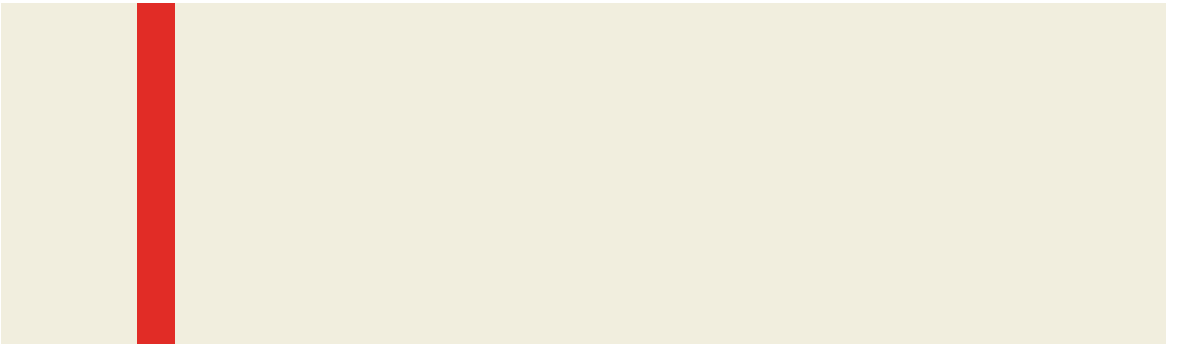


Livelihoods in Development

Professor Leo de Haan

Valedictory lecture in abridged form delivered on 18 June 2015 on the occasion of Professor de Haan's departure as Rector of the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam.



Dear Rector Magnificus and Madame President of the Executive Board
Dear family and friends and students and colleagues,

A rapidly changing world

The world is changing rapidly and so is the field of development studies. When I started my university studies and became interested in what was then called 'issues of development and underdevelopment', the map of the world I had grown up with was simple and orderly. It was conveniently arranged into a First World, a Second World and a Third World. I lived in the First World, the free and capitalist world. That First World was engaged in a Cold War with the Second World, the socialist world. The Third World was poor and troubled by famine. The Third World was considered underdeveloped because of the way it was integrated into the world capitalist system. It was subordinated and exploited by the First World, which reaped the benefits of that relationship. This was the main reason it became rich and developed. The Second World had no part in this and went its own way. I was concerned about the poverty and hunger in the Third World and wanted to do something about it. And so it became the main subject of my studies.

Whether this map of the world and its underlying analysis were correct is now water under the bridge. As a result of globalization, all parts of the world have become increasingly integrated. Many Third World countries have managed to profit from globalization and have transformed into industrial societies with flourishing economies. First came the Asian Tigers: Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea. They were small and could be ignored as exceptions or classified as anomalies. Reputed economists such as Paul Krugman, who later won the Nobel Prize, called them Paper Tigers

because their rapid growth was in large part based on “an astonishing mobilization of resources” rather than on a rise of productivity.¹

But then Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and, of course, China followed suit and the Asian miracle became a reality. After these newly industrializing countries came the emerging markets, though this group seems to include many of the previous group. Moreover, we talk about the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as new world powers. And do not forget the Next Eleven (Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Turkey, South Korea and Vietnam), so called because they have high potential to become new BRICS.

Looking at the other side of the coin – the countries with the lowest average income – the dominance of Africa is striking. Of course, there are positive reports about Africa’s economic development, mainly driven by a boom in commodity prices in the past decade. Angola, Ghana, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique have all seen considerable growth rates thanks to a booming raw materials sector. And Nigeria has recently overtaken South Africa as the biggest economy on the continent. On the whole, however, ‘Africa’s rising’ as a prosperous society is still a future prospect rather than development reality on vast parts of the continent. Nevertheless, during my current visits to Africa, an optimistic mood takes control of me: transformations are taking place at a pace and a scale I have never witnessed there before. That is, I cannot deny – as I near the end of my career, a good part of which I spent in Africa – a far more joyful observation than the gloomy state of affairs I experienced in Africa at the start my career.

On a global scale, the number of low-income countries (LICs) has declined over time. Of the 43 countries listed as LICs in the World Development Report 1992, only 25 were still in that group in 2014. Also the number of people living in extreme poverty² “has decreased dramatically in the past

1 P. Krugman (1994), *The Myth of Asia’s Miracle: A cautionary fable*. *Foreign Affairs*, November/December, pp.62-78.

2 Living on less than \$1.25 per day

three decades, from half the citizens in the developing world in 1981 to 21% in 2010, despite a 59% increase in the developing world population.³

So, the blocs on the map I grew up with have disintegrated and we are witnessing successful economic and social transformation in what was once called the Third World. This trend in world development is mirrored at ISS. Established as a training centre for professionals from the Third World, the institute's students came almost exclusively from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Now we have a considerable and steady contingent of students from Europe and North America (16% in 2013), which not only adds to the international flavour of the institute but also demonstrates that development studies has become a global interest and that our worldwide reputation attracts students from all over the globe is confirmed by the origin of our doctoral candidates, which reflect more or less the same distribution.⁴ But the other trend – the dominance of Africa amongst countries with the lowest average income – is also mirrored at ISS: the largest share of our MA students and doctoral candidates come from Africa, suggesting that much of the institute's original challenge to contribute to development lies in that continent.

What has not changed over time is ISS' reputation as a centre of excellence in development studies. That reputation is increasingly founded on our research performance, as well as our continuous ambition to prove our relevance in development practice. When the institute's average research output is benchmarked against our international peers, it consistently scored the best between 2003 and 2013 in terms of both impact and scientific output.⁵

With respect to teaching at ISS, not only is our curriculum continuously upgraded, but new global relations also give rise to new teaching constellations.

3 World Bank (2013), *Remarkable Declines in Global Poverty, But Major Challenges Remain*. Press release 17 April 2013, drawing upon the 2013 World Bank report *The State of the Poor: Where are the Poor and where are they Poorest?* Washington: World Bank.

4 In addition, 42% of our MA students come from Africa, 30% from Asia and 12% from Latin America. More or less the same distribution is reflected in the origins of our almost 100 doctoral candidates: 39% from Africa, 32% from Asia, 17% from Latin America and 12% from Europe and North America. ISS (2014), *Annual Report 2013*. The Hague: International Institute of Social Studies, p.32 and p.49.

5 ISS (2011), *Research Quality Assessment Self Evaluation Report 2003-2010*. The Hague: International Institute of Social Studies, p.41 and ISS (2014), *Development in Transition. Mid-term Research Assessment 2011-2013*. The Hague: International Institute of Social Studies, p.13.

This is the time of joint and double MA and PhD degrees. We no longer train for the rest of the world but with partners in the rest of the world. Part of the programme is implemented there and part here in The Hague.⁶ Moreover, that collaboration is driven not only from The Hague, but also by our partners. The F.H.R. Lim A Po Institute in Paramaribo is a case in point. When it comes to positioning training programmes in the education market or to setting our ambition for accreditation, the institute and its Rector are a step ahead of the rest.

And of course, throughout its existence, ISS has emphasized its “commitment to societal relevance in terms of contributing to the solution of social problems relevant for developing countries and in giving a voice to those that are not usually invited to sit at the tables where decisions are taken”.⁷ Making a difference in practice: that is what our students are studying for, that is what drives our research and that is what I found so appealing about being Rector of this institute. And the question “Did my own work in development studies and my own research matter?” is also relevant in this context. I will try to answer that question here below.

Despite poverty declining overall, according to the World Bank, there are still some one billion people living in extreme poverty, with a third of those living in Sub-Saharan Africa. Given that the number of people living in extreme poverty in 1981 was 1.9 billion, progress has been tremendous.⁸ However, it is striking that most extremely poor people do not live in low-income countries.

6 ISS runs the following joint and double MA degree programmes:
Two-year international joint MA degree programme (Erasmus Mundus Master Programme) in Public Policy with the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, the University of York in England and the Institute on International Relations in Barcelona in Spain (IBEI).
Two-year joint programme (Transatlantic Atlantis Programme) in International Security and Development Policy with Maxwell School of Syracuse University, USA, and Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, Germany.
MA programme in Public Administration (MPA) with FHR Lim A Po Institute for Social Studies in Suriname.
Two-year double MA degree programme with University of Indonesia.
Double MA degree programme in Development Studies/International Relations with Ritsumeikan University in Japan.
Double MA degree programme in Agrarian, Food and Environmental Studies with the Universitas Padjadjaren, Bandung in Indonesia.

7 P. van Bergeijk and L. Johnson (eds) (2014), *Social impact @ sciences: the end of the ivory tower*. The Hague: International Institute of Social Studies, p.6.

8 World Bank (2013), *op.cit* and World Bank (2014), *Poverty Overview. Context*. Updated 7 October 2014.

Nowadays three-quarters of the extreme poor live in middle-income countries (MICs).⁹

“So while inequality between countries is decreasing worldwide, inequality within most countries continues to rise. There is a clear link between growth and income inequality in large middle-income countries, making poverty and associated problems increasingly a distribution issue. Economic growth may not be enough if the poor are disconnected from a country’s economic prosperity. In China and India income inequality is rising rapidly, and without a change in policy this trend will certainly continue. In recent years, Brazil has pursued an active policy of supporting the poorest groups within and outside the labour market, and income inequality in the country has somewhat declined, though it remains among the highest in the world”.¹⁰

This poses a new challenge for our work here at ISS and for development studies in general. Of course, we knew that economic growth would not automatically solve poverty – on the contrary – though we considered it essential. But with the impressive world economic growth in the past decades and most poverty now located within emerging economies, the emphasis is shifting increasingly from poverty as such to growing inequalities within countries. Growing income inequalities weaken a country’s potential for sustained economic growth and increases the probabilities of a sharp and permanent societal cleavage between rich and poor. High income inequalities reinforce inequalities in health, in education, in life chances and between men

9 “Using the World Bank’s measure of extreme income poverty, there are around 1.2 billion people in extreme poverty. Around 26% of those, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa, live in low-income countries as classified by the World Bank (below \$1.025 GDP per person in 2011). Another 58%, mainly in Asia, live in lower-middle-income countries (between \$1,026 and \$4,035 GDP per person) such as China, India, and Indonesia. Around 17% of the extreme poor live in upper-middle-income countries. The high proportion (74%) of the extreme poor living in middle income countries is not entirely surprising given that MICs account for approximately 86% of the population of the developing world. Nor are the lower-income countries that are home to the greatest proportion of the world’s poorest people safely out of the low-income country zone where extreme poverty can be endemic. India, Nigeria, and many other LMICs face enormous challenges of maintaining high and inclusive economic growth, in view of highly challenging demographic, environmental, and social factors.” Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2012), *Global Profile of Extreme Poverty*. Background paper for the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Prepared by the secretariat of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. New York: United Nations.

10 SID-ISS-FMO-NCDO (2013), *Building Blocks for International Cooperation*. Prepared for Conference The Future of International Development on 7 March 2013 at ISS in The Hague, p.1.

and women.¹¹ This means that processes of social exclusion and inclusion and social justice deserve even more attention than before and have therefore become the core of our work. Inclusive growth or inclusive development is our new focus.

11 OXFAM (2014), Even it Up: *Time to end extreme inequality*. Oxford: Oxfam GB.

Livelihoods in development

If increased inequality within countries is the reality of contemporary transformation processes and regarded as the major challenge for the coming years, then inclusive development is the main objective to be achieved, and research on poor people's livelihoods remains topical and has a relevant contribution to make. That is what the following section will address.

What it was

Livelihood research has been the connecting thread in my academic work throughout my career. If I have to explain at a birthday party what my research entails, I usually say that I am doing poverty studies, meaning that I study how poor people organize their lives. In the same breath, I add that I hope that my findings will give rise to action – by poor people themselves or in the form of external interventions – that will improve their wellbeing. In no time, that triggers a discussion on the failures of development aid. I won't dwell upon that issue now, but I usually admit that development aid does frequently miss the target. Usually, I add that societal transformations are incredibly complex and that I myself often do not have good advice or a good solution. My listeners then immediately look at me with pity. Even at birthday parties, professors must live up to the expectations the media have helped them to create, that they always have an expert opinion at hand to solve every problem that comes up.

My point here is that "to understand how poor people organize their lives with an aim to contribute to improvement" is an accurate, no-nonsense

description of livelihood research. And I find myself in good company: Robert Chambers, who is generally considered the founding father of the livelihood approach because of his 1991 paper “Sustainable rural livelihoods” and who was honoured with an EUR Honorary Doctorate by ISS in 2013, indicated that livelihood refers to a means of securing a living resulting from an interaction between capabilities, tangible assets and intangible assets.¹²

That was in the 1990s, when I also found additional inspiration in the work of Norman Long, who promoted an actor-oriented perspective on development interventions. More specifically, Long conceptualized development aid projects in rural areas as arenas where various actors, such as small farmers and rural labourers, extension workers and foreign development practitioners, meet and interact with their own interests and different – sometimes hidden – agendas. In those arenas, local people try to organize their livelihoods, or rather are perhaps “forced to organize their livelihoods”. They try to “appropriate” the development intervention to their own advantage. And they do that in ways that the designers of the intervention did not foresee and development practitioners did not anticipate. In those days, of course, local people were usually not involved in the design: development aid projects were designed “for” them, not “with” them. Long explained these “battlefields of knowledge” – as he called them, because research on knowledge systems was his point of departure – as arenas of social conflict and power struggle.¹³

This explanation shows that, contrary to the general belief, issues of power were already at the centre of livelihood studies at an early stage. Powerlessness, discrimination, unequal distribution of assets and deprivation are all present in Chambers’ founding livelihood paper from 1991. But it was the dominant political discourse of the time that depoliticized the concept.

12 “A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living; a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term”. Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway (1991), *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century*. IDS Discussion Paper 296. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, p.6. See also pp.6-7.

13 A. Long and N. Long (1992), *Battlefields of Knowledge. The interlocking theory and practice in social research and development*. Routledge: London. See N. Long, *From Paradigm Lost to Paradigm Regained?*: pp.16-43.

“..... the so-called Sustainable Livelihood Framework was strongly promoted by the Department for International Development (DFID), the British state development cooperation agency. It was part of an attempt of the New Labour government to design a set of distinguishable policies that would profile the Blair administration as builder of the ‘Third Way’ between the rusted labour ideology of the past and the neo-liberal ideology of the preceding conservative administration. Sustainable Livelihoods became the core of DFID’s poverty alleviation policy”. “The pro-active, self-help image of the poor in Sustainable Livelihoods thinking fit very well with the image that the new Blair administration wanted to demonstrate. As a consequence, DFID initiated a large number of new research projects and policy debates on the subject in collaboration with a number of British think-tanks and research groups and started to finance development interventions based on that.”¹⁴

This particular perspective on the poor was part of the broader rise of people-centred, bottom-up approaches in development thinking and development interventions as a reaction to the mainstream development management approach. This mainstream approach was considered top-down and based on assumptions about reality rather than on grounded knowledge of poor people’s lives. And if it was operating on the basis of information collected on the ground, it was often “subject to serious biases”,¹⁵ and therefore ineffective. All this meant that the subjects of development interventions – the poor, farmers or slum-dwellers – often became disempowered.

The alternative approach that emerged was participatory development. The participatory approach wanted to connect explicitly to poor people’s needs and aspirations. It was expected that this would result in more effective

14 L. de Haan (2012), *The Livelihood Approach: A critical exploration*. *Erdkunde* 66, 4, pp.346. This quote includes references to L. de Haan and A. Zoomers (2005), *Exploring the frontier of livelihood research*. *Development and Change* 36, 1, pp. 27–47 and to two papers by Solesbury: W. Solesbury (2003a), *Sustainable Livelihoods: A Case Study of the Evolution of DFID Policy*. London: Overseas Development Institute. And W. Solesbury (2003b), *The Sustainable Livelihoods Case Study*. Bridging Research and Policy. Seminar. Transcript of presentation given at Overseas Development Institute 9 Oct 2003, London.
15 D. Gasper (2012), Introduction to Robert Chambers. In: *‘Voices of the Poor’ and Beyond: Lessons from the Past, Agenda for the Future*. Robert Chambers Honorary Doctor of ISS (8 November 2013). Lecture delivered on 11 October 2012 on the occasion of the 60th Dies Natalis of the International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague: p.3.

development interventions. Various kinds of participatory techniques were designed and introduced to achieve that. Part of the practice of participatory approaches was no more than instrumental and therefore still fell into the realm of mainstream development management, albeit no longer top-down but bottom-up. The other part practiced participatory development as the road to empowerment, helping the poor to pro-actively shape their own future. Again Robert Chambers was a major driver of this change.¹⁶

That brought a strong flavour of agency to the livelihood approach. The poor were no longer considered helpless, in despair and to be saved by outsiders, but as actively taking their livelihoods into their own hands, exploring various income-generating and other opportunities around them to give their lives a meaning and to sustain or improve their wellbeing, making use of the various resources, capitals or assets they owned or could lay claim to. As a consequence, “to understand their livelihoods” meant to understand their livelihood strategies.

This, in a nutshell, is what attracted me to the livelihood approach, after I had completed my first research projects in Africa and was trying to come to grips with the results. Setting out on doctoral fieldwork to Togo, West Africa, to disclose the detrimental effects of the articulation of the local mode of production with the dominant capitalist world system, I began to research the livelihoods of rural people in the peripheral north of that country. Soon I became captivated by their creativity and resilience, their dignity and perseverance, in the face of drought, disease and hunger and despite a long history of rule and oppression by outsiders.

Friends and family at home would keep on asking “Does it help? Does your work help?” And I would immediately say “Yes. I am lucky to be able to share the results of my work with the Belgian NGO Isles de Paix, which started a broad participatory development programme in the same region supporting all kinds of local initiatives, such as village grain banks, farmers associations, wells and women’s vegetable production”. All in all it was an existential experience that turned out to be decisive for the rest of my academic work: livelihoods and Africa became the mainstays, while – often

¹⁶ D. Gasper (2012), op. cit. p.1.

a long way from home – I found myself also dealing with the downside of a multi-local livelihood.

After Togo came Benin. I am a geographer by training and in that period I worked in a geography department. By default, geographers like to move through space and explore different spatial contexts. To my surprise, the same ecological zone which I knew in Togo as peripheral, marginal, and backward turned out in neighbouring Benin to be a booming cotton-producing region integrated in the world market. The same ecological conditions but very different economies. That was an eye-opener, as you can imagine, and it triggered new research into conflicting livelihoods of pastoralists and cotton-growers.

Again, critical friends and family at home would ask “Did it help? Did your work help?” And I would reply that the whole purpose of the work was to feed into policy-making by the government and big donors like the European Community, as it was then. Unfortunately, this time my research work on land management practices and conflict resolution between farmers and pastoralists had less practical impact than expected. With hindsight I must conclude that its focus on policy-making was at the expense of its participatory approach and thus its relevance for practice.

What it is

After Benin, other African countries followed, but the game-changer came from a completely different and unexpected direction: when I moved for my first professorial appointment from geography in Amsterdam to development studies and to a social sciences faculty in Nijmegen, to be precise.

In that new epistemological context, I soon realized that “... the understanding of livelihood [goes] beyond the economic or material objectives of life..... This is not to say that livelihood is not a matter of material wellbeing, but rather that it also includes non-material aspects of wellbeing. Livelihood should be seen as a dynamic and holistic concept”.¹⁷ Moreover, agency became more clearly bounded by structure. Individual behaviour became socially constructed, embedded in norms

¹⁷ L. de Haan and A. Zoomers (2005), *op. cit.*, p.32.

and values and institutions. For example, structural constraints like the ownership and distribution of land explained limited access to assets and resources. Imperfect markets resulting in low prices came to the fore and explained incomes at survival level. Culture became a crucial explanatory factor in that new working context, explaining the inertia of many poor communities and their narrow perspective on what opportunities for improved wellbeing could be explored and which could not or would not even be considered as an opportunity; gender norms being a specific case in point. In short, a structuralist perspective on livelihoods came to the fore, considering habits, social behaviour and social phenomena in general as unwittingly generated by underlying structures, hard to grab – you may even call them invisible – but omnipresent. Although they were once the result of human action and thus created by it, these structures tend to sustain and continue so that social behaviour submits to it habitually.

Nowadays one would say that that my learning curve was steep at the time. It enriched my perspective on livelihoods tremendously but the original confrontation was overpowering. It is one thing to value with hindsight the shift towards a people-centred, bottom-up perspective as a paradigm shift,¹⁸ but it is different when you are in the middle of it and not yet fully realizing the magnitude of the shift you are making.

What this means for my approach to livelihood studies can best be illustrated by a metaphor I often used of the livelihood trajectory, as a historical route through a labyrinth of rooms in a huge house inhabited by a society.¹⁹ Each room has several doors giving access to new livelihood opportunities, but all need a key to be opened. One door leads to fields to be cultivated with maize and another door to a carpenter's workshop to produce and sell furniture. But to access these opportunities you need the key to open

18 D. Gasper (2012), op. cit. p.3.

19 L. de Haan and A. Zoomers (2005), op. cit, p.44. ".....with each room having several doors giving access to new livelihood opportunities; but the doors can be opened and the room of opportunities successfully entered only with the right key qualifications. As a result, some doors remain unopened and rooms of opportunities not accessed; while new rooms of opportunities are sometimes successfully exploited, a person often ends up in a room that very much resembles the one from which he or she was trying to escape. Informants may report accurately on the opportunities that they have successfully or unsuccessfully exploited; however, it is much more difficult — but vital — to understand why some opportunities were not even considered. These are usually opportunities that informants did not even think of for reasons of convention, that is, elements of access like social norms, institutions, power etc."

the door: the key being ownership of the workshop or kinship through which you can borrow the field. The next door leads to a classroom for your children, but you will need sufficient income to pay for the key in the form of a school fee and school uniform. This is the first layer of livelihood analysis: the surface, so to speak.

For the next door hardly any access qualification may seem necessary at first sight. It leads to a place in the street where you can sell foodstuff you prepared at home to office workers strolling around for their 12 o'clock lunch. But in that case you are not aware of the power struggles that are going on in the background. Every spot on the pavement is already 'owned' by a street vendor. If you are a newcomer they send you packing, unless you have friends or family among the vendors. In that case they may allow you a spot around the corner in an alley. In some cities, you must always be on the alert for overzealous policemen sweeping the streets clean of vendors; sometimes you have to bribe them to back off.²⁰ There are similar power struggles to open other doors, or behind them. Sometimes marginalized people are not allowed to register their children for schools and registration is refused. Without the help of civil rights activists, they don't get far. And so on. These examples represent the second layer of livelihood analysis: that of the power struggles, not directly visible but ever-present and essential to understand.

The third layer lies deeper below the surface and is much more difficult to grab. Let us return to our societal house: there are many doors never opened or not even recognized as doors. Many marginalized people do not even think about registering their children for school, believing that "schools are not meant for our kind of people". Many live an obedient, servile life because that is also what they consider to be proper, a worn and unconscious pattern of behaviour. Faithful Anglican women in North Uganda will never brew beer as an income-generating activity, because the Church is against it. They know the door is there, they know where to find the key, but they will never open it. For the same reason, young Fulani men from the north of Benin (Fulani are semi-nomadic pastoralists, migrating to the city of Cotonou in the south) will

²⁰ The example is invented but inspired by the study of street food vendors in Dhaka, Bangladesh, by Etzold et al. See B. Etzold, ; Bohle, H.-G.; Keck, M. and Zingel, W.-P. (2009), Informality as agency. Negotiating food security in Dhaka. *Die Erde* 140 ,1, pp. 3–24.

find employment as herders of cattle owned by rich urban businessmen. Their habitus – as Bourdieu would call it – leads them to that occupation, while the urban-dwellers reinforce that because they only want Fulani to herd their cattle. The only alternative for young Fulani men in Cotonou, for some odd historical reason, is to work as night-watchmen at the homes of the urban middle class.²¹ Here we touch upon the invisible but persistent underlying structures directing social behaviour. But we also know that these structures can change and did change in the past because human behaviour broke through and uprooted established patterns. For example, after they became members of micro-credit women groups, some Anglican women in North Uganda started brewing and selling beer and now earn an income from it.²² There are many more smaller and bigger examples of poor people breaking through barriers, improving their wellbeing considerably. Fortunately they are frequently supported by development interventions at the grassroots level and I am particularly proud that many ISS students play a role in that.²³ So, my answer to the home front is frequently “Fortunately, yes, it helps”

I would argue that over time livelihood studies have made a significant contribution to the understanding of processes of inclusion and exclusion and thus to the root causes of poverty and marginalization. Inspiration came from various corners: from political ecology and related thinking on vulnerability²⁴,

21 T. Djedjebi (2009), *Pastoralists et la ville au Bénin: Livelihoods en questionnement*. African Studies Collection 17. Leiden: African Studies Centre.

22 L. de Haan and A. Lakwo (2010), Rethinking the impact of microfinance in Africa: ‘Business change’ or social emancipation. *European Journal of Development Research* 22, 4, pp.529-545.

23 Out of the many examples I could choose, I have chosen Mary Rutenge and Hadi Marifat. ISS PhD candidate Mary Rutenge from Tanzania is currently completing her PhD thesis on the effects on local communities’ livelihoods of extractive industries in Tanzania. Her thesis explains how local livelihoods are being destabilized by land grab, water and air pollution and violence from the side of the mining companies and the authorities. The working title of her thesis ‘Gold Mining Multinationals and Communities: Struggle for corporate accountability’ indicates that she investigates how companies can be held accountable for the damage they cause on local well-being. She shows that government institutions are not always capable of holding companies accountable. For the time being, international and local NGO activism have succeeded best in doing that. Hadi Marifat is alumnus from the MA programme. When still a MA student, he gave a compelling speech about the work of his NGO in Afghanistan at the TEDx Conference in The Peace Palace, here in The Hague on 9 September 2013. Hadi is an Afghan human rights activist and co-founder of the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO) and he explained in his Tedx presentation how the Memory Box he developed became a tool for Afghan war victims to give meaning and voice to their memories. In his TEDx, Hadi argued that all attempts to settle the conflict in Afghanistan have forgotten to put people first. According to him, peace can only be achieved by empowering communities to speak for themselves. He demonstrated how ‘The Memory Box project’ contributed to war victims’ empowerment.

24 Bohle, H.-G. (2007), *Living with vulnerability. Livelihoods and human security in risky environments*. UNU-EHS InterSecTions 6. Bonn.

from Foucault's theory of power and subsequent power analysis in gender studies, from the conceptualization of social arenas by Long and of social fields by Bourdieu. What matters most is that they not only provided us with frameworks and toolboxes like the livelihood approach used to do in its infancy, but with coherent theorization that provides possible explanations, causations and impacts of what otherwise remained symbolic feedback arrows between boxes in a framework. As a result, the term "livelihood studies" is no longer limited to studies following the sustainable livelihood framework of the 1990s but points at people-centred studies that – through a holistic perspective on how they organize themselves a living – understand the processes of exclusion they are subject to and think through the interventions and policies that intend to countervail that.

What it becomes

In my opinion, feeding into interventions and policies that intend to countervail social exclusion is the biggest challenge for livelihood studies at that moment. As explained above the world is rapidly changing. Most global poverty is now located within emerging economies and inclusiveness is the new focus. Growing inequalities within countries will become more important than growth, thus the distribution of growth requires our special attention. Let me call a spade a spade: the world economic system – the capitalist economic world system – also in its current stage of globalization, has not been able, is not able and will not be able to achieve equity on its own. History shows that it needs public social policies to achieve equity, policies supported by a widely carried commitment throughout a society,²⁵ like we used to have in Western Europe after the Second World War, a commitment to which I am not certain still exists today. So poverty is now foremost a

25 "The term 'social contract' opens up a range of possible interpretations. The term is not used here in the classic sense of a compact between conflicting interests or between individuals and government, as in the writing of Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes. Instead, it is employed in the more restricted Rawlsian sense of an overlapping consensus, emerging in pluralistic societies around the need to set in place institutions charged with ensuring equal distribution of primary goods and priority for the least advantaged (Rawls, 2001). It echoes European, but perhaps not Anglo-Saxon, perspectives on the 'social' underlying welfare states, which include both provisioning institutions and a political commitment to ensuring appropriate levels of well-being for all (Leisering, 2003)." [J. Rawls (2001), *Justice as Fairness: A restatement*. London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.] [L. Leisering (2003), Nation state and welfare state: an intellectual and political history: Review Essay. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 13, 2, pp.175–185.] Quoted from A. Barrientos 2013, Human Development Income Transfers in the Longer Term, International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth Working Paper 116 Brasilia: UNDP, p.11.

distribution issue, social protection policies are required to direct distribution and an understanding of the processes of social exclusion and inclusion indispensable to conceive them.

In a more strict interpretation, social protection means securing the livelihoods of the poor through policies aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion.²⁶ That reveals the link between social protection and livelihood studies. The new assignment for livelihood studies is to feed into social protection policies and the establishment of social protection systems. This linking is not surprising: the roots and inspirations of livelihood studies and social protection thinking overlap. For example, both draw upon Amartya Sen's work on entitlements and both recognize the need to assail vulnerability and to cope with shocks and stresses. While livelihood studies focus on the actors, social protection focuses on the system. That makes them to a large extent complementary. And that, in a nutshell, is the core of my work in development studies.

In terms of my personal path through academia as a livelihoods researcher, this linking of livelihood research with social protection would have been far less substantial and productive if I had not worked at ISS. In that sense, my move to this institute was again a game-changer. Ongoing and previous work at ISS on poverty, population, work and employment, gender and youth and "is now being carried forward [with] a strong commitment to the potential for achieving social justice and equity through social policy tools in development".²⁷ "The focus in this 'ISS school' of critical social policy is on the analysis of the problems of social reproduction and social provisioning – or of societal responses to social need – within a context of development and associated social and structural transformations. Emphasis is given to the question of how social policy can be used as a force for progressive transformation and for sustainable, equitable, gender-aware and socially-just development within a context of contemporary globalization and profound population transformations such as migration and urbanization."²⁸

26 ILO (2014), *World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice*. Geneva: International Labour Organisation: p.162.

27 *ISS Social Policy Capacities: Approach, projects and academic expertise*. Compiled by Andrew Fischer and David Wubbs 15 January 2013. The Hague: International Institute of Social Studies, pp.2-3.

28 *ISS Social Policy Capacities* (2013), op. cit. p.3.

Significant in terms of the game-change is that, for us at ISS, alleviating poverty through social protection is only meaningful when it takes place within the broader objective of universalizing social protection. Universal social protection is “social protection which covers the entire population with adequate benefits and is grounded in claimable entitlements, whether derived from rights or payments by institutions and individuals [.... with the overall intention to] contribute to human security, reduce poverty and inequality, and build social solidarity”.²⁹ Without the principles of universality and claimable entitlements, social protection risks fragmentation and inadequate accessibility. Therefore social protection is a public affair. Private sector initiatives can play an important role in achieving universal social protection – one only has to look at the way social protection has been organized in Europe – but all within an overall social provisioning system in which government assumes the central role.

Finally and again in terms of the game-change, the strong commitment at ISS to strive for relevance in practice, in development practice, poses an extra challenge to my academic work which is common in development studies, but which is influenced here at the institute with extra force, also because students usually bring with them experiences from development practice.

Social protection

The foregoing already made clear that social protection is a heavily debated and controversial issue in development. “While the essential elements vary significantly across different social protection frameworks, social assistance, social insurance and minimum labour standards are some of the most commonly included categories of instruments by agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Social assistance (including non-contributory social transfers in both cash and in kind) is increasingly popular public initiatives that tackle extreme poverty while strengthening private responses. Social insurance mechanisms can help correct market failures and more effectively broaden access to include the poor. Governments also legislate minimum labour standards in the workplace (and more broadly) to reduce imbalances in economic power. Private sector employers sometimes

²⁹ UNRISD (2010), *Combatting Poverty and Inequality: Structural Change, Social Policy and Politics*. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, p. 135. (Chapter 5, Towards universal social protection).

adopt voluntary standards that offer even greater social protection. Broader definitions of social protection may include social and private services, primarily those that build human capital, such as education, health, sanitation, and community development. In addition, some frameworks consider an even wider range of public policies – including macroeconomic policies – as components of social protection”.³⁰ Issues of heated debate are the merits of cash and food transfers, the question of conditionality versus non-conditionality and the question of targeted versus universal provision.³¹

Also contentious is the notion of “graduation out of poverty”. Graduation in this context means that individuals or households attain a sustainable livelihood after being supported for some time by a social protection programme with, for example, food, credit and training. In other words it implies an objective to be pursued actively and is the origin of the general concern that social transfers may render people dependent. But on the other hand it is at odds with the principle of claimable entitlements.

Bolsa Familia in Brazil is the biggest social protection programme in the world, benefiting some 13 million families, i.e. more than 50 million people or roughly a quarter of the total population.³² Bolsa Familia is exemplary of the kind of social security policies middle-income countries can pursue to meet the challenge of distributing the benefits of economic growth more equally through society. The programme combines direct cash transfers to poor families to reduce their poverty instantly with conditional cash transfers. The conditional cash transfers aim to improve human development by ensuring access to basic health and education facilities (for example, children must enrol in school and be vaccinated). Two important lessons can be learned from the success of Bolsa Familia. Firstly, it shows that institutionalization in strong and dedicated ministries of social security is an essential requirement to sustain success and to ban poverty completely. Secondly, it makes clear that social protection cannot be limited to cash transfers only. It should be

30 OECD (2009), *Promoting pro-poor growth; Employment and Social Protection*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, pp. 35-36.

31 ASC (2013), *Social protection in Africa: Web dossier*. Leiden: African Studies Centre.

32 H. Schwazer (2013), *The Programa Bolsa Familia and its Relevance for the ILO's Concept of the Social Protection Floor*. International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth One Pager 231. Brasilia: United Nations Development Programme, p.1.

driven by a broader agenda of “ensuring a social minimum consistent with full participation in society”.³³

I do not, incidentally, intend to argue that social protection itself is able to generate economic growth. It is inherently a mechanism to redistribute growth. Although social protection will also sustain and broaden the basis for economic growth – for example, because improved access to education will promote the quality of the workforce – economic growth will mainly be generated in coming decades by the private sector, preferably directed by industrial policies in order to contribute to societal goals. This is not the moment to dwell upon that key contribution of the private sector extensively. But a few matters are important to note with respect to the inclusiveness potential of their investments and job creation. For the big corporate firms, pro-active poverty reduction as a corporate strategy is far from reality and not to be expected in the foreseeable time, although some bigger European firms do explore in their strategic operations “interesting examples as regards partnerships, broader approaches to the bottom of the pyramid, and novel business models”.³⁴ Nor would it be realistic to expect medium and small enterprises to pursue pro-active poverty reduction as part of their business strategies. However, for inclusive growth, these kind of enterprises are interesting.³⁵ They provide the bulk of accessible employment and usually across most segments of the

33 A. Barrientos 2013, *Human Development Income Transfers in the Longer Term*. International Policy Center for Inclusive Growth Working Paper 116 Brasilia,: UNDP, p.12. 9 (Italics added LdH)

Moreover, it is worthwhile to note the following: “The issue here is whether human development income transfer programmes, as effective ways to address poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion in developing countries, can contribute to the emergence or renewal of social contracts. The term ‘social contract’ opens up a range of possible interpretations. The term is not used here in the classic sense of a compact between conflicting interests or between individuals and government, as in the writing of Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes. Instead, it is employed in the more restricted Rawlsian sense of an overlapping consensus, emerging in pluralistic societies around the need to set in place institutions charged with ensuring equal distribution of primary goods and priority for the least advantaged (Rawls, 2001).¹⁷ It echoes European, but perhaps not Anglo-Saxon, perspectives on the ‘social’ underlying welfare states, which include both provisioning institutions and a political commitment to ensuring appropriate levels of well-being for all (Leisering, 2003).” A. Barrientos (2013), op. cit., p.11. The quote refers to: J. Rawls (2001), *Justice as Fairness: A restatement*. London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. And L. Leisering (2003), Nation state and welfare state: an intellectual and political history: Review Essay, *Journal of European Social Policy*, 13, 2, pp.175–185.

34 R. van Tulder (2008), *The Role of Business in Poverty Reduction towards a Sustainable Corporate Story?* Report prepared for the UNRISD project on UNRISD Flagship Report: Combating Poverty and Inequality. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, p.26.

35 SID-ISS-FMO-NCDO (2013), op. cit. pp.2-3



labour force and throughout the country, and have strong linkages in the local economy. Small and medium-sized enterprises – the ‘SMEs’ – have graduated from a low-priority to a high-priority sector of the economy because their development potential has been recognized at long last. In this respect, it is opportune to link ISS’ longstanding expertise in local economic development and private sector development with our interest in social protection. There is a large degree of complementarity in the way both clusters of our expertise contribute to inclusiveness growth.

Besides, not without a feeling of pride, I have seen ISS taking the lead in a truly original approach to innovations, or to be more precise frugal innovations, to explore further the developmental potential of private sector development. ISS leads the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Centre for Frugal Innovation in Africa – one of the centres shaping the strategic alliance between Erasmus University, Leiden University and Delft University of Technology by combining the strengths of these three universities. The LDE Centre for Frugal Innovations works on value sensitive innovations which fit into local circumstances and cultures with the aim to improve the lives of lower-strata consumers and producers. Recently, it entered into a partnership with a number of Dutch water companies to explore inclusive business models, i.e. models that would make profit-making possible in a sustainable and inclusive way. ISS has invested significantly in the Centre for Frugal Innovation because we expect to develop ISS’ contribution to the conceptualisation of inclusive growth further and strengthen the institute’s contribution to our university’s strategy.

Livelihoods and social protection

So livelihood studies come to the fore as part of the broader debate on social protection. The contribution of livelihood studies lies particularly in its holistic perspective on people’s lives. It is through its holistic perspective that the mechanisms of social exclusion in various contexts become clear, and the effectiveness of social protection policies and instruments to counteract exclusion can be determined. For livelihood studies, notable areas of social protection to focus on include basic services such as education, health and housing, and employment and employment regulations like minimum labour standards and wages. It is also relevant to analyse social assistance measures like food distribution,

conditional or unconditional cash transfers, income guarantee schemes, pensions, child and disabled support grants and employment guarantee schemes. In addition, attention should be devoted to social insurance for health, pensions, unemployment, accidents and agricultural risks.

However, we must be aware that the same trap lies in wait as in the past. Just as the livelihood perspective was depoliticized in the 1990s under the impact of the dominant political discourse of the time, the debate on social protection and, within that, on poverty, vulnerability and inequality, is again running the risk of becoming de-politicized. Simply declaring inequality as the major issue to be tackled in the world – like the World Bank does (just to mention only one usual suspect)³⁶ – does not immediately imply that attention will be devoted to the underlying processes of marginalization and exclusion, which mainstream policies have all too easily ignored or downplayed in the past. There is a clear danger that, without paying attention to these mechanisms of social exclusion, the debate will focus only on indicators of poverty and inequality without tackling and understanding the underlying processes.³⁷

An early publication dealing with the link between livelihoods and social protection clearly states “that social protection is not only about welfarist resource transfers but can be a powerful tool for livelihood promotion” and that, for example, “social protection should address problems of social exclusion and discrimination in the labour market”.³⁸ However, thus far I am disappointed how little attention is devoted to processes of exclusion and the accompanying power struggles in the problem analysis and the preparation

36 World Bank (2012), *Resilience, Equity and Opportunity*. The World Bank 2012-2022 Social Protection and Labour Strategy. Washington: World Bank.

37 A. Fisher (2012), *Inequality and the Universalistic Principle in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. Addressing Inequalities The Heart of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Future We Want for All. Global Thematic Consultation. The Hague: International Institute of Social Studies, p.2.

Moreover, it may even be necessary to include middle social strata in our studies because it is not obvious that processes of exclusion are only limited to the poor. The marginalization and impoverishment of many highly skilled undocumented immigrants in Europe is a case in point. In fact, inclusive development can only be achieved by applying more universalistic principles in order “to bring about more egalitarian and equitable processes of social integration and citizenship”.

A. Fischer (2012), op. cit. p.3.

38 S. Devereux and C. Gorman (2006), *Looking at Social Protection Through a Livelihoods Lens*. IDS in Focus, 1, p.1.

for interventions.³⁹ Most of the emphasis of current people-centred social protection studies is on innovative approaches to social insurance, on partnerships between government, NGOs and the private sector, or on reaching out to vulnerable people not covered by social protection, without questioning impeding underlying structures. I could even argue that there is a danger that social protection is becoming a new fad, under which all kinds of development interventions are being regrouped, and a silver bullet that will put a stop to all evil.

Fortunately, more recently, the work of the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium – a global research network led by the Overseas Development Institute to generate stronger evidence on successful provision of basic services, social protection and support to livelihoods in conflict-affected areas – is much more attentive to issues of power, exclusion and empowerment, especially in its work in South Sudan, Uganda and Nepal.⁴⁰ Another positive example is Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme, one of the biggest social protection programmes in Africa. It was officially established in 2005, but its history dates back to 1994. The programme consists of food aid, cash transfers and work on public works projects for rural poor facing chronic food insecurity. The programme is rather successful in the way it actually manages to reach the poor in need. But the reason I mention it here is because of its determination not to ignore signals of exclusion, including that caused by its own operations. So it evaluates its own effectiveness in reaching female-headed households (in which it is, by the way, quite effective) and acknowledges that its "exclusion error" is still big, because 71% of

39 Eldis, the online information service and database on international development issues of the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex, offers more than 40,000 summaries and gives access to research papers and policy documents from some 8,000 publishers. It provides 700 items on social protection through the resource guide on livelihoods. Very few of these papers include an analysis of power struggles and exclusion processes as part of the design or evaluation of social protection measures.

40 D. Maxwell, K. Gelsdorf, and M. Santschi (2012), *Livelihoods, basic services and social protection in South Sudan*. Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium Working Paper 1. London: Overseas Development Institute. And K. Gelsdorf, D. Maxwell and D. Mazurana (2012), *Livelihoods, basic services and social protection in Northern Uganda and Karamoja*. Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium Working Paper 4. London: Overseas Development Institute. And B. Raj Upreti, S. KC, R. Mallett and B. Babajanian with K. Pyakuryal, S. Ghimire, A. Ghimire and S. Raj Sharma (2012), *Livelihoods, basic services and social protection in Nepal*. Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium Working Paper 7. London: Overseas Development Institute.

non-beneficiaries also reported having experienced food shortage.⁴¹ It also indicates that, though women were fairly represented in the programme, they experienced significant difficulties in balancing required participation in public works with other household responsibilities.⁴²

Another social protection programme prepared for issues of exclusion is Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP), the “flagship programme of Ghana’s National Social Policy Strategy (NSPS). It aims to ‘empower’ the poor by enhancing their capacity to access government interventions and enabling them to ‘LEAP out of poverty’. In addition to the provision of cash, LEAP promotes an ‘integrated social development approach’ which seeks to link beneficiaries with complementary services such as free access to the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), free school uniforms and access to agriculture support and linkages to micro-credit ...”.⁴³ LEAP is quite successful in addressing social exclusion of the poor, although not always in guaranteeing access to the programme to all potential beneficiaries.⁴⁴ “The LEAP transfer functioned primarily as a safety net, supplementing meagre household incomes and enabling resource-poor households to cope better, eat better and spend more on education and health without disinvesting in assets or getting into debt. It increased access to and control over resources amongst female-headed beneficiary households..... LEAP did impact positively on beneficiary inclusion in existing social networks through greater self-esteem, visibility and a raised social status. It also enabled many

41 “In general, beneficiary households [were] significantly more likely to be female-headed than non-beneficiaries, and to have older household heads”. Also its support to the beneficiaries was judged to be effective. However, the “exclusion error” was still big. Of the non-beneficiaries 71% also reported to have experienced food shortage.” S. Devereux, R. Sabates-Wheeler, M. Tefera and H. Taye (2006), *Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). Trends in PSNP Transfers Within Targeted Households*. Final report. Sussex UK: Institute of Development Studies and Addis Ababa: Indak International Pvt. L. C., p.40.

42 Subsequent evaluations confirm the good track record in effectiveness for beneficiaries. But again regional coverage to beneficiaries is criticized, with Amhara and Oromiya in particular lagging behind the rest. With respect to the gender dimension the picture was mixed. Women were fairly represented, “But both women and men report that women experience significant difficulties in balancing required participation in public works with other household responsibilities”. G. Berhane, J. Hoddinott, N. Kumar, A. Taffesse, M. Diressie, Y. Yohannes, R. Sabates-Wheeler, M. Handino, J. Lind, M. Tefera and F. Sima (2013), *Evaluation of Ethiopia’s Food Security Program: Documenting progress in the implementation of the productive safety nets programme and the household asset building programme*. Ethiopia Strategy Support Program II (ESSP II), International Food Policy Research Institute. Sussex UK: Institute of Development Studies and Dadimos, p.2.

43 Oxford Policy Management (2013), *Qualitative research and analyses of the economic impacts of cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa: Ghana country case study report*. Rome: FAO: p.1.

44 Oxford Policy Management (2013), op. cit. p.41.

beneficiaries to 're-enter' contribution-based social networks including extended family risk sharing arrangements, livelihood/labour farming groups and savings groups".⁴⁵ That LEAP strengthens social networks and facilitates beneficiaries to re-establish their network is a positive and very encouraging outcome that was reconfirmed by another more recent evaluation. Unfortunately, LEAP did not manage to organize a consistent cash flow to its beneficiaries all over the country. However, it did succeed in increasing the National Health Insurance Scheme coverage, though curative care-seeking did not increase except for households with young children.⁴⁶

It has probably to do with my stage of life, but at this point I would like to add a special note on youth. After all, we are only young once – after that we need some other excuse. Young people, especially in developing regions, find it increasingly difficult – if not impossible – to become independent adults.⁴⁷ Their problem is that the attributes of adulthood – work, a house, getting married and establishing a family – are becoming unattainable. They are waiting for adulthood, no longer children in need of care but still unable to become adults. This period of suspension between childhood and adulthood is now often called 'waithood',⁴⁸ though we have to bear in mind that young people might not always see themselves in suspended transition. They may be more interested in "trying to be successful in the eyes of their peers as youth, rather than preparing themselves to be successful adults".⁴⁹

"Youth's inability to access basic resources to become independent adults does not result from a failed transition on the part of the youth themselves but rather from a breakdown in the socioeconomic system supposed to

45 Oxford Policy Management (2013), op. cit. p. iii.

46 S. Handa, M. Park, R. Darko, I. Osei-Akoto, B. Davis and S. Daidone (2014), *Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Program Impact Evaluation*. Carolina Population Center University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill: p. ii.

47 The ILO estimates that more than 73 million young people aged 15–24 are unemployed in 2013. That is an unemployment rate of 12.6%, i.e. 2.7 times higher than that for adults. The situation is particularly alarming in developing regions where 90% of the global youth population lives. ILO (2013), *Global Employment Trends for Youth: A generation at risk*. Geneva: International Labour Organisation: pp.1 and 3.

48 The foregoing is freely rendered and quoted from A. Honwana (2014), "Waithood": *Youth Transitions and Social Change*. In: D. Foeken, T. Dietz, L. de Haan and L. Johnson, *Development and Equity. An interdisciplinary exploration by ten scholars from Africa, Asia and Latin America*. Brill: Leiden: p.29.

49 B. White (2011), *Who will own the countryside? Dispossession, rural youth and the future of farming*. ISS Valedictory lecture 13 Oct 2011. The Hague: International Institute of Social Studies, p.3.

provide them with the opportunities to grow up healthy, get good education, find employment, form families and contribute to society as fully fledged citizens. What is broken is the social contract between the state and its citizens. Unsound economic policies, bad governance, corruption and absence of civil liberties are often at the origin of this problem.”⁵⁰

This is an important statement because it puts responsibility precisely where the social protection debate says it should be: first and foremost with the state and its institutions. I think that livelihood studies, used to the inability of many developing states to deliver, quickly move their attention to the “pro-active, self-help image of the poor”,⁵¹ and focus on young people’s self-employment efforts without paying much attention to what should and can be delivered by the state. But what we should not forget is to connect the focus on access to education and training, to employment or self-employment opportunities, and to the accompanying power struggles and exclusion mechanisms, with entitlements and claim-making. The state cannot shirk its responsibility for the well-being of its citizens and transfer it to the citizens themselves.

Furthermore, youth and private sector development are often connected, in the sense that the lack of real employment creation throws young people back on their own creativity and initiative, forcing them to become successful self-entrepreneurs.⁵² But they lack resources and skills and often wider market opportunities. Only massive job creation – of course, realized to an important extent by the private sector, but directed by state industrial policies and flanked by labour market regulations and other social protection measures – can offer young people inclusive employment. Skills training programmes only have success in the context of growing economies, like those in Asia.⁵³ If not paired with specific demand in the labour market and with the acquisition of work experience, skills training is ineffective.

50 A. Honwana (2014), *op.cit* p.30.


51 See page 2 of this address

52 B. White (2011), *op.cit*. p5.

53 S. Jagannathan (2012), *Skills for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Developing Asia and the Pacific*. ADB Briefs 10, Manila: Asian Development Bank.

It goes without saying that ISS also has an important contribution to make when it comes to contributing knowledge and expertise on issues of power, exclusion and empowerment to the social protection debate. The institute has a wealth of experience on these issues based on previous and ongoing research. It manages the database on Indices of Social Development, previously owned by the World Bank, bringing together 200 indicators on issues like gender equality, discrimination and inclusion of minorities. It has researched problems of limited and unequal access to health care and of exposure to the financial risks associated with illness in low- and lower-middle income Asian countries. It is engaged in a Community Based Health Insurance pilot programme in Ethiopia and is researching health policies and access to health care in the Philippines through the Prince Claus Chair 2010-2012. It is evaluating the use of SMS (short messenger service) to encourage HIV/AIDS patients to take their medication and to renew their prescriptions. It has explored food security, famine and the vulnerability of the population to external shocks and natural hazards in East Africa. It has explored human security in Asia through research on migration and gender, and the developmental potential of informal and formal enterprises in Africa.⁵⁴ Last but not least, in the past two decades, ISS has built up a remarkable reputation in building knowledge about the success and failure of claim-making by NGOs and civic action in general. I am pleased that in virtually all these fields of ISS' expertise, intensive collaboration with other expert groups in the university has emerged. Take the Rotterdam Global Health Initiative, of which ISS is a founding partner. The RGHI has triggered the involvement of various research groups at ISS and this has resulted in successful grant applications through which the institute's international network and experience has also been recognized. ISS will continue to contribute to the five priority research areas of RGHI: integrated health financing, equity and access; new (urban) public health; improving health service management and delivery systems; health policy, governance and evaluation; and the new global health architecture.

⁵⁴ *ISS Social Policy Capacities*, op.cit. pp.6-9.



Another major initiative is the Erasmus Graduate School of Social Sciences and the Humanities (EGS3H) of which ISS is again a founding partner: joint PhD training and research collaboration are beckoning on the horizon. I am confident that EGS3H will help the ISS PhD programme to become even more successful than it is now.



A word of thanks


To my family: thank you for your support throughout all these years. I am definitely going to spend more time with you, whether you like it or not. And that also goes for my wider family and friends.

To all ISS students: you really are the best ISS has to offer. Coming from all corners of the world you have put everything aside, including your families and jobs, to develop your knowledge so as to make more difference in development practice. You have challenged me on many occasions and I am proud to have been your Rector. I wish you good luck in your further career.

To the secretaries and the secretariat: thank you for managing to steer my work and life at ISS in the right direction, despite all the disorder I sometimes caused. I extend these thanks to all other support staff too and to all academics of ISS for their collegiality.

To my colleague researchers and lecturers: throughout this lecture I have demonstrated how successful your teaching and research is. I am confident that this ascending line will be continued in order to keep ISS on the map.

To all the members of the Institute Board I worked with: thank you for your support, your good fellowship, for your feedback, and for your willingness to bring the institute a step further, also when it needed painful decisions.



To the members of the Erasmus University Executive Board: thank you for the trust you have put in me and thank you for your everlasting support for this institute. I am confident that it will continue to contribute successfully to our university's mission.

To my colleague Deans of the university: I have enjoyed our meetings and your collegiality. Contrary to what many people may think, our meetings have been not only stimulating but genuinely pleasant and enjoyable. Thank you too for your interest in working together with ISS in many aspects of teaching and research.

To the members of the Advisory Board: thank you for all the precious time you have spent on ISS advising on strategies, on how to implement the reorganization and on the institute's societal relevance.

To my successor: this lecture was by no means intended to draw up an agenda for the future for you; you will do that yourself together with the institute. I wish you good luck.

