

MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONCEPTS OF POVERTY: BEYOND MONEY, BEYOND MEASUREMENT, BEYOND MINIMALISM

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Summary

Poverty is defined here as deprivations which are *multidimensional* (comprising an interconnected system of multiple disadvantages), *avoidable* (hence an object of policy concern) and *unfair* (compelling others to act to remove poverty because the poor can't do it all for themselves). Most people agree that poverty is 'multidimensional'. Whatever complex of problems the poor may suffer, money alone won't buy them out of it. We therefore need 'multidimensional' approaches to understanding poverty, understood here in four main senses: *multi-axis* (using several contrastive axes or scales); *multi-domain* (looking at several categories of resources and needs); *multi-causal* (recognizing poverty as a complex interactive process); and *multi-perspective* (using diverse methods, viewpoints, disciplines, or lenses).

The most common 'unidimensional' approach is to take purchasing power as the sole axis for distinguishing poor people from rich people. Even this single dimension represents a wide variety of the causes of our sufferings and joys. But in all societies, even highly monetized ones, most of the goods and services we rely on for our wellbeing aren't monetized. So poverty is far more complex than monetary deprivation. It is sometimes convenient to use income or expenditures as 'proxy' indicators of poverty, but this reductionism always carries the risk of misrepresenting reality. The call for 'multidimensional' approaches to poverty is a reminder of the need to avoid reductionism and distortion by triangulating, seeking a variety of information sources

on the plight of the poor and on pathways out of poverty. Our poverty appraisals, our anti-poverty strategies and our evaluations of progress need to reflect this complexity. Beyond this loose agreement, there is a lot of room for debate about the practical and moral implications of poverty's multidimensionality.

This chapter seeks to enrich those debates by exploring how poverty is conceived, labeled, and assessed – by planners, academics, the general public, and by poor people themselves. Although monetary deprivation is a core feature of poverty, the degree to which it matters varies widely between individuals and in different contexts, depending on the many nonmonetary resources and processes by which wellbeing is achieved. To speak of 'multidimensional concepts' is to highlight the importance of these wholly or partly unmonetized social and material resources, experiences, and relationships, such as health, information, education, friendship, and environmental goods and services. This doesn't mean neglecting money, but rather seeing how money and its effects are embedded in complex material and social contexts. In the 'livelihoods' approach to development, for example, money is recognized as one among five kinds of 'capital' (or 'asset', or – more accurately - 'process') which people draw on to achieve well-being.

We also draw attention here to two further struggles against reductionism: against the tendency to reduce assessment to mere measurement (hence paying inadequate attention to the provenance, meanings, and fallibility of numerical proxies); and against the tendency to reduce development to the 'minimalist' fight against poverty. Monetary reductionism is one variety of the broader problem of numerical reductionism that we so often witness in the naive reverence that researchers, bureaucrats, the media, and the public so often show for numerical indicators. Like money, the measurement of poverty matters and there are lots of dimensions that can be measured, but quantification though often useful is ultimately less important than the qualitative description and analysis on which its plausibility and usefulness depend.

There have been many thousands of papers, mainly by economists and statisticians, on technical aspects of the measurement of poverty and inequality. Some key readings on measurement are referred to below, but instead of engaging with that already copious literature (see e.g. Atkinson and Bourguignon, 2000), we focus here on prior and more fundamental philosophical, moral and practical questions of how poverty is conceived and what kinds of purposes and effects these conceptions are associated with.

1. Introduction: Concepts, Measures, and Assessment

There is general agreement among scholars and development practitioners that unidimensional approaches are limited and often misleading, and that more sophisticated 'multidimensional' approaches are needed. Although in practice unidimensional (typically income-based or expenditure-based) poverty lines still dominate in policy and media coverage in many countries, there has been a strong global trend for at least two decades towards increasing sophistication in multidimensional approaches to learning about poverty and its reduction.

For thousands of years in many cultural contexts, poverty concepts have coexisted with duties and desires to provide or deny help to those deemed worthy or unworthy of support. But quite different modern concepts, with much more ambitious claims on citizens, governments and international development agencies, have developed on

consort with uniquely modern beliefs in the possibility that all of humanity might one day escape from poverty. For the first time in human history, it seems possible that all of humanity – even at this uniquely huge population level – may enjoy opportunities for a decent life. Optimism is, however, tempered by the persistently large numbers of people in both poor and rich countries who live in poverty, though in part this persistence is due to inflation in standards and in the criteria by which poverty is defined. Fighting poverty is a distinct sub-category of campaigns to promote wellbeing and justice. We know we can't abolish ill-being altogether, nor will we ever get rid of inequality. But we can get rid of poverty – defined here as a *complex of avoidable and unfair disadvantages*.

Note that this definition insists on two kinds of socio-cultural relativity, namely the relationships between poverty and *optimism*, and between poverty and *fairness*:

- **Optimism:** poverty becomes a concern when belief in its possible abolition renders it deviant.
- **Fairness:** poverty concerns derive from the prevailing sense of fairness which defines some kinds of involuntary deprivation as unacceptable.

Since poverty is by this definition intrinsically relative and dependent on cultural attitudes, it is never an 'absolute' condition. So the economist Galbraith was wrong to argue, in the opening pages of *The Affluent Society*, that 'nearly all nations throughout all history have been very poor' and that economic systems are 'products of a world in which poverty had always been man's normal lot' (1958:1). Poverty is by definition abnormal, and when the deprivations we now associate with poverty were normal, they weren't called 'poverty'. Galbraith was really referring to the fact that humanity had always hitherto faced scarcities and discomforts that were suddenly becoming abnormal in the modern era. Similarly the concept of 'voluntary poverty' is entertaining as a paradox, but is more rationally called 'voluntary simplicity': if poverty is by definition unfair, then voluntary simplicity is by this modern definition not 'poverty'.

In English, 'poverty' came into existence in a highly monetized economic system marked by exceptionally strong faith in the power of money to buy us out of trouble. So it has historically had a core association with 'shortage of money' which appears to reduce socioeconomic complexity to a single scale. This impression was boosted when governments and development agencies began defining 'poverty lines' and measuring poverty in purely monetary terms. But poverty has never been confined solely to this meaning, and in other less monetized societies where nonmonetary (material, social, cultural) pathways to wellbeing are more prominent, poverty concepts are more clearly multidimensional. In all countries, including highly monetized ones, the policy prominence of poverty also developed along with public concern about governmental and private responsibilities for hunger, famine, and land clearances. Before modern money-metric poverty lines were developed, there were 'poor laws' (e.g. in 16th century Scotland) and 'famine codes' (e.g. in 19th-century British India) setting out requirements for bureaucratic assessment and remedying of avoidable deprivations.

No matter how important money may be, its influence always derives from broader sociocultural contexts that shape not only how much money people have, but also how much they need, what they are able to do with it, and what they want to do with it.

Livelihoods and wellbeing always depend on lots of unmonetized resources and processes, access to which may or may not correlate strongly with access to money. This recognition of poverty's 'multidimensionality' is now 'universally accepted' (Asselin 2009:3). It was, for example, formally enshrined in the World Development Report *Attacking Poverty* (World Bank, 2000). Yet poverty studies have throughout most of their modern history been dominated by variants of so-called 'unidimensional,' money-metric approach – tracking poverty and classifying people as poor by measuring (or, particularly in poorer countries, guessing) income or expenditure.

Although unidimensional in terms of measurement scale, this approach is of course not entirely unidimensional since money is uniquely versatile as means for getting what you want or need, and can serve as a useful starting-point for discussions of a wide variety of deprivations. If you ask people who the poor are, how many there are, and what the poverty trends are, most likely there will be some quick reference to the ultra-simple definition of people 'living on less than a dollar a day' (or variants such as the World Bank's \$1.25 'extreme poverty' or \$2 'moderate poverty' lines). This shorthand has been helpful in getting conversations going, and in preparing broad-brushed geographical and crosstemporal comparisons of monetary deprivation, but it doesn't help us understand what poverty is. In any case, despite the iconic popularity of the 'dollar-a-day' idea, official poverty lines vary worldwide from \$0.62 to \$43 per day at 2005 Purchasing Power Parity, and even in poorer countries the definition of 'absolute' poverty varies from \$0.63 to \$9.06 per day (Ravallion, 2010:3,10).

People's livelihoods and well-being aren't literally based on money. Even in today's highly monetized societies, money typically only buys a minority of the goods and services people need, and its importance may dwindle as more goods (information, education, communication services, health services, etc) are supplied free to users. In any case, money is always socially embedded: since it only exists as a social convention, a symbol of trust and worth, its value is entirely dependent on nonmonetary social and cultural qualities. Many people have used distinctions between 'absolute' poverty (basic needs deprivation) and 'relative' poverty (deprivation in relation to social norms). But because we are all social beings, our understanding of poverty is always 'relative' to some social comparisons or cultural contexts. As Ravallion has recently demonstrated (2010), the long-recognized phenomenon of elasticity in poverty standards in rich countries now clearly applies also to poor countries too, where even the definition of so-called 'absolute' poverty varies widely according to cultural standards of decency. In short, the idea of 'absolute,' non-relative poverty is a myth.

The rhetoric of moneymetric measurement is often called 'unidimensional', in contrast to more complex 'multidimensional' assessments of wellbeing or poverty which explore a fuller range of resources and processes. The best-known example of this is the United Nations Development Programme's 'human development' approach to assessing wellbeing and poverty, manifested as the 'Human Development Index' (a composite of money, longevity, and literacy measures) and the 'Human Poverty Index'. This has now been replaced by the confusingly titled Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) (Alkire and Santos, 2010). Like the HDI, the MPI makes the counterintuitive move of measuring multiple indicators but then reducing them all back to a single dimension again in a single numerical index. This is a bit like agreeing to record the complex harmonies and rich tonal variety of a symphony orchestra, and then reducing the

recording to a single composite noise. The thinking behind this is that whereas a 'dashboard' display of various deprivations may have some uses, it is also useful to have a composite index showing who suffers multiple deprivations (Alkire and Santos, 2010:23; for a more critical perspective on aggregation of indicators, see Ravallion, 2011).

Every year we are getting more sophisticated in using information about the various 'dimensions' of poverty to guide our efforts, but most commentators agree that these efforts are unduly restricted by a narrow focus on simple indicators of income and/or consumption. This increasing sophistication in approaches to poverty is often, however, subject to two further restrictions. First, some of it still restricts itself to 'measurement' as the main tool for appraising these multiple conditions as processes. Measurement is useful but is clearly inadequate on its own since a great deal of what matters to us can't be well represented numerically. Second, the overall rubric of 'poverty' is itself a kind of minimalist straitjacket compared with broader concepts of welfare, development and progress. Many other discussions which are relevant to poverty but transcend it, are more commonly pursued under other rubrics such as 'social exclusion', 'marginality', 'rights', 'inequality', 'well-being', and 'empowerment' (Narayan, 2002, 2005).

2. Modern Poverty: Multidimensional, Avoidable, and Unfair.

The persistence of poverty in all countries of the world is one of the darkest clouds spoiling our era of unprecedented social and technical progress. How bad and how morally compelling this problem is, what we can and should do about it, and whether it is likely to persist forever, depend on how we conceive of poverty. We have already seen the irony in the fact that public concern about poverty derives from optimism about its eradicability. But there is a further compounding irony in that the same optimism also fosters inflation in minimum living standards, which fosters disappointment in our apparently slow progress towards the goal of poverty eradication.

Despite the agreement that it's not just about shortage of money, poverty can't simply be conceived as an open invitation to talk about all kinds of suffering or deprivation. Even poverty experts commonly make the mistake of confusing poverty with the broader category of ill-being:

'Poverty is pronounced deprivation in wellbeing' (World Bank 2000:15)

'I take poverty to mean bad condition or experience of life' (Chambers, 2005:1)

These definitions miss three crucial defining features of the concept of poverty as used in development ethics today: its multidimensionality, its removability (and hence its moral unacceptability), and the corresponding sense that the nonpoor ought to feel morally responsible for helping to remove it. All lives, even those of the richest and happiest people, involve suffering and illbeing, so we mustn't confuse poverty with suffering or illbeing. We can point, then, to distinct conceptual and normative aspects of the definition poverty as a subset of the broader category of suffering:

- **Cognitive:** the harms of poverty are those interconnected, multiple deprivations which we believe could be reduced or eradicated; a good life is not free of suffering, but it is free of involuntary poverty.

- **Normative:** because they are unnecessary, it is morally compelling to do something to reduce these harms; when people suffer these conditions, nonpoor are morally compelled to help the poor avoid the suffering.

Recognizing poverty as *multidimensional* helps us appreciate that it is a *dynamic syndrome* rather than a random bundle of isolated deprivations (Asselin, 2009). Simply having bad health or a poor quality water supply isn't in itself poverty. Recognizing its removability helps us distinguish poverty from other, ultimately unavoidable kinds of suffering. And the insistence on the philanthropic responsibilities of the nonpoor helps us appreciate that the concept of poverty is intrinsically bound up with considerations of who ought to do what to reduce it. In this unique era of dramatic movements towards global empathy, poverty is understood as a set of problems that poor people and poor countries can't solve on their own. Poverty requires partnerships between the poor and the nonpoor. So here's a better definition:

Poverty is about those multiple, interconnected deprivations which prevent people from achieving an acceptable quality of life, and which are unfair because they are unnecessary and beyond the immediate power of individuals to resolve for themselves.

The inclusion of philanthropic responsibility in the definition is not to claim, naively, that we have dispensed altogether with the old moral distinction between the 'deserving poor' (those who can't help being poor and therefore merit assistance) and the 'undeserving poor' (those who brought about their own poverty and therefore don't deserve help). But it is to recognize and support the uniquely modern idea that no-one ought to be left in a state of persistent multiple deprivation if those deprivations are in principle removable. Poverty therefore implies a moral claim by the poor on the assistance of the nonpoor. Use of the label 'poverty' carries compelling moral force because it defines nonoptional priorities for development. Working for world development, we may also aspire to promote positive values such as happiness, hope, freedom, love, creativity, wisdom, and beauty. But the bottom line is that we *must* remove poverty.

These ethical beliefs develop together with our *causal theories* about what factors and agents make poverty happen and about what factors are most crucial for helping people escape from poverty and preventing others from falling into poverty. To use the label 'poverty' in this modern, developmental sense, is to declare an assumption that the deprivations referred to are largely caused by human agency, and hence also removable by human agency. There may be biophysical factors to most dimensions of poverty, that aren't entirely susceptible to human control. But they nonetheless come under the 'poverty' rubric to the extent that their incidence could reasonably be expected to reduce as a result of deliberate efforts and policies. Thus, for example, TB and malaria might well persist to some extent in a poverty-free world, but most of their contemporary incidence is attributable to the poverty of the individual victims, and of their neighborhoods, regions and countries. Causal theories strongly influence ethics and the motivation to take action. The moral compulsion to fight poverty will not develop among the nonpoor if they believe poverty is caused by poor people themselves, or that is due to fate or divine will or some cosmic penalty for misbehavior in previous lives.

With social and technical progress, there has been rampant inflation in the variety and levels of deprivation that are seen as avoidable in richer countries. With the globalization of empathy and responsibility, this inflation has spread to the whole world. The multiple dimensions of poverty must everywhere be continually reappraised and updated. It is realistic, rather than callous, to recognize poverty as a cultural construct. This doesn't mean that poverty is just a figment of people's imaginations, as has been argued by a number of radical revisionists who have tried to persuade us that development policy rests on unwarranted beliefs in the value of western affluence. We don't need to agree with the 'anti-development' writer Rahnema's claim that 'poverty' is simply a 'pauperizing myth' (1991), or with his precursor the romantic anthropologist Marshall Sahlins who inspired a generation of students with his vision of the 'original affluent society' of hunter-gatherers who seemed to live in contentment although they were 'poor' by modern standards (Sahlins 1968/1974). We can, however, learn a great deal by comparing 'objective' reports of deprivations with subjective self-assessments. Nor do we need to agree with the naïve postmodernist Arturo Escobar, who whipped up a frenzy of anti-development skepticism among social scientists by sneering at the proliferation of 'poverty' in the modern development era. Escobar was quite right to recognize that labels such as 'illiterate,' 'underdeveloped,' 'malnourished,' and 'landless peasants' were invented as part of the process of justifying development intervention (Escobar 1995:41), but wrong to reduce the associated moral concerns to the status of a patronizing western plot to continue dominating ex-colonies.

To be 'poor' is to suffer real and unfair deprivations. But these problems are at the same time culturally invented. So the experience of poverty, and the approaches to its reduction, depend on ongoing conversations and agreements. Rather than a specific kind of condition with essential, objectively measurable attributes, it is best seen as a reflection on what kinds of life, living conditions, and relationships are unacceptably bad (cf McGregor, 2007:325-326). Throughout the history of civilizations, some people have countered materialistic visions of the good life with ascetic values and practices of 'voluntary poverty' (a contradiction in terms by the above definition) or (nowadays more commonly) 'voluntary simplicity'. What's wrong with Sahlins' 'original affluent society' essay is that he quite consciously encourages us to see the involuntary poverty of contemporary hunter-gatherers as if it were similar to the voluntary asceticism of elite religionists – the 'Zen road to affluence' as he puts it.

Understanding of poverty will vary according to situations and values:

- **Aspirational horizons and comparators:** whose living standards provide the benchmark of acceptability?
- **Current deficits:** what are the main shortfalls at present?
- **Cultural values:** what kinds of good are given most priority in the surrounding culture?
- **Personal preferences:** what kinds of deficit do people (poor or nonpoor) find least tolerable?

Questions of moral acceptability and responsibility become peculiarly poignant with the advent of new forms of modern poverty-related problems, such as obesity and drug addiction – pathologies which are simultaneously diseases of affluence and of deprivation. Food-poor people in poorer countries must find it somewhat surprising to

learn that in rich countries poor people tend to be fatter than rich people. Here is not the place to rehearse complicated moral debates on this particular issue, but it is a striking reminder of the limitation of understanding poverty primarily as lacking adequate funds to buy bare necessities. If poverty can be a key factor in health-threatening fatness, shortage of money can no longer be the core of the problem.

Theoretical discussion of poverty has tended to highlight several different but overlapping distinctions:

- **Absolute (or ‘subsistence’, or ‘basic needs’) poverty** (deprivation of basic subsistence goods) versus **relative poverty** (deprivation in relation to some social norm)
- **Objective conditions** versus **subjective experiences** of poverty
- **Income** versus **consumption/expenditure** indicators and measures
- **Monetary** versus **nonmonetary** indicators and measures
- **Material deprivations** (food, water, shelter, hygiene, etc) versus **nonmaterial deprivations** (power, dignity, voice, choice, information, etc)
- **Temporary** (accidental, transitional or seasonal) versus **chronic poverty** (persistent over long periods).
- **Individual, household, community, national** and other levels of poverty assessment.

Discussions or assessments of poverty which overlook these important analytical distinctions, or which reduce these complexities to a single proxy measure and scale (typically money, but sometimes others such as food deprivation), are called ‘unidimensional’.

An ethnographic illustration of the importance of recognizing differences between subjective experiences of poverty and standardized ‘objective’ measures comes from Talle’s portrayal of Tanzanian Maasai livelihoods (Talle, 1999). In Tanzania, development is ‘defined primarily as a combat against “poverty”’, but some people refused to be classified on a spectrum from ‘poor’ to ‘rich’ or from ‘backward’ to ‘developed’ (1999:107,109). Maasai pastoralists are an example of this. Defined by others as economically irrational and backward, they see themselves as morally superior to and cleaner than both ‘town people’ and farmers, and until recently associated farming with poverty since for them this had only ever been a temporary survival strategy in times of drought and livestock diseases. When Maasai people are forced to live without cattle, although they may not be seen as poor because their subsistence is guaranteed by their traditional redistributive system, nonetheless they feel impoverished. For them, poverty is more a matter of personal indignity than shortage of specific subsistence goods, and for their neighbors their so-called ‘poverty’ is not primarily linked to materiality or survival, but rather to images of backwardness and disorder’ (1999:110).

Further examples exploring how poverty and dignity relate to livelihoods and ethnic traditions are to be found in the collection entitled *The Poor are Not Us: Poverty and Pastoralism in Eastern Africa* (Andersen and Vigdis Broch-Due, 1999). Other particularly compelling ethnographic accounts revealing the importance of appreciating subjective experiences of poverty include Scheper-Hughes’ *Death without Weeping*

(1992); Bourgois' *In Search of Respect* (1995); Einarsdottir's *Tired of Weeping* (2004). A common theme running through all of these is that being deprived of dignity, respect, or meaning may be far more worrisome than material deprivations.

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Narayan, Deepa with Raj Patel, Kai Schafft, Anne Rademacher and Sarah Koch-Schulte (2000) *Can Anyone Hear Us? Voices From 47 Countries*. Washington, DC. World Bank www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices/reports.htm [Uniquely ambitious synthesis of qualitative information on the experiences of being poor, from 20,000 poor people in 23 countries, though disappointingly lacking in attention to people who have escaped from poverty.]

Narayan, Deepa, et al (2002) *Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook*. Washington, DC: World Bank [Overview for researchers and policy-makers, defines empowerment as 'the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.]

Narayan, Deepa et al (2005) *Measuring Empowerment: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, Washington, DC: World Bank [This isn't actually confined to 'measuring' at all, but promotes a rich variety of approaches to empowerment from various social sciences going well beyond statistical analysis to include participatory and qualitative research.]

Nolan, Brian, and Christopher T. Whelan (2011) *Poverty and Deprivation in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [Although this has multidimensional approaches as its core theme, the addition of 'deprivation' as a separate term in the title betrays the lack of confidence in the possibility of expanding the term 'poverty' beyond its reductionist monetary meaning.]

Prahalad, C.K. (2005) *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty Through Profits*. Wharton School Publishing [Optimistic argument in favor of looking beyond poor people's deficits and victim status to recognize and build on their multiple strengths.]

Rahnema, Majid (1991) 'Global poverty: a pauperizing myth'. *Interculture* 24,2:4-51 [Deeply skeptical critique of the vagueness, cultural relativity, and deficit orientation of poverty concepts.]

Rahnema, Majid (2006) 'Eradicating "poverty" or the poor?' *Policy Matters* 14:36-45 [Addressed particularly at World Bank economists, continues his radical critique arguing that the still-dominant dollar-a-day poverty concept is 'arbitrary,' reductionist, unduly deficit-oriented, and ethnocentric.]

Ravallion, Martin (2010) 'Poverty lines across the world' Washington, DC: World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 5284 [Notes that poverty lines worldwide are highly variable, from \$0.62 to \$43 per day, and that even so-called 'absolute' measures referring to basic needs, more commonly used in poorer countries, are still highly variable because they are also 'relative' to a country's cultural standards.]

Ravallion, Martin (2011) 'On multidimensional indices of poverty' Washington, DC: World Bank, Policy Research Working Paper 5580 http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1774427 [Excellent discussion of the arguments in favor of multidimensional indices, and critique of some aggregations of these into a single multidimensional index, arguing that both selection and weighting of indicators must be based on poor people's own preferences not just on experts' views].

Sahlins, Marshall D. (1968/1974) 'Notes on the original affluent society.' In *Stone Age Economics*. London: Tavistock [The most famous anthropology essay ever written, this challenges western assumptions about the meaning of affluence and poverty by presenting optimistic portraits of the simple, low-stress lives of contemporary hunter-gatherers. Though hailed by many as left-wing radical, Sahlins shows here a shocking degree of romantic naiveté and callous disregard for the sufferings and exploitation of the people he writes about.]

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (1992) *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press [Pessimistic ethnographic portrayal of the experience of poverty and its damaging effects on subjectivity.]

Sen, Amartya K. (1985) *Commodities and Capabilities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [Landmark text promoting the highly influential 'capabilities' approach to poverty reduction, emphasizing the policy significance of the various ways in which people's opportunities to pursue valued activities are inhibited or constrained, but stopping short of spelling this out in any systematic or comprehensive way.]

Spicker, Paul, Sonia A. Leguizamon, and David Gordon [eds] (2006) *Poverty: An International Glossary* [Second Edition] London: Zed Books [Useful basic reference book]

Stadhams, Dianne (2004) 'Look to learn a role for visual ethnography in the elimination of poverty' *Visual Anthropology Review* 20,1:45 – 58 [Building on 'Emancipatory Action Research' approaches, this uses a case study on ethnographic film and sustainable tourism development in the Gambia to set out a systematic approach to the use of film for participatory learning and policy influence.]

Streeten, Paul (1981) *First Things First: Meeting Basic Human Needs in Developing Countries*. New York: OUP for the World Bank [Landmark text shifting the attention of economists and planners from economic growth towards needs, rights, and the distribution of benefits.]

Talle, Aud (1999) 'Pastoralists at the border: Maasai poverty and the development discourse in Tanzania' in D.M. Andersen and V. Broch-Due [eds], *The Poor are Not Us: Poverty and Pastoralism in Eastern Africa*. Oxford: J. Currey, pp. 106-124 [Ethnographic illustration of the importance of looking beyond material deprivation at indigenous conceptions of dignity and social order.]

Tiwari, Meera (2009) 'Poverty and wellbeing at the 'grassroots'-how much is visible to researchers?' *Social Indicators Research* 90,1:127-140 [Drawing on her primary qualitative research in India, shows what planners can learn by looking at local multidimensional conceptions of poverty and wellbeing].

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) (2010) *The Report on the World Social Situation (RWSS) 2010: Rethinking Poverty*. New York: UN-DESA [Chapters 3 ('Poverty of poverty measurement') and 4 ('Deprivation, vulnerability and exclusion') provide good accounts of the importance of going beyond numerical understanding of poverty.]

United Nations Development Programme (2010) *Human Development Report 2010* [Includes introduction to the new Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)]

Vickery, C. (1971) 'The time-poor: a new look at poverty.' *Journal of Human Resources* 12: 27–48 [Seminal paper promoting the two-dimensional money and time approach to poverty recognition,

showing how official monetary poverty standards discriminate against households with only one adult and distort the incentives for household formation.]

Wilson, William J. (2011) 'Why both social structure and culture matter in a holistic analysis of inner-city poverty' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 629, 1:200-219 [Explores the long-term structural and cultural forces affecting people who live in racially segregated areas, and draws on the example of the Harlem Children's Zone to show ways of combating social and cultural exclusion.]

World Bank (2000) *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty*. Washington, DC: World Bank [This influential text gave an important boost to recognition of social and cultural aspects of poverty, and to the policy importance of empowerment and social protection.]

World Bank (2007) *Poverty and the Environment: Understanding Linkages at the Household Level*. Washington, DC: World Bank [Good introduction to poverty-environment interactions, and to the importance of biophysical context as an aspect of poverty or wellbeing.]

Web sites

Basic Income Earth Network [BIEN] www.basicincome.org [From 1994 this was the BI European Network; since then globalized, it promotes the norm of a universal minimum income guarantee, 'an income unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement' (see the key background paper by the economist Philippe van Parijs, 2000). BIEN publishes the journal *Basic Income Studies*]

Brooks World Poverty Institute (University of Manchester, UK) www.bwpi.manchester.ac.uk [BWPI is a multidisciplinary centre researching poverty, poverty reduction, inequality and growth]

Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre (CHIP) www.childhoodpoverty.org [This is based on collaboration between Save the Children and the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CRPC) with partners in China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and the UK]

Chronic Poverty Research Centre, UK (CRPC) www.chronicpoverty.org [Funded by the UK DFID, this is an international collaboration of academics and practitioners focused on learning about long-term poverty and its reduction]

CROP - International Social Science Council, Comparative Research Programme on Poverty www.crop.org [An excellent online resource, established since 1992 at the University of Bergen, emphasizing 'critical' social science perspectives on poverty in both rich and poor countries]

Eldis www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/poverty [Eldis is an excellent gateway for guidance, news, program and research documents on all aspects of development. This 'poverty' page has lots of links to guidance and research on poverty]

Global Issues Poverty Facts and Statistics www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats [Quite an impressive one-man site by Anup Shah, not a professional poverty expert but someone who synthesizes and communicates knowledge about poverty in his spare time]

Global Poverty Research Group www.gprg.org [Run jointly by Oxford University's Centre for the Study of African Economies, and the Institute for Development Policy and Management at Manchester University]

Human Development and Capability Association www.capabilityapproach.com [Organizes conferences and offers an excellent collection papers on capability issues, including lots on capability deprivation and poverty]

Institute for Research on Poverty www.irp.wisc.edu [USA-focused Institute based in the University of Wisconsin-Madison]

Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK, Poverty Reduction Learning Network www.ids.ac.uk/prln [This network links researchers and development agents]

International Association for Research in Income and Wealth www.iariw.org [Information on annual conferences, and see the *Journal Review of Income & Wealth* www.roiw.org]

Joint Center for Poverty Research www.jcpr.org [Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University and the Harris School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago; has a useful series of

Working Papers sorted by subject, mostly social policy papers on domains and outcomes of poverty rather than on concepts and assessment.]

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (York, UK) www.jrf.org.uk [Named after the pioneer of modern poverty studies who first developed the 'basket of goods' measure of poverty in the UK over 100 years ago, this is one of the longest-running non-state research institutions specializing in the study of poverty and social exclusion, producing and disseminating online scores of high quality research-based documents on poverty every year]

National Poverty Center (NPC) USA http://npc.umich.edu/about_us [Multidisciplinary research on the causes and consequences of poverty, based in the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan]

Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford www.ophi.org.uk [This is the key resource on multidimensional poverty measurement by economists. The stated purpose of the group is 'To build a multidimensional economic framework for reducing poverty grounded in people's experiences and values.']

Poverty and Economic Policy (PEP) Research Network www.pep-net.org/programs/cbms/about-cbms [PEP is a global research network originating in Ottawa which has a sub-network focused on Community-Based Monitoring Surveys (CBMS) for monitoring multidimensional poverty; another for Poverty Monitoring, Measurement and Analysis (PMMA); and a third for Modeling and Policy Impact Analysis (MPIA)]

Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/poverty> [Established in memory of Peter Townsend, the most influential advocate of 'relative' conceptions of poverty]

UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) www.ipc-undp.org [Formerly 'International Poverty Center'; has an excellent archive of papers on poverty, and access to its free journal *Poverty in Focus* – see esp vol.9 *What is poverty? Concepts and measures*]

University of Sussex, Poverty Research Unit, www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/PRU/ [Free access to working papers by several leading poverty experts]

Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) Research, University of Bath www.welldev.org.uk [output of a major multi-country research program 2002-2007 which produced 51 working papers; given the positive emphasis on 'well-being' there was limited reference to the P-word, but much of the research was strongly relevant to multidimensional poverty analysis, exploring how people experience and conceptualize poverty, basic needs, illbeing, capabilities, and nonbasic aspects of the good life.]

Further reading suggestions

Addison, Tony, David Hulme, and Ravi Kanbur (2009) *Poverty Dynamics: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [Excellent collection of essays on movements into and out of poverty]

Alkire, Sabina (2007) 'Choosing dimensions: the capability approach and multidimensional poverty' Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford: CPRC Working Paper 88 www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/PDF/Outputs/ChronicPoverty_RC/88Alkire.pdf [Links the classification of poverty dimensions with the ongoing work on spelling out what the 'capabilities approach' can mean in practice.]

Alkire, Sabina and James Foster (2010) 'Designing the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI)' New York: UNDP Background Paper for Human Development Report (2010) <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/papers> [Good introduction to the links between poverty and inequality]

Alkire, Sabina, and Maria E. Santos (2010) 'Acute Multidimensional Poverty: a new index for developing countries' Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, Working Paper 38 <http://www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ophi-wp38.pdf> [This new measure is likely to become a highly influential approach to assessment of multiple deprivation.]

Alsop, Ruth [ed] (2005) *Power, Rights, and Poverty: Concepts and Connections*. Washington, DC: World Bank [Good collection of essays by applied social researchers on links between empowerment and poverty reduction, and on methods and indicators for assessing empowerment.]

Anand, Sudhir, Paul Segal, and Joseph E. Stiglitz (2010) *Debates on the Measurement of Global Poverty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [Essays here focus on controversies and debates about what numbers to use and what they mean.]

Ayala, L., A. Jurado, and J. Perez-Mayo (2011) 'Income poverty and multidimensional deprivation: lessons from cross-regional analysis'. *Review Of Income And Wealth* 57, 1:40-60 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1475-4991.2010.00393.x/pdf> [Mainly numerical analysis of the surprisingly low correlation between measures of multidimensional deprivation and income poverty]

Baker, Judy (2000) *Evaluating the Poverty Impact of Projects: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTISPM/0,,contentMDK:20194198~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:384329,00.html> [A very good, thorough guidance document on application of poverty concepts and measures in evaluation, but strongly focused on statistical analysis and methodological rigour rather than on more realistic qualitative data collection and analysis.]

Brock, Karen, and Rosemary McGee (eds) (2002) *Knowing Poverty: Critical Reflections on Participatory Research and Policy*. London: Earthscan [Very useful as a basic introduction to social dimensions of poverty research and poverty reduction.]

Chambers, Robert (2006) 'What is poverty? Concepts and measures' New York: UNDP International Poverty Centre (IPC) Poverty In Focus Issue 9, www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCpovertyInFocus9.pdf

Cornwall, Andrea, and Karen Brock (2005) 'Beyond Buzzwords: "Poverty Reduction", "Participation" and "Empowerment" in Development Policy'. Geneva: UNRISD Overarching Concerns Paper 10 www.unrisd.org [Critical, scholarly piece on the inevitably political implications of our choice of terms and concepts.]

Coromaldi, Manuela, and Mariangela Zoli (2011) 'Deriving multidimensional poverty indicators: methodological issues and an empirical analysis for Italy.' *Social Indicators Research* [Online First] [Technical introduction to a multivariate statistical technique called 'non-linear principal component analysis' (NLPCA)]

Coudouel, Aline, Jesko Hentschel and Quentin Wodon (2002), 'Poverty measurement and analysis' in the PRSP Sourcebook, Washington DC: World Bank <http://web.worldbank.org> [A primer on poverty, inequality, and vulnerability analysis and a guide to resources on this topic]

Deutsch, Joseph, and Jacques Silber (2005) 'Measuring multidimensional poverty: an empirical comparison of various approaches.' *Review of Income and Wealth* 51,1:145-174 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1475-4991.2005.00148.x/pdf> [Reviews and compares four approaches based on fuzzy set theory, information theory, efficiency analysis, and axiomatic derivations of poverty indices]

Dixon, John (2010) 'Poverty: an existential-humanist perspective,' *Poverty & Public Policy* 2,4 www.psocommons.org/ppp/vol2/iss4/art6 [A strong argument in favor of paying attention to subjective and psychological dimensions of the experience of poverty, particularly long-term welfare dependence, highlighting the complex challenges of 'enhancing the existential human condition of long-term able-bodied welfare recipients'.]

Eberstadt, Nicholas (2008) *The Poverty of the Poverty Rate: Measure and Mismeasure of Material Deprivation in Modern America*. AEI Press [Argues that the dominance of an incompetent income measure perpetuates the mistakenly pessimistic belief that 'material deprivation' is increasing in the USA, whereas most consumption measures show the opposite trend.]

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Neil Thin et al), (2006) *Better Forestry, Less Poverty: A Practitioner's Guide*. Rome: FAO Forestry Paper 149 www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0645e/a0645e00.htm [Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of multidimensional poverty analysis, paving the way for promotion more effective roles for forestry in poverty reduction.]

Gacitua-Mario, E., and Q. Wodon (Eds) (2001) 'Measurement and meaning; combining quantitative and qualitative methods for the analysis of poverty and social exclusion in Latin America.' Washington, DC: World Bank Technical Paper 518 http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDS_IBank_Servlet?pcont=details&eid=000094946_0201040949175 [Collection of case studies following a social exclusion framework.]

Hanlon, Joseph, Armando Barrientos, and David Hulme (2010) *Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South*. Kumarian Press [Highly readable review of grassroots cash transfer experiments in several countries, some of which seem to support the argument that, after all, the key factor to most of the resources that the poor lack is cash.]

Harbert, Wayne, with Sally McConnell-Ginet, and Amanda Miller [eds] (2008) *Language and Poverty*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters [Specialist essays on linguistic aspects of deprivation, and on how poverty affects language survival]

Headey, Bruce (2008). 'Poverty is low consumption and low wealth, not just low income.' *Social Indicators Research*, 89(1):23-39 [Clear demonstration, based mainly on Australian evidence, that even within the domain of 'financial poverty', income measures on their own give a distorted and inadequate view.]

Henninger, Norbert, and Mathilde Snel (2002) *Where are the Poor? Experiences with the Development and Use of Poverty Maps*. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute [Good introduction to spatial and environmental aspects of poverty.]

Iceland, John and Kurt J. Bauman 2007 'Income poverty and material hardship: How strong is the association?' *Journal of Socio-Economics* [Special issue on capabilities], 36(3):376-396 [Using 'poverty' as a shorthand for 'income poverty', they provide clear evidence that in the USA income poverty (and its timing, duration, and depth) correlates fairly strongly albeit variably with various material deprivations such as food insecurity, basic needs deprivation, housing and neighborhood problems, and fear of crime); see also Iceland's book *Poverty in America*.]

Kakwani, N. and J.Silber [eds] (2008) *Quantitative Approaches to Multidimensional Poverty Measurement*. London: Palgrave Macmillan [A set of highly technical essays by economists, for economists, focusing on the numbers.]

Klugman, Jeni [ed] (2002) *A Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies* (2 Vol. Set). Washington, DC: World Bank [Useful discussions of links between conceptual and statistical matters and their application in policy and practice, especially in chapter 1 'Poverty Measurement and Analysis']

Laderchi, Caterina Ruggini (2001) 'Participatory methods in the analysis of poverty: a critical review'. University of Oxford: International Development Centre / Queen Elizabeth House <http://www3.queh.ox.ac.uk/pdf/qehwp/qehwps62.pdf> [Fair overview of challenges posed by participatory methods that highlight multiple nonmonetary dimensions of poverty.]

MacPherson, Steward, and Richard Silburn (1998) 'The meaning and measurement of poverty' in Dixon, John and David Macarov [eds], *Poverty: A Persistent Global Reality*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-19 [Strong emphasis on the nonmonetary aspects of poverty, and particularly on the 'moral dimension' concerning the inhibition of control, choice, and dignity.]

Mattes, Robert (2008) 'The material and political bases of lived poverty: insights from the Afrobarometer' In V. Møller, D. Huschka, and A.C. Michalos (Eds.), *Barometers of Quality of Life Around the Globe: How Are We Doing?* Dordrecht: Springer [Presents a new experiential measure of lived poverty - how frequently people go without basic necessities during the course of a year - which they argue represents a core part of poverty that is ignored by existing objective or subjective measures.]

McGregor, Allister (2007) 'Researching wellbeing: from concepts to methodology.' In I.Gough and J.A.McGregor [eds], *Wellbeing in Developing Countries From Theory to Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [Shifts attention from looking at dimensions of poverty to dimensions of wellbeing.]

McKay, Andrew, and Emilie Perge (2011) 'Is severe poverty a good proxy for chronic poverty? Evidence from a multi-country study.' University of Sussex, UK, Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Working Paper 179 <http://www.chronicpoverty.org/publications/details/is-severe-poverty-a-good-proxy-for-chronic-poverty-evidence-from-a-multi-country-study> [Reviews 23 panel data sets from 12 countries and concludes that severity is a strong indicator of the duration of poverty.]

Mosley, Paul, and Elizabeth Dowler [eds] (2003) *Poverty and Exclusion in North and South: Essays on Social Policy and Global Poverty Reduction*. London: Routledge [An impressive collection of expert scholarly essays linking poverty with social processes, insecurity, and 'social capital.']

Odekon, Mehmet (Ed) (2006) *Encyclopedia of World Poverty*, 3 Volume Set. [Unsurprisingly a significant number of the 750 essays in this massive collection address the multidimensionality of poverty, and corresponding policy responses.]

Pogge, Thomas [ed] (2007) *Freedom from Poverty as a Human Right: Who Owes What to the Very Poor?* Paris: UNESCO / Oxford University Press Philosopher's Library [Several of the essays here focus on the political, social and moral dimensions of poverty and of efforts to combat it.]

Rojas, Mariano (2005) 'Household arrangements and economic poverty: a subjective well-being approach' Paper at UNDP International Poverty Centre Conference: The Many Dimensions of Poverty. Brasilia, August, www.ipc-undp.org/md-poverty/ [Based on Mexican research, explores the complex ways in which subjective experience of 'economic' poverty are mediated through the degree to which household arrangements support sharing and altruism.]

Sachs, Jeffrey B. (2005) *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. New York: Penguin [Noteworthy example of how a passing recognition of the multiple dimensions of poverty (p.213) can be crowded out by a predominantly financial conception of poverty.]

Saith, Ruhi (2001) 'Social exclusion: the concept and application to developing countries'. University of Oxford, Queen Elizabeth House, Working Paper Number 72 <http://www2.queh.ox.ac.uk/pdf/qehwp/qehwps72.pdf> [Simple introduction to social dimensions and causes of poverty.]

Schwenke, Chloe (2008) *Reclaiming Value in International Development: The Moral Dimensions of Development Policy and Practice in Poor Countries*. Westport, CT: Praeger [Strong insistence on attention to dignity and ethical analysis in development.]

Sen, Amartya (2000) 'Social exclusion: concept, application, and scrutiny'. Asian Development Bank, Office of Environmental and Social Development, Social Development Papers No.1. www.adb.org/documents/books/social.../social_exclusion.pdf [Elaborates on his theme of understanding links between poverty, capability deprivation, and social exclusion.]

Sen, Amartya K. (1983) 'Poor relatively speaking' *Oxford Economic Papers* 35, 153-69 [Also in Sen, 1984, *Resources, Values, and Development*] <http://russell-davidson.arts.mcgill.ca/e473/Sen83.pdf> [this paper has been hugely influential in promoting discussion of the social relativity of poverty.]

Shorrocks, Anthony, and Rolph van der Hoeven (2004) *Growth, Inequality, and Poverty: Prospects for Pro-Poor Economic Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [Collections of economists' essays on analysis of links between economic growth and non-income aspects of poverty]

Spicker, Paul (2007) *The Idea of Poverty*. Bristol: Policy Press [Simple textbook introduction to poverty concepts, measures, analysis and policies.]

Stiglitz, Joseph E., Amartya Sen, and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, 2009, *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*. Paris: OECD www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr/documents/rapport_anglais.pdf [Very high-profile global review, by economists commissioned by several leading politicians, of prospects for transcending traditional economic measures of progress.]

Townsend, Peter, and David Gordon (2003) *World Poverty: New Policies to Defeat an Old Enemy*. Bristol: Policy Press [A companion volume to *Breadline Europe: The measurement of poverty* (Policy Press, 2001), arguing (especially in Gordon's paper on measurement and anti-poverty policies) that global agencies should adopt the degree of attention to social quality that has become normalized for many years in Europe.]

United Nations Development Program [UNDP] International Poverty Centre (IPC) (2005) *Conference: The Many Dimensions of Poverty*. New York: UNDP-IPC www.ipc-undp.org/md-poverty/ [An important set of papers, but there is disappointingly little attention to qualitative assessment and participatory learning strategies, and most papers either address quantification or provide country case studies.]

Van Parijs, Philippe (2009) 'Basic income and social justice: Why philosophers disagree' Joseph Rowntree Foundation Lecture, 23 July 2009 <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/basic-income-foundation-lecture> [Exemplifies how moral philosophers can on the one hand be fascinatingly sophisticated on questions of social justice, yet on the other hand worryingly detached from the real-world challenges involved in finding practical commonsense solutions]

Wagle, Udaya (2008) *Multidimensional Poverty Measurement: Concepts and Applications*. New York: Springer [Very helpful clear introduction distinguishing broadly between 'economic', 'capability' and 'social' approaches to poverty, and exploring policy implications via case studies from USA and Nepal.]

Biographical Sketch

Neil Thin is a Senior Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Teaching in the School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh. He lectures and researches on happiness, social planning, poverty, education, human rights, and sustainable development. He has since the early 1980s been continuously active in international development cooperation as an adviser, trainer, planner, and policy evaluator at all levels from project work with local NGOs to policy analysis for global agencies such as the World Bank, UN-FAO, OECD-DAC, and UK-DFID. His book *Social Progress and Sustainable Development* (Rugby: ITDG Publications, 2002) was commissioned by the World Bank and UK-DFID. His book *Social Happiness: Research into Policy and Practice* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012) is the product of a decade of multidisciplinary secondary research on happiness, wellbeing, and intentional as well as unintentional social development.