1 Introduction[1]

Poverty reduction is once again in vogue. Following the decade of the 1980s when poverty considerations were either neglected or subsumed under structural adjustment priorities, the reduction of poverty has reappeared as an overriding development priority of the 1990s. Significant affirmations of this trend have come from the World Bank (1993), UNDP (1993), ILO (1995) as well as major bilateral donors including the UK's Overseas Development Administration (Chalker 1992). A developmental consensus has emerged regarding the imperative of reducing poverty. But what is poverty?

Within development circles, two different approaches to poverty have increasingly come into prominence. The first approach, the 'income/consumption (I/C) method', defines poverty in terms of basic needs-deprivation resulting from inadequate command over commodities, proxied by income or consumption levels obtained from household survey (HHS) data. The second approach, the 'participatory' (PA) method, rests on a broader definition of deprivation resulting from a much broader range of factors, determined through an interactive – 'internal-external' – process involving Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) facilitator and participants. Efforts have been made to combine HHS and PPA data in an attempt to profit from insights culled from both.[2] A serious problem arises, however, when these approaches generate conflicting results with respect to both identification of the poor and prescription of poverty-related policy. Which data are right?

Most answers to this question have focused on the practical shortcomings of both approaches. Attention has focused on the quality of data generated by each. Thus, HHS data have been criticized for assorted sampling biases including under-representation of 'invisible' villages or marginal groups (migrants, homeless, domestics); for respondent and

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[2] The World Bank has used PPA data in conjunction with HHS data to compile poverty profiles in, inter alia, Zambia, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Benin and Nigeria (IDS 1994: 15).

investigator bias; for faulty questionnaire design; for temporal/seasonal bias and for specific interpretative and contextual problems associated with surveying in developing areas.[3] Likewise, PPA (and ethnographic) results have been questioned for sampling biases; for particular problems related to the representativeness, generalizability and comparability of findings as well as for respondent, investigator and seasonal biases.[4] These problems usually call for technical solutions in terms of better HHS and PPA design and practice.

A different reason for divergent results, which has received far less attention, relates to underlying philosophical differences. Specifically, the two approaches rest on different epistemological and ethical underpinnings. As a consequence, potentially different conceptions of poverty/deprivation, or ill-being,[5] are investigated in radically different ways. In cases where differences in findings are philosophical and not technical in nature no easy synthesis of results is possible. Neither data set is right or wrong. They are only different.

The format of this paper is as follows. Section 2 presents an overview of salient features of the I/C and PA approaches to poverty. Section 3 examines the different epistemological underpinnings of the two approaches while Section 4 examines the methodological implications. Section 5 examines the different ethical underpinnings of the two approaches and Section 6 examines the implications for conceptions of ill-being. Section 7 concludes.

2 The Income/Consumption and Participatory Approaches to Poverty

As noted, the two approaches conceive of and investigate ill-being in different ways. Questions related to these two sets of issues will be discussed under the headings 'methodology' and 'conceptions of ill-being'.

2.1 The income/consumption approach

Methodology

a **Determination of well-being**. Well-being, or in the present case ill-being, is defined **externally**, i.e. in a priori fashion by a third party, as physical needs deprivation due to private consumption shortfalls. There are two main variants of the I/C method in practical use: the 'food energy' and 'food-share' methods.[6] The former empirically estimates a food energy minimum required to satisfy dietary energy needs and then determines the lowest level of income or consumption expenditure at which this minimum is typically met. The latter estimates the cost of a food basket which satisfies the food-energy minimum and multiplies this by the inverse of the Engel's coefficient (the food share in total expenditure) of a sub-group definitionally classified as poor (e.g. the lowest 20 per cent of the distribution). The poverty line corresponds to the income or consumption expenditure level arrived at through either of these methods.

b **Measurement of Well-being.** Well-being can be measured or proxied **quantitatively** by either income or consumption expenditure levels. Typically the latter is favoured as a well-being indicator because consumption smoothing and insurance arrangements may offset the negative (or positive) welfare effects associated with income variability (Ravaillion 1994: 15).

c **Stance towards Consumer Preferences.** A basic premise of both the food-energy and food-share methods is **respect** for the actual consumption behaviour of households. The consumer is assumed, in most instances, to rationally allocate resources in such a way as to maximize basic need fulfilment. In practice, this principle of consumer sovereignty is not slavishly adhered to but the approach does not countenance any general principle which overrides consumer choice. There are three issues areas where consumer sovereignty

[3] See Chambers 1983: Ch.3; 1988: 21-24; Gill 1993; Stone and Campbell 1984: 31-33.

[4] See Appadurai 1989: 259-260; Ravaillion 1994: 27.

[5] Ill-being will refer to a subset of well-being which corresponds to poverty or deprivation, however

defined. Well-being will be used in those instances where the distinction between ill-being and well-being is not relevant.

[6] This discussion draws on Hagenaars and van Praag 1985: 141-42 and Ravaillion 1994: 31-37

comes into play: the selection of goods to 'count' as sources of well-being; the acceptance or rejection of the intrahousehold distribution of these goods when assessing well-being; the acceptance or rejection of consumption expenditure levels arrived at by food-energy and food-share methods when deriving the poverty line.

1   For the food-energy method, sources of well-being reflect actual consumption behaviour. In the food-share method, however, consumer sovereignty may be violated if the chosen food basket represents a hypothetical minimum cost diet which does not correspond to the consumption habits of the poor (Sen 1981: 12).

2   For both methods, the construction of household equivalence scales may involve departures from the actual intra-household distribution of goods if it is felt that distribution reflects discrimination, asymmetrical bargaining power, etc. and not utility-maximizing behaviour of the household (Ravaillion 1994: 22-25).

3   For both methods, the poverty line may be adjusted upwards or downwards if it is felt that the households are not 'rational' in their choice of foods or in the food/non-food share in total consumption expenditure (*ibid.*: 26).

d Sources of Data. Questionnaire surveys meet the informational requirements of this approach. Ideally household survey (HHS) data are combined with data on local prices of relevant goods and services culled from community surveys. Survey data of this type facilitates the revelation of consumer preferences over market goods. In this way, consumer preferences are rendered observable and amenable to quantitative analysis.

e Objectives. The underlying goal of the approach is to provide an accurate **description** of an externally delimited concept, income/consumption poverty, in terms of its measurable and observable characteristics.

Conceptions of Ill-being

a Constituents of ill-being. As noted, the fundamental constituent of ill-being is basic needs deprivation. Basic needs are defined materially in terms of minimal physiological requirements, in particular minimal nutritional requirements.

b Sources of ill-being   Sources of ill-being are limited to inadequate private consumption of goods and services. Private consumption may include both non-market and publicly supplied goods, although value imputation poses problems in the absence of suitable market value referents (Lipton 1994: 4).

2.2 The participatory approach

Methodology[7]

a Determination of well-being. The determination of both constituents and sources of well-being follows an interactive, i.e. **internal/external**, process involving PPA facilitator and participants. A central objective is to ensure that the voices of poor or marginalized groups figure prominently in the dialogue. Assessment of relative well-being of individuals or groups, 'wealth or well-being ranking', and the derivation of a deprivation cut-off if appropriate is facilitated by various tools including role playing, participatory public meetings, social mapping, participatory diagramming, modelling and scoring, contrast comparisons, card sorting, livelihood analysis, etc.

b Measurement of well-being. Data generated from the PPA exercise may be both **quantitative** and **qualitative**. Quantitative data has tended to consist of ordinal rather than cardinal well-being measures adequate for relative wealth rankings of different groups. There is a recognition of the irreducibly qualitative nature of some data which precludes its transformation into quantitative proxies.

c Stance toward consumer preferences. The given preferences, values and conceptions of ill-being of PPA participants are subject to **critical**, examination by both PPA facilitator and fellow participants in dialogue. Specific techniques are designed to effect this task including participatory group discussion and role play. One role of PPA facilitator in her capacity as 'critical' participant is to broaden the scope of dialogue by broaching issues hitherto suppressed or concealed.

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[7] This section is based on Chambers 1992; IIED 1992; Scoones and Thompson 1994.

d Sources of data. The assorted techniques associated with **PPA** methodologies fulfil the informational requirements of this approach. PPA data is communicatively or discursively generated incorporating local conceptual categories and local empirical proxies.

e Objectives. The overriding aim is to achieve a critical understanding of peoples' conceptions of ill-being with a view to **empower**. The empowerment aspect may either inhere in the PPA exercise itself, as a function of a self-reflective process, or result from substantive conclusions generated during the PPA.

Conceptions of ill-being[8]

a Constituents of ill-being. The PA approach begins with a much broader conception of ill-being, 'deprivation', which comprises 'physical, social, economic, political and psychological/spiritual' elements (Chambers 1995: vi). Potential constituents of ill-being include absence of security, autonomy, self-respect and dignity. The precise definition and weighting of these elements results from the PPA process. The imperative of consultation to determine constituents and sources of well-being in particular contexts precludes its determination in an externalist fashion.

b Sources of ill-being. Similarly, sources of ill-being extend beyond inadequate commodity consumption to include, *inter alia*: income and non-income sources of entitlements; social relations of production, reproduction and exchange; employment conditions as well as other sources of security, autonomy, self-respect and dignity, etc. As above, the definition and weighting of these elements results from the PPA process.

Table 1 schematically presents the key features which distinguish the two approaches.

3 Epistemological Differences

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy which studies the nature and claims of knowledge. It addresses two basic questions: what can we know and how do we know what we know? Answers to these questions underlie different research paradigms and methodologies. A standard three-fold distinction between research paradigms in the social sciences contrasts naturalist, interpretative (hermeneutic) and critical approaches.[9]

Naturalism refers broadly to the application of research methods adapted from the natural sciences to the social sciences (Rosenberg 1988: 19). The historical fount of the naturalist paradigm is Galileo who claimed to have discovered the language of nature: 'a new reductionist, mathematical vocabulary ... a scientific method [which corresponded] to an absolute conception of reality' (Rorty 1982: 191,194). Naturalism came into prominence in the Enlightenment under the influence of Cartesian Rationalism and British Empiricism and was exemplified by Newtonian physics. Its distinguishing characteristic is the search for causal laws based on observation, experiment and the collection of data (Rosenberg 1988: 9). The particular variant of naturalism which has the closest affinities to the present debate is associated with the British Empiricist tradition.

Hermeneutics refers to the interpretative understanding of social meaning. The hermeneutic tradition developed in close association with the interpretation of canonical texts in the Renaissance and gained increasing prominence with the rise of historicism in the German Romantic period (McCarthy 1978: 169-70). The implication for social scientific inquiry is an 'interpretative turn [which] refocuses attention on the concrete varieties of cultural meaning in their particularity and complex texture' (Rabinow and Sullivan 1979: 4). Critical hermeneutics adds to this central thesis the view that understanding involves the critical examination of given frames of meaning in order to expose false consciousness with a view to emancipate or empower. In terms of the three-fold classification presented above, critical hermeneutics combines elements of both interpretative/hermeneutic and critical research approaches.

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[8] This section is based on Beck 1994; Chambers 1988, 1995 and Kabeer 1989.

[9] Braybrooke 1987. Different variants of this basic categorization include: empirical-analytic/historical-hermeneutic/critical (Habermas 1971); empirical/phenomenological/critical (Bernstein 1976); postpositivist/constructivist/critical (Smith 1990)

Table 1	Analytical approaches to the study of poverty		
	I Methodology	**II Conceptions of Ill-being**
	a Determination of Well-being b Measurement of Well-being c Stance towards Consumer d Sources of Data e Objectives	a Constituents of Ill-being b Sources of Ill-being
Income/ Consumption Approach	a External: Third party *a priori* determination b Quantitative: Income/ consumption expenditure levels c Respectful: Consumer is (usually) sovereign d Questionnaire survey e Description	a Basic Needs Deprivation b Inadequate Consumption of Goods and Services
Participatory Approach	a Internal/External: Interactive group determination b Qualitative/Quantitative: Multiple criteria c Critical: Discursive examination of given preferences d Participatory Poverty Assessment e Critical Understanding/ Empowerment	a Multiple Deprivations b Multiple Sources

It will be argued that the I/C approach has close affinities to the naturalist paradigm while the PA approach has important linkages to the critical hermeneutic camp. An important link between the I/C approach and the naturalist paradigm runs through utility theory of modern welfare economics. There are important parallels between the I/C approach and utility theory concerning both the conception of, and methodological approach to, well-being.[10] The most important recent expositor of the critical hermeneutic tradition is Jürgen Habermas whose work will receive primary attention.

There are two crucial epistemological differences between naturalism and critical hermeneutics which bear on the poverty debate. The first relates to the basic building block of knowledge, the second to the nature of truth.

3.1 Knowledge

For the naturalist tradition the irreducible unit of knowledge as object of inquiry is 'sense-datum': 'a unit of information which is not the deliverance of a judgement, which has by definition no element in it of reading, or interpretation, which is a brute datum' (Taylor 1985b: 19). Investigation and analysis of brute data do not require an understanding and interpretation of intersubjective social meanings. They proceed by way of the examination of observables and are premised on an ideal of

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[10] Ravaillion 1994, 4-20; Sen 1981, 27.

verification: 'verification must be grounded ultimately ... [on] data whose validity cannot be questioned by offering another interpretation or reading' (*ibid.*). The basic assumption then, is that 'propositions count as knowledge only if there can be independent objective evidence for them, evidence based on observations of phenomena independent of our feeling and thoughts' (Rosenberg 1988: 110).

The hermeneutic and critical hermeneutic approaches reject this fundamental claim. Scientific inquiry is irreducibly interpretative and social scientific inquiry doubly so. Social science methodologies must come to grips with a 'double hermeneutic' (Giddens 1976: 158, 162): 1) interpretation of different scientific and research paradigms at a theoretical level; 2) interpretation of different conceptual schemes and meaning structures at the level of data collection itself. The latter point is the crucial reason for the rejection of brute data. Brute data miss the world of intersubjective meanings with 'disastrous' results: 'we interpret all other societies in the categories of our own' (Taylor 1985b: 42). For the hermeneutic and critical hermeneutic approaches, access to this world of preinterpreted meaning must come 'from the inside':

> Understanding a symbolic expression fundamentally requires participation in a process of reaching understanding ... Symbolically prestructured reality forms a universe which is hermetically sealed to the view of observers incapable of communicating ... They gain access to it by participating, at least virtually, in the communication of members and thus become at least potential members themselves.
> (Habermas 1984: 112)

3.2 Truth

The naturalist paradigm is premised on a correspondence notion of truth (Smith 1990: 171). Truth is correspondence to reality, even though it is widely recognized that there is no unmediated access to reality. A central distinction is drawn between facts and values. While facts admit of truth or falsity, values usually do not. 'The factual aspect of a proposition refers to a part of reality. As such it can be true or false. But the value aspect of a proposition does not refer to any facts. Strictly speaking there are no moral facts' (Bernstein 1976: 46). A core associated thesis is that discovery of truth, or adequate representation of reality, is premised on the application of naturalist techniques of inquiry.

Habermasian critical hermeneutics is based on a consensus theory of truth. According to Habermas (quoted in McCarthy 1978: 299):

> In order to distinguish true from false statements I make reference to the judgements of others – in fact to the judgement of all others with whom I could ever hold a dialogue (among whom I counterfactually include all the dialogue partners I could find if my life history were coextensive with the history of mankind). The condition of the truth of statements is the potential agreement of all others.

The underlying idea is based on what Habermas (1979) calls 'universal pragmatics.' The task of universal pragmatics is to identify the **universal** conditions of possible understanding. For Habermas, these conditions inhere in language itself. All acts of speech, presuppose four types of validity claims based on truth, rightness, comprehensibility and sincerity. The former two[11] must, in principle, be discursively redeemable, i.e. justified by way of rational argumentation leading to consensus. Truth, rightness and comprehensibility, then, presuppose the possibility of an intersubjective discursive consensus. The criterion for distinguishing between a true and false consensus is procedural. True consensus results from a process of open dialogue, the 'Ideal Speech Situation (ISS)', with the following characteristics: unrestricted access to all concerned; mutual recognition of participants as autonomous agents; equal opportunity for dialogue; freedom to question traditional norms, etc.

For the present purposes the following three points are relevant:

Comprehensibility is a condition of the successful discursive redemption of the first two claims. Sincerity can only be redeemed through actions.

- The ISS performs a dual function: it is a necessary supposition of discourse, a constitutive condition of rational speech; it may also be interpreted as a regulative idea, a guide for social action (Outhwaite 1994: 40, 57);

- The ISS provides the basis for a critique of both facts and values;

- The ISS provides the basis for the rational reconstruction of truthful, or 'rational', normative positions.

4 Methodology

These contrasting epistemological positions concerning truth and knowledge have important bearing on methodological issues for social scientific inquiry. The following discussion examines some of these issues making use of the categories presented in Table 1, column 1.

a Determination of Well-being

The key distinction is **internal/external** or between 'sciences that gain access to their object domain by understanding what is said to someone and those which do not' (Habermas 1990: 41). The naturalist approach is externalist. It either ignores intersubjective frames of meaning or incorporates only those which can be transformed into brute data.

The critical hermeneutic approach adopts an **internal/external** position. As virtual participant in dialogue the social scientist assumes an internalist position, interpreting and mediating local frames of meanings. She also assumes an externalist role in three ways: as **virtual** participant researcher her underlying objective and duration of stay is different than full participants (Habermas 1984: 114); as critical actor, 'the social scientist can systematically exploit and bring into play the potential for critique built into communicative action' (*ibid.*: 121); as social observer, the virtual participant can play a structurating role by bringing into dialogue knowledge which extends beyond the bounds of local competencies or which remains suppressed and concealed (Drinkwater 1992: 378).

b Measurement of Well-being

The naturalist paradigm reveals a deep commitment to the **quantitative** measurement of phenomenon. Quantification follows logically, but not necessarily, from reliance on brute data which is amenable to observation and 'objective' verification. This concern with quantification has deeply imbued the conceptualization of well-being in welfare economics. Classical utility theory began as the paradigmatic naturalist exercise (Little 1957: 8). Utility, or 'happiness' in Bentham's formulation, was thought to be a measurable and interpersonally comparable entity whose maximization constituted the fundamental ethical criterion used to judge social states (Bentham 1789: Ch 4). The shift in the conception of utility to preference satisfaction necessitated a switch from cardinal to ordinal representation of utility and provided impetus for the rejection of interpersonal comparisons of well-being (Sen 1987: 7-15). Income or consumption expenditure, however, have frequently been used in welfare economics as cardinal and interpersonally comparable proxies of well-being if it is assumed that utility is a positive function of the vector of income and that individual utility functions are identical or similar (Deaton 1980: Part III).

The critical hermeneutic approach exhibits a lesser concern with mathematical precision and rigour of measurement. Both **quantitative and qualitative** measurement is possible, but certain interpretations of meaning structures and conceptual categories may be irreducibly qualitative in nature. The crucial issue is not whether quantification is possible but 'whether problems of social life (and standard of living) can be reduced largely to their quantitative dimensions (and still remain significant)' (Appadurai 1989: 277).

c Stance toward Consumer Preferences

The naturalist approach is ill-equipped for a normative critique of social phenomenon. The correspondence theory of truth and concomitant injunction against explicit value judgements make this option problematic. This is the sense in which naturalism, and in the present case, consumer sovereignty stakes a claim to value-neutrality. Preferences, attitudes and beliefs are **respected** as given and not explicitly judged (which is itself, of course, a normative position). While consumer preferences

may be rejected in *ad hoc* fashion as in the cases mentioned in Section 2, the naturalist paradigm provides no basis to undertake normative critique in a **systematic** way.

Critical hermeneutics takes an explicitly **critical** stance towards normatively relevant aspects of social reality. The consensus theory of truth provides the theoretical apparatus necessary to mount a critique of social phenomenon. The crucial link is provided by the notion of reflection. Critical hermeneutics aims to establish the falsity of given preferences, attitudes and beliefs by initiating a process of self-reflection among agents. Specifically, the aim is to expose false consciousness by showing agents that their beliefs and preferences were formed under conditions which diverged significantly from the Ideal Speech Situation (Geuss 1981: 64, 91). According to Habermas (1971: 310) 'the validity of critical propositions ... is established by the concept of self-reflection. The latter releases the subject from dependence on hypostatized powers. Self-reflection is determined by an emancipatory cognitive interest.'

d Sources of Data

Standardized **questionnaire** techniques provide a means of transforming unobservables into brute data. As such they are not the preferred data source of the naturalist paradigm, as they lie at one remove from the social phenomenon which they purport to depict. Still, they provide brute data which are amenable to quantification and thus constitute a second-best option for the naturalist paradigm. Within welfare economics, the preoccupation with the revelation of preferences either directly via observation or indirectly via questionnaire responses reflects a strong commitment to behaviouralism and rejection of other means of inferring preferences including introspection and dialogue (Sen 1982: 9, 71-72).

The reliance on **PPA** data underlies the critical hermeneutic approach which is premised on a critically interpretative understanding of social phenomenon. PPA data aims to interpret and represent frames of meanings which have been subject to critical examination. The PPA exercise allows for the internal/external determination of categories, the qualitative and quantitative representation of data and the critical examination of given attitudes and behaviour.

e Objectives

The underlying objective of the naturalist approach is to accurately **explain and describe** social reality. It strives for value neutrality in two ways: it aims to explain and not evaluate social phenomenon and it aims to describe what is and not to prescribe what ought to be. It is widely accepted that neither of these distinctions, explanation/evaluation and description/ prescription, is watertight (Blaug 1992: Ch 5; Weston 1994). Still, they underlie the I/C approach to poverty in two ways: 1) the respect for given consumer preferences; 2) the commitment to factual description 'unbiased' by prescriptive aims related to social change.

The critical hermeneutic approach categorically rejects these distinctions. Explanation logically implies evaluation, because understanding necessarily involves the evaluation of the validity claims which different speech acts raise. 'In order to understand an expression, the interpreter must bring to mind the reasons with which a speaker would if necessary and under suitable conditions defend its validity, he is himself drawn into the [evaluative] process of assessing validity claims' (Habermas 1984: 115). Critical understanding is not only necessarily evaluative, however, it is self-consciously prescriptive. The objective is to expose false consciousness via self-reflection with a view to emancipate. Although it is recognized that reflection does not automatically bring emancipation, 'it can free agents from conscious complicity ...and may be a necessary precondition of action' (Geuss 75). This emphasis on critique and emancipation is paralleled by the PPA emphasis on critical examination of beliefs and empowerment.

5 Ethical Differences

The epistemological differences in Section 3 are closely related to the ethical differences which underlie the two conceptions of well-being employed by the I/C and PA approaches to poverty. The contrasting ethical positions will be referred to as 'naturalist' ethics and, following Habermas 'discourse' ethics. The link between epistemological and ethical positions is provided by two concepts

which underlie these ethical positions: the 'naturalist self' and 'intersubjectivity'.

Naturalist ethics is based on certain characteristics of the 'naturalistic' self. The 'naturalist' self is not only an empirical entity, a part of nature (Williams 1985: 121) but also a brute datum whose inner properties are amenable to discovery through scientific inquiry. Accordingly, the underlying characteristics of the 'naturalist' self must be explicable in the same way as natural phenomena. This has implications for both theories of human motivation/action and ethical deliberation. Human motivation and action is explained in terms of objectified forces including stimuli-response mechanisms, physical needs (survival, reproduction), physical desires (pleasure, pain, happiness) (Taylor 1985a: 50-51, 105-112) or maximizing behaviour. Omitted from this list are characteristics with an irreducibly interpretative component including shame, love, dignity, pride, a sense of worth, etc. Concerning ethical deliberation, 'our ends are seen as set by nature, and thus discoverable by objective scrutiny, or else as autonomously chosen' by a consistent chooser (ibid.: 113). The crucial point is that normatively desirable ends are determined a priori on the basis of characteristics of the naturalist self and consequently lie beyond the ambiguous realm of continual and perpetual human interpretation.

Discourse ethics fundamentally rejects this notion of the self as a grounding for ethical deliberation. Habermas shifts the terrain of debate by founding ethics on 'intersubjectivity', or the properties of intersubjective communication. The epistemological underpinning is provided by the consensus theory of truth premised on the idea of the Ideal Speech Situation (ISS). The three previously noted points with respect to the ISS underlie what Habermas (1990: 68) considers the two key assumptions of the discourse ethics: 'a) normative claims to validity have cognitive meaning and can be treated like claims to truth and b) the justification of norms and commands requires that a real discourse be carried out and thus cannot occur in a strictly monological form'. An actual dialogue approximating the aforementioned conditions of the ISS is required in order to compel a universal exchange of roles among all affected. In this way, the ISS plays the role of a regulative idea, provides the basis for a critique of facts and values and facilitates the rational reconstruction of truthful, or rational, normative positions.

6 Conceptions of Ill-being

These contrasting ethical positions have important bearing on the conceptions of ill-being employed by the two approaches to poverty. The following discussion examines some of these issues making use of the categories presented in Table 1, column 2.

a Constituents of Ill-being

The I/C approach defines ill-being in terms of deprivation of basic needs required to meet biological or physiological requirements. The primacy of physical needs over other needs underlies the derivation of the poverty line in physical terms and is captured in the quip that 'you must be before you well be' (Greeley 1994: 57). The primacy of needs over mere desires is implied by the very concept of need given the association of need satisfaction with avoidance of harm, human flourishing and greater relative urgency (Goodin 1988: Ch.1).

Need theory is a bedfellow of the 'naturalist self'. It is predicated on 'an explanation of human motivation and conduct ... sought in certain instincts, drives, propensities or powers which bespeak man's predicament as a physical being' (Springboard 1981: 4) This view was powerfully restated in the Enlightenment by Locke whose sensationalist psychology reduced human motivation to the twin impulses of pain and pleasure mediated by judgement (ibid.: Ch 2). **Physical** need theory flows logically from this naturalist conception of the self if either of the following assumptions are accepted: 1) if human motivation is restricted ultimately to the satisfaction of physical or survival requirements; 2) if temporal and moral priority is afforded physical needs over other types of needs. An influential theory of needs of the latter type with ties to policy analysis in the developing world is Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maxwell and Smith 1992: 28). Maslow proposed a lexicographic ordering of needs proceeding from the physiological to the cognitive, including physiological needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow 1954). In Maslow's formulation both temporal and moral priority is afforded the satisfaction of 'lower' over 'higher' needs.

The PA approach rejects the a priori primacy afforded the satisfaction of physical needs over other types of needs (Chambers 1995). Discourse ethics adopts the same position on grounds that the satisfaction of social and cultural needs is 'as legitimate and as important' (Geuss 1981: 36). More fundamentally, and following from the notion of 'intersubjectivity', discourse ethics rejects the a priori determination of substantive normative positions. It specifies a procedural metanorm, the Ideal Speech Situation, without specifying the contents of agreements arrived at through this process. According to Habermas (1990: 108), discourse ethics constitutes a universal norm of justice which is consistent with a plurality of different conceptions of the good life. The constituents of well-being are time and context-specific and cannot be determined externally by a third party.

b. Sources of Ill-being

For the I/C approach, income or consumption expenditure levels serve to proxy command over commodities required to satisfy basic physical needs. As noted, the concern with command over commodities reflects a general commitment to consumer sovereignty, which lies at the heart of utility theory. Consumer sovereignty is a composite of two normative views: 'it is a good thing that individuals should have what they want and that they themselves know best what they want' (Little 1957: 258). The first position is a restatement of the view that social well-being is a positive (or unique) function of individual well-being. The second is an affirmation of economic rationality. The rationality postulate provides the link between consumer sovereignty and the naturalist self.

While the rationality postulate has been used in varying ways in economics, in utility theory it is usually associated with two conditions: 1) consistency of choice (or more technically, transitivity, completeness and continuity of preferences as well as preferential choice (Hausman 1992: Ch 1 and 2) utility or personal well-being maximization (Sen 1992: Ch 4). These conditions reflect a naturalist conception of the self with respect to both motivational determinants and normatively desirable ends. With respect to motivation, the rational chooser is driven by personal well-being maximization. While

personal well-being maximization is not restricted to narrow self interest, and may included other-regarding preferences, excluded are all situations where the motivation underlying choice conflicts with personal well-being maximization including instances of: weakness of will, commitment, duty, moral obligation, satisficing behaviour, etc. (Hauseman and McPherson 1993: Section 2). Normatively desirable ends are restricted by utility theory to preference satisfaction and are subsequently delimited in the revealed preference variant of the rationality postulate to consistent preferences revealed in choice. Consistency requires that preferences be unchanging and fully known to their beholders. As with the naturalist self, there is no room for ambivalence, self-development, striving, conflicting preference systems, and the self-evaluative capacity of agents to reflect upon given preferences.[12]

The PA approach rejects the restriction of sources of ill-being to command over commodities. Discourse ethics adopts the same position for the reasons outlined in the previous section. Another way of illustrating these conflicting positions is to contrast economic rationality with communicative rationality. For Habermas (1984: 85), economic or 'cognitive-instrumental' rationality is characterized by goal-oriented or strategic action involving a means-ends calculus: 'the actor is supposed to choose and calculate means and ends from the standpoint of maximizing utility.' Communicative rationality, by contrast, is characterized by communicative action: 'the interaction of ... actors [who] seek to reach an understanding ... in order to co-ordinate their actions by way of agreement' (ibid.: 86). In place of a mean-end calculus on the part of a solitary actor is a concern for 'the unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech' on the part of participants in dialogue (ibid.: 10). Communicative rationality provides the behavioural grounding for 'intersubjectivity' which underlies the discourse ethics.

7 Conclusion

It has been argued that the I/C and PA approaches to poverty rest on different epistemological and ethical underpinnings. These are schematically presented in Table 2.

See *inter alia* Hirschman 1984; Etzioni 1986; McPherson 1984.

Table 2	Underpinnings of the income/consumption and participatory approaches to poverty	
	Epistemology/Methodology	**Ethics/Conception of Ill-being**
Income/Consumption Approach	Naturalist	Naturalist Ethics
Participatory Approach	Critical Hermeneutic	Discourse Ethics

These different underpinnings have implications for both research methodologies and conceptions of ill-being. Epistemological differences underlie methodological differences with respect to the determination and measurement of well-being, the stance toward consumer behaviour, sources of data and objectives. Ethical differences underlie the different constituents and sources of ill-being employed by both approaches to poverty

If the argument is accepted then it should come as no surprise that these two approaches generate conflicting results. They are asking different types of questions in very different ways about potentially different conceptions of ill-being. With respect to identification of the poor, whenever commodity consumption as proxied by income or consumption expenditure is poorly or inversely related to other sources of ill-being, different groups will be selected. This is not just a hypothetical situation, as evidence suggests just such a trade-off among some poor groups between income and other sources of self-respect (Beck 1994: 181-83; Jodha 1988: 2423).

In situations such as these no amount of technical tinkering can adjudicate between conflicting results. The problems are philosophical not technical. The real issues facing policy makers relate to the importance accorded to the discursively generated priorities and knowledge of the poor. These types of issues should be faced squarely and not left for a quick technical fix.

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