant) this need not be the case. Thus in general, these aspects of the situation are independent: they define different possible dimensions of poverty.

4. The Dimensions of Poverty: Some Further Aspects

One may now ask, are there other significant features one should consider as defining further dimensions of poverty? One possibility would be to suggest one could conceive of a poverty associated with each of the domains of welfare - housing poverty, transport poverty, health poverty, etc. However this does not seem useful - it would lead to such a proliferation of use of the word 'poverty' as to devalue it. In essence, this is because while each of these aspects is important (and so will be included as sub-sections of any general definition of poverty), they are not by themselves generally sufficiently decisive factors in determining welfare.

There are however three features that are certainly of significance, and could conceivably be used in extending the concept of 'poverty' to a broader foundation. These are based on further major features of the welfare feedback system described above.

5) Psychological poverty

Firstly, a key factor in determining welfare (whether this choice is implicitly or explicitly made) is the choice of goals by the group. They are bound to have a low level of satisfaction if they have unreasonably high expectations that cannot possibly be met; and this is likely to be the case when there are rising expectations during a period of social change. A great deal of judgement and negotiation is involved in determining what are in fact 'reasonable' expectations (this is an aspect of the choice of reference standards referred to earlier). On the other hand the group considered are in a state of severe deprivation if they have depressed expectations, resulting in their regarding as acceptable conditions that most others would regard as grossly inadequate (there is evidence that this situation occurs amongst under-privileged people [13], in essence because it is necessary that their expectations be depressed in order that they may survive).

Given the group's 'ideology' (or weltanschauung), their goal-setting is based partly on their judgement (which depends on qualities already categorised under 'human resources'), and partly on their psychology. Thus one should consider the possibility of categorising psychological poverty, that is, determining if there is a gross inadequacy in the quality of the group's psychological reactions that (implicitly or explicitly) lead to their goal-setting. In effect, one is asking if the group's reaction to their situation is a mature reaction or not.

Whether this is possible or not depends on whether agreement can be attained that there is an ordering of the personality traits that are needed to react to the situation in a sensible way, and which are associated with psychological maturity. It seems likely that such agreement might be reached. One could base a judgement on features like the quality of reaction to situa-

tions of stress and frustration (is there the ability to maintain sensible judgement, or a tendency to dissolve in panic, or give up ?) and the ability to accept responsibility for their own actions (and not blame their mistakes on others); and on whether the group action is based on an adequate analysis of the situation confronting them (does it result from an appraisal of the causal reality underlying the surface phenomena, or is it a reaction to the surface appearances of the situation only ?). A major lack of these abilities amongst the adult members of the group would characterise them as suffering psychological poverty. It implies such a severe deficiency in their ability to set appropriate aims and goals, as to be likely to cause a major lessening of their welfare from what it might otherwise have been (cf e.g. [14]).

An example of psychological poverty is a government that (against impassioned pleading) implements a set of policies that are bound to fail for political, economic, and social reasons; and then blames the failure of these policies on overseas enemies, agitators, World Communism, the Press, etc, instead of taking responsibility for the failures (inevitable, because of the use of policies which attempt to deal with social and economic problems by political fiat). The response is inappropriate to the problems facing them, and consequently does move towards solving them. A contrast is the conscious attempt to set goals that are based on realistic evaluation of long-term trends and the hope of making rational plans in the face of these trends (cf [15]).

6) Ideological Poverty

It is clear that the nature of the goals set also depends critically on the 'ideology' or weltanschauung of the group, for this determines the basis from which their reactions proceed. Can one also develop a concept of poverty of this ideological basis?

As in the case of psychological poverty, this depends on whether one can in some suitable sense detect an ordering of philosophical, ethical, or 'spiritual' outlooks (the 'ideology' or weltanschauung has all these elements), enabling determination of which are more mature and which less mature as regards the way they affect the determination of choices and the setting of goals by the group. If so, one might then be able to characterise an ideology so immature that this again made impossible the setting of adequate goals that could ensure the welfare of the group; and would then have characterised what might be called ideological poverty (the names philosophical, ethical, or spiritual poverty might also be proposed; the name that is appropriate would depend on one's perception of the nature of the defect in question).

It seems there may indeed be a possibility of such an ordering of ideologies, based on a concept of ethical maturity. The suggestion here is that one can claim to discern an evolution of ethical views over the last 6000 years as man has evolved from an unconscious to a self-conscious state. The problem that has

confronted him, in the face of his own developing consciousness, is how to deal with alternative consciousnesses or world-views. For the primitive man such alternative ideologies are a threat to his very being, as they undermine the limited understanding he has attained by offering alternative possibilities and interpretations; consequently he has to attempt to destroy them by killing their bearers. As greater maturity has been attained, man has partially learned not merely to tolerate different understandings, but even to realise that they may offer important insights that may increase his welfare. Indeed this tolerance of other viewpoints and outlooks is essential to the long term survival of the human race, for the simple reason that modern technology is fast providing such deadly weapons that mankind will not survive if such intolerance is allowed to persist; for in the aeons ahead of us, it is inevitable that such weapons will be used if ethical evolution does not proceed to the point of complete acceptance of the existence of alternative interests, views, and ideologies. This ethical stand must further be sufficiently strong to lead to a move towards major disarmament, as otherwise the continued proliferation of weapons is itself a factor virtually guaranteeing that war will occur (cf [16]).

Given this background, one can suggest a scale of measurement of ideologies based on their ability to cope with alternative viewpoints, and to deal with them by accommodation rather than annihilation. The most significant of the views that offer hope in this regard necessarily have strong ethical bases, and indeed are usually based on a mature religious outlook. It would certainly not be acceptable (in view of the divergent views on the subject) to propose a standard based on religious outlook. However it is possible to do so on the basis of tolerance for alternative consciousnesses, and maturity in accepting them. As pointed out above, such a well-developed ethical/spiritual outlook is in fact essential for the long-term well-being of the human race. Thus one can attempt to characterise ideological poverty existing when there is such a lack of this outlook that one is a threat to oneself and one's neighbours.

It will be controversial whether this is indeed a viable proposal. However it is at least conceivable that one can assign such an ordering of outlooks; and if so, this is an extremely useful and indeed important concept, for it characterises the basis on which the process of goal-setting rests, and therefore the pre-conditions that make long-term satisfaction possible or unviable. The kind of situation where one might detect such poverty is where a major purpose of a state is the destruction or destabilisation of neighbouring states; or when a government has let itself drift into a war or civil war situation to the extent that it exults over the number of deaths caused by its soldiers.

7) Perceptual and Conceptual Poverty.

Finally, all the above takes place in the light of perceptions of the situation made within the framework of a particular conceptual scheme (or 'shared cognitive framework')

[17]). If these perceptions are defective, then the possible choices cannot be clearly understood, and the setting of goals is unlikely to be successful. An example is that an understanding of the concepts of cause and effect is essential to successful government of one's affairs. The group suffers perceptual poverty if it cannot perceive major channels of action that would relieve its situation. A particular problem arising in many cases is that the framework used is not large enough: the conceptual scheme employed does not allow for sufficient possibilities, so the variety of options that may be expressed in that framework is restricted. There is conceptual poverty if this happens to the degree that it excludes consideration of possibilities that could allow the group considerably greater welfare. Then the group are not even able to recognise that major opportunities for betterment exist (this again is a feature that occurs in particular in a 'culture of poverty').

As an example, there are many White people in South Africa who cannot conceive it possible to live in harmony with Black people as political and social equals in the same State. This restriction of outlook seriously endangers their future welfare. Similarly there is an inability to understand that large-scale urbanisation of poor blacks, accompanied by a mushrooming of squatter camps around the major South African cities, might be a necessary pre-requisite for the long-term welfare of this country (irrespective of what political developments may take place). This conceptual block leads to an inability to set goals adequate to meeting the situation encountered. One should note that in the cases characterised here, the essential feature is not emotional reactions expressing horror at such possibilities (although these will almost certainly occur). Rather it is that the idea that these might be possibilities, simply cannot occur; they are literally inconceivable [18]. Consequently highly emotional reactions will probably result when confronted with the suggestion that these features might indeed be possibilities.

6: Conclusion: a Proposal

The analysis of the causes of welfare given above leads naturally to the conclusion that the major dimensions of poverty are,

- 1) Economic Poverty;
- 2) Social Poverty;
- 3) Political Poverty; and,
- 4) Legal Poverty.

There are further dimensions of poverty relating to more fundamental (but therefore more distant) aspects of the welfare situation; namely,

- 5) Psychological Poverty;
- 6) Ideological Poverty; and,
- 7) Perceptual Poverty.

In some cases one might usefully divide the concepts further; particularly 'Economic Poverty' may be regarded as on the one hand comprising Consumption and Production Poverty, and on the other Developmental Poverty, the major components of which are Resources Poverty and Human Capital Poverty. In addition, one might distinguish Conceptual Poverty as a major component of poverty related to Perceptual Poverty.

The suggestion is that in analysing the nature of poverty, one should carefully distinguish the aspects labelled 1) to 4) above, recognising them each as important dimensions of the situation that should be individually identified and named. Then use of these names should help to clarify the nature of the situation described by the overall word 'poverty'. In addition, one should consider the possibility that further aspects labelled 5) to 7) are also important aspects of the poverty situation that are harder to characterise, but also deserve explicit recognition. They too may well deserve naming in their own right.

It is well known that dignifying some aspect of reality with a specific name identifies it as particularly worth consideration, and gives it a more prominent existence in the consciousness of those analysing the situation, thereby ensuring it receives more attention than would be the case otherwise [19]. The importance of distinguishing and naming the various aspects of poverty considered above is that they indicate the relation of the lack of welfare to causality, and so emphasize areas where action is needed to improve the situation.

This proposal has only given a broad outline of criteria that could be used to establish the existence of the different kinds of poverty. Once a decision had been taken to use these classifications, the implementation of the proposal into a usable scheme would require considerable further work. However it is reasonably clear that no major conceptual problems would prevent implementation of measurement schemes identifying and distinguishing these aspects of poverty. As mentioned above, the most

difficult problem would probably be the establishment of reference standards (the Poverty Datum Level, or PDL, for each aspect of poverty). However this problem is basic to every use of the word 'poverty', and is not specific to the aspects singled out for consideration here. As in the usual use of the word, one should in practice be able to determine usable standards defining poverty levels, which would find reasonable acceptance. That is, once the concepts have been stated clearly enough, one should be able to obtain reasonable consensus as to when there is a poverty situation in regard to each of these aspects, and when that is not the case.

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Figure 1

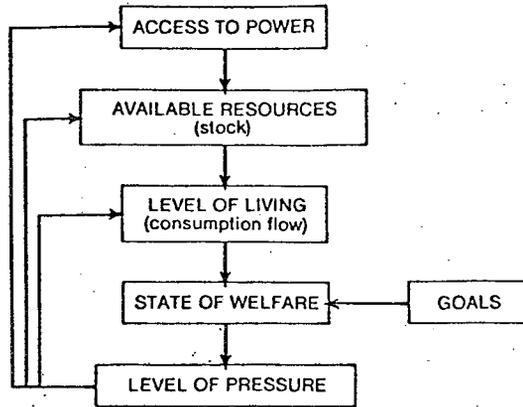


Figure 2

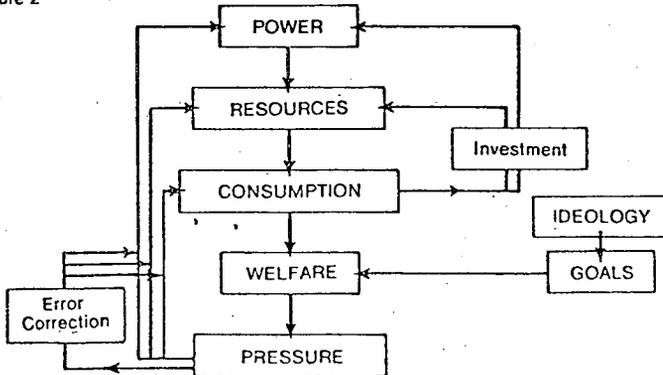


Figure 3

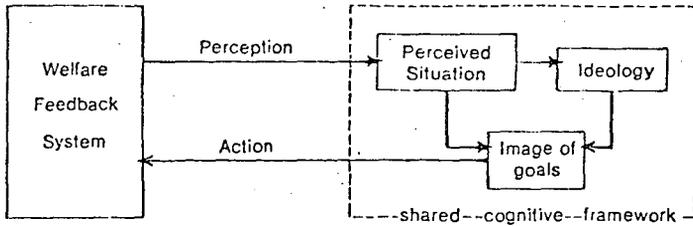
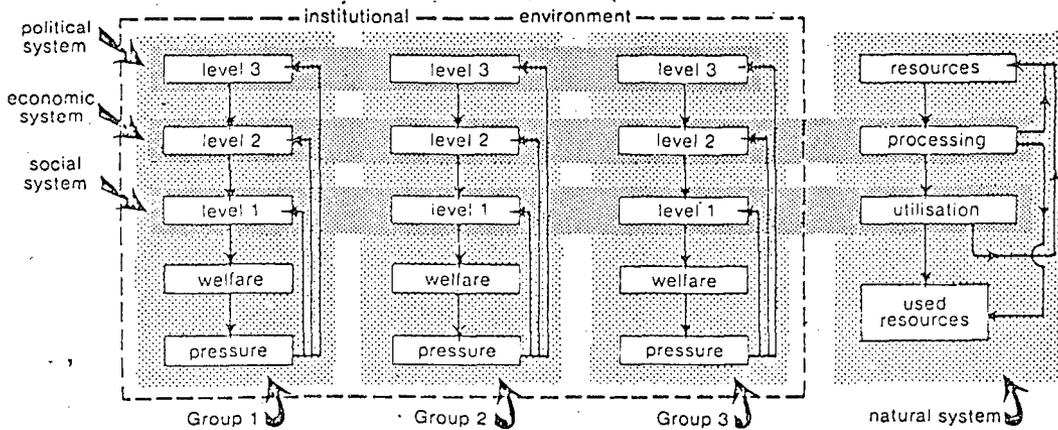


Figure 4

Levels	Quantities considered
Level #4	Error correction (Legal Access)
Level #3	Access to power
Level #2	Available resources
Level #1	Level of living
Level #0	Physical welfare
Level #-1	Distress symptoms

Figure 5



LEVEL OF LIVING

Physical Welfare	Safety	Economic Investment	Political Investment
1) Nutrition ii) Clothing iii) Dwelling iv) Utilities v) Health vi) Environment	1) Police protection ii) Unofficial groups and security expenditure. iii) Fire, ambulance iv) Rescue, emergency v) Environmental control	1) Education ii) Community processing, distribution and maintenance iii) Other resource processing and distribution iv) Resource investment v) Trade and export vi) Persuasion	1) Political activity ii) Coercion iii) Persuasion

'Higher' Needs	Organization	Loss of resource flow	Social Freedom
1) Facilitating resources ii) Community resources iii) Self-affirmation iv) Recreational and cultural v) Living environment vi) Religious resources	1) Community organization ii) Economic organization iii) Public organization	1) Resource loss ii) Resource decay iii) Inefficiency iv) Ineffectiveness.	1) Freedom of action ii) Freedom of association iii) Freedom of expression iv) Freedom of communication v) Religious freedom

STATE OF WELFARE

Physiological Welfare	Safety	'Belongingness	Esteem	Self-Actualisation
1) Nutritional Status ii) Health status iii) Bodily state iv) Physical fitness	1) Environment ii) Violence and accidents iii) Existence iv) War v) Vulnerability	1) Family life ii) Community life iii) National acceptance iv) International acceptance	1) Morale ii) Group status	N.I.

LEVEL OF PRESSURE

Physiological Response	Social Pressure	Economic Pressure	Political Pressure
1) Death rates ii) Disease iii) Medical action	1) Social action ii) Social protest iii) Social pathology	1) Economic action ii) Work pathology iii) Market pathology	1) Political action ii) Political protest iii) Political pathology

ERROR CORRECTION

- | |
|---|
| 1) Administrative correction procedures |
| 2) Legal corrective procedures |
| 3) Correction of legal proceedings |
| 4) Legal freedom |

ACCESS TO POWER

Direct Political Power	Direct Economic Power	Indirect Power	Persuasive Power	Coercive Power	Political Freedom
1) National Government ii) Local government iii) Specific Utilities and organisations	1) Employer's power ii) Employee's power iii) Producer's power iv) Consumer's power	1) Influence on national government ii) Influence on local government iii) Indirect economic power iv) Indirect international power	1) Legitimation ii) Moral iii) Standards iv) Charisma v) Motivation	1) Local ii) National iii) International	1) Political action ii) To organise iii) Expression

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Natural Resources	Human Resources	Economic Resources	Technological Resources	Enabling Resources	Economic Freedom
1) Land resources ii) Non-renewable resources iii) Renewable resources	1) Population ii) Labour iii) Management iv) Recruitment v) Skills vi) Leadership	1) Personal income ii) Group income iii) Capital iv) Borrowing power v) Goodwill	1) Energy ii) Information iii) Transport iv) Coercive v) Production vi) Technocrats	1) Stability ii) Information iii) Assessment and adaptability iv) Motivation v) Initiative	1) Ownership ii) Work choice iii) Trade and manufacture iv) Training v) Information

Table 1: Components and aspects of the "Error Correction", "Access to Power" and "Available Resources" levels.

Also shown are the 'freedom' aspects which directly reflect important aspects of the functioning of the main feedback loops.