

Example research reconstruction of a PhD thesis (disciplinary embedding)

The research is about the conditions that affect the availability and characteristics of productive assets regarding habitat for urban households in the Caribbean and that affect the effective use of these productive assets by these households in order to make a contribution to their well being.

1 Discipline: Human Geography	(Discipline 2) Political science	(Discipline 3) Economic science
2 Research area: Human geography of developing countries	(Research area 2) Governance	(Research area 2) Globalisation
3 Research theme: Livelihoods	(Research theme 2) Urban governance	(Research theme 2) Economic globalisation

Reconstruction of the choices	Presuppositions and arguments for choices/presuppositions
4 Livelihoods of poor households	4 Livelihood is a rather general term referring to the access and control of different actors to various kinds of capital: human, natural, social and cultural capital. It can be discussed from the point of view of individuals and groups, networks and households. I choose to discuss it from the perspective of households because the focus is (as outlined below) on the multiple strategies and capitals mobilized by a confined group and (as outlined below) on strategies and capital in the habitat of households. The choice for poor households stems from the idea that especially for them access to and control over resources are not guaranteed at all.
5 Livelihoods of poor urban households	5 Theoretical concepts regarding livelihood have been developed predominantly for rural areas and households. Livelihoods of urban households are different from rural households because of distinct urban features, i.e. high commoditized nature, environmental hazards and social fragmentation. The urban focus is chosen because a theoretical concept regarding urban livelihood is non-existent.
6 Livelihood strategies developed by poor urban households to secure or enhance their well-being.	6 Focus is on the actions and strategies and their dynamics developed by members of a household in order to secure or enhance their well-being. These are named 'livelihood strategies'. By putting it like this the focus is explicitly on actions of actors and on agency and the direction of these strategies.

<p>7 Assets (or resources) poor urban households have access to (or are endowed to) in developing livelihood strategies to enhance or secure their well-being.</p>	<p>7 To gain insights in livelihoods strategies it is useful to distinguish between the assets and the effective use of these assets (see under 11). Regarding assets (or resources), for the rural context the term endowment has been developed referring to claims, rights or possession of resources. Maybe this is not really a narrowing of the theme but a definition, as assets for the urban contexts labor, human capital, productive assets, household relations and social capital are distinguished? Households (or members thereof) first need to have access or possess certain assets before they can start using them in their livelihood strategies.</p>
<p>8 Productive assets poor urban households have access to in developing livelihood strategies to enhance or secure their well-being.</p>	<p>8 The choice for productive assets as a focal area derives from the fact that until recently labour has been seen as the major asset for urban people. Recent findings point at the fact that productive assets seem to be the second most important asset to urban poor. These have hardly gained attention in research though. Focusing on this asset produces useful outcomes.</p>
<p>9 Productive assets regarding habitat poor urban households have access to in developing livelihood strategies to enhance or secure their well-being.</p>	<p>9 One of the productive assets distinguished is the habitat of people. The possibility of using an owned house as collateral was a well known productive asset but until recently productive assets like home-ownership, tenure security and availability of land were ignored as possible endowments to be mobilized in livelihood activities.</p>
<p>10 Effective use of (or entitlement to) productive assets regarding habitat poor urban households have access to, to enhance or secure their well-being.</p>	<p>10 In livelihood it is not just about what assets or resources (endowments) people have access to but also, or especially, about what they can actually do with these endowments to increase their well-being, i.e. their effective use. In the rural context it has been discussed in the entitlements framework ('mechanisms for effectuating endowments'). In the urban context, Moser has recently suggested that economic activities in and on the habitat generate substantial livelihoods for people. These activities have hardly been discussed in literature and are ignored in discussions on income generation. It is expected that the activities are informal and probably carried out by people for whom other types of work are difficult to enter (home bound people, women, elder people and children).</p>
<p>11 Effective use (or entitlement) of productive assets regarding habitat poor urban households have access to, to enhance or secure their socio-economic well-being.</p>	<p>11 The focus in the research is on the economic well-being of households as well as on their social well-being because it focuses on the productive aspects of habitat and on income/goods deriving from it. It does not focus on physical or mental well-being. The interest is not just in access and control of assets and the income and goods deriving from the activities as described above. It is also in what is being done with these, which part is being invested in the economic activities itself and which parts directly benefit the household and which members of the household (in other words: in gender and age difference). Contribution is being directed to these aspects of well-being because they are at the core of poverty debates.</p>

12 Conditions shaping the effective use of productive assets regarding habitat poor urban households have access to, to enhance or secure their socio-economic well-being.

12 The households do not have even access to assets and cannot always put effective claims on them. Focussing on conditions provides necessary insights in processes affecting the access to resources and ways by which people realize effective use of these. Or to state it differently: the focus is on the process by which households obtain endowments regarding productive 'habitat' assets and transform these into entitlements.