

KENOTIC EMPOWERMENT

A Holistic & Radical
Approach to Poverty

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Emmanuel AWIAH

The cover design features the picture of a cross-section of kenotic empowerment group members wearing shirts, hats, and plaids donated by Patty De Vos.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (Jn 10:10).¹

The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor.²

The Bible says about the First Christian Community, “there were no needy persons among them” (Act 4:34). In contrast, many religious communities, all over the world, seem to be struggling to deal with extreme poverty. Billions of people all over the world are in abject or relative poverty. Is there a way to contribute towards ensuring that no one is abandoned in impoverishment? This book presents *kenotic empowerment* as one such way — a framework that could enable one to practice true love by synthesising dichotomies of life, such as the earthly and divine economies, in a way that minimises poverty and promotes salvation. The book attempts to help one to gain more understanding about and to practise the preferential option for people in poverty or to assist in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially the goal of ending extreme poverty.

The Problem

Poverty and inequality are still serious problems in the world and in Ghana. For instance, according to the World Bank, currently, almost 10% of the global population (736 million people) live in extreme poverty (below the poverty line of \$1.90 per day),³ with Sub-Saharan Africa accounting for more than 413 million of these people. This implies it is the world’s poorest region. The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) reports that 3.1 million children die annually worldwide due to malnutrition.⁴ According to World Vision, 74% of the global population currently lives in multi-dimensional poverty (deprivation of essential facilities).⁵ Meanwhile, some experts give a grimmer portrait of global poverty. For instance, Winn and Kirchgeorg, in 2014, stated that over 4 billion people live in abject

¹ NB: All Bible texts are taken from the New International Version.

² Archdiocese of St. Paul Minneapolis, “Option for the Poor: Major Themes from Catholic Social Teaching,” <https://web.archive.org/web/20060216183419/http://www.osjspm.org/cst/themes.htm> [accessed May 1, 2020].

³ Cf. World Bank, “Going Above and Beyond to End Poverty: New Ways of Measuring Poverty Shed New Light on the Challenges Ahead,” (2018), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2018/10/17/going-above-and-beyond-to-end-poverty-new-ways-of-measuring-poverty-shed-new-light-on-the-challenges-ahead> [accessed May 20, 2019].

⁴ Cf. UNICEF, “Too Many Children Dying of Malnutrition,” (2013), <https://www.unicefusa.org/press/releases/unicef-too-many-children-dying-malnutrition/8259> [accessed May 2, 2020].

⁵ Cf. World Vision, “Global Poverty: Facts, FAQs, and How to Help,” <https://www.worldvision.org/sponsorship-news-stories/global-poverty-facts> [accessed May 2, 2020].

poverty.⁶ Global inequality is rising despite remarkable progress in the global economy. From 1990 to 2015, 1% of the global population earned twice as much as the 50% poorest individuals,⁷ giving the global economic order a highly exclusive outlook.⁸ With the Covid-19 crisis, the situation is expected to worsen due to the loss of sources of income, disruption in education, health, and other socio-economic services. According to World Bank estimates, about 40-60 million people globally may relapse into extreme poverty.⁹

The Ghanaian situation mirrors the global. As reported by the Ghana Statistical Service, currently, about 8.4% of Ghanaians (almost a tenth of the population) lives below the extreme poverty line of GhC792.05 (about \$131) per adult per year (though that of the UN is \$693.50 per year); 24.2% (almost a quarter of the population) lives below the absolute poverty line of GhC1,314.00 (\$157) per adult per year, and 42.7% (almost a half of the population) lives in multidimensional poverty. Inequality is high because the national share of extreme poverty incidence¹⁰ in the urban areas is 11.2% while that in the rural areas is 88.8%.¹¹ Meanwhile, according to Ossei-Assibey, inequality in Ghana is rising and continues to retard poverty alleviation and worsen social alienation.¹² This implies that there is too much misery in the world and in Ghana, hence the need to become more zealous in poverty alleviation.

Motivation

First, Jesus promises that people in poverty are blessed (Lk 6:20) and that He has come that they may have the fullness of life (Jn 10:10). Hence, the prayer, “Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well” (3 Jn 1:2). This, accordingly, entails spiritual and material wellbeing, to which the Church promises its commitment.¹³ Yet, our world seems very far from this

⁶ Cf. Monika Winn & Manfred Kirchgeorg, “Bottom of the Pyramid,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.* (2014), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Bottom-of-the-Pyramid> [accessed May 12, 2020].

⁷ Cf. World Inequality Lab, “World Inequality Report 2018,” <https://wir2018.wid.world/> [accessed January 9, 2020].

⁸ Cf. Julián Herrera, “Inequality as Determinant of the Persistence of Poverty,” (2017), <https://www.intechopen.com/books/poverty-inequality-and-policy/inequality-as-determinant-of-the-persistence-of-poverty> [accessed May 1, 2019].

⁹ Cf. World Bank, “Poverty Overview,” (2020), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview> [accessed May 3, 2020].

¹⁰ It appears, unlike in health studies where a distinction is made between “incidence” and “prevalence” (cf. Marjan van den Akker *et al.*, “Estimating Incidence and Prevalence Rates of Chronic Diseases Using Disease Modeling,” *Population Health Metrics* 15, no. 1 (2017): 1-14), in poverty studies, the two are used synonymously, as in the Ghana Statistical Service documents.

¹¹ Cf. Ghana Statistical Service, *Ghana Living Standards Survey Round Six: Poverty Profile in Ghana* (Accra: GSS, 2014), 9, 14-17. (Hereafter, GSS, *Poverty Profile in Ghana*). This is updated with reference to 2010 national population census, which is carried out every decade.

¹² Cf. Eric Ossei-Assibey, “Nature and Dynamics of Inequalities in Ghana,” *Development* 57, no. 3-4 (2014): 521-530.

¹³ Cf. Paul VI, *Gaudium et spes* (1965), 1.

vision because a lot of people are abandoned in misery. The “moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor.”¹⁴ This research attempts to contribute towards passing this test.

Secondly, this research is inspired by new insights about poverty I got in KU Leuven. My knowledge on the ethical dimension of poverty was greatly deepened through many of the courses I followed during my master’s studies. For example, in the course of development in theological ethics, taught by my promoter, Prof. Dr. Johan De Tavernier, liberation/contextual theologies, taught by Prof. Dr. Jacques Haers and some collaborators, and Catholic Social Teaching, taught by Prof. Johan Verstraeten, I learnt more about the fact that poverty alleviation (based on the fundamental principle of the preferential option for people in poverty) is primarily a theological interdisciplinary category. In other words, God is the agent par excellence of poverty alleviation, as seen in chapters three and four of this research. Chapter three deals with the issue that theology can either help to find solutions to poverty or worsen it. So, the right understanding of theology is necessary to overcome poverty, especially in Ghana where religious people form about 94% of the entire population. Any pro-poor theology must be transformed into an authentic theology if poverty will be overcome. This research, thus also, reflects on how this could be realised.

Research Question, Aim, Methodology, Scope, Limitation, and Outline

The central research question is: How could religious actors in Ghana, especially the Catholics, improve upon their poverty alleviation approaches? So, the main scope of the study is the context of Ghana, especially religious circles, situated within a global context. To answer this question, the study employs an interdisciplinary methodology, involving practical, moral, and systematic theology, as well as secular disciplines. These disciplines represent four research voices: the basic (practical), normative (official), formal (academic) theological voices, and the secular voice.

The first aim of this research is to explore if dichotomies of poverty alleviation (which is my sensitising concept) play a role in the poverty situation, especially in Ghana. To realise this I employ interdisciplinarity. Sensitising concepts, according to Glenn Bowen,

are, broadly speaking, background ideas that inform the overall research problem. They usually provide a starting point for data analysis and function as an analytic lens or interpretive mechanism throughout the process. ... Sensitizing concepts may suggest possible lines of inquiry or alert researchers to some important aspects of a particular research situation as they undertake fieldwork or begin coding (labelling and categorizing) data. In the course of the analysis, such concepts can enhance sensitivity to

¹⁴ Archdiocese of St. Paul Minneapolis, “Option for the Poor.”

General Introduction

nuances in the data and stimulate relevant questions. The analytical process can show how people give meaning to the concept in a specific context.¹⁵

From my personal experience and my master's studies, I learnt that interdisciplinarity helped to identify the main causes of the endemic and resilient poverty in Latin America in the latter part of the 20th century. I learnt that poverty is aggravated by dichotomies between polar binaries of reality, such as the secular and sacred, and interdisciplinarity helps to synthesise these dichotomies. Scholars have shown that poverty research that employs sacred and social sciences could help to bridge the gap between theory and practice,¹⁶ and between different contexts, cultures, and perspectives.¹⁷ It could, as well, help to avoid overgeneralisations or fundamentalism.¹⁸

The second aim is to help fill the gap in the lack of a theological interdisciplinary discourse on poverty in Ghana. The available literature reveals that poverty literature is mostly from social sciences, such as sociology, development economics, and anthropology.¹⁹ There are a few theological attempts but not from an interdisciplinary angle.²⁰ There is hardly any attempt to analyse poverty in Ghana from an interdisciplinary perspective of theology and the social sciences, especially from a Catholic viewpoint.

Thus, the first chapter employs a narrative and integrative review of literature on poverty and poverty alleviation in the global and Ghanaian contexts, based mainly on development economics. As such, it serves as a secular research voice. It tries to understand if poverty is endemic and resilient, and how that could be remedied. It focuses on development economics because this easily facilitates linking the extent of poverty with the causes and remedies. Yet, some references are made to sources in other disciplines, as and when necessary, such as sociology, anthropology, history, and politics. The chapter has two parts. First, the global context. The challenges of global poverty are discussed in terms of its extent and explanatory factors. Literature from the World Bank and other sources are used to point out the extent and trend of poverty. Then, some

¹⁵ Glenn A. Bowen, "Sensitizing Concepts," *Sage Publications* (2019), <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036> [accessed October 23, 2020].

¹⁶ Cf. Annemie Dillen & Robert Mager, "Research in Practical Theology: Methods, Methodology, & Normativity," in *Invitation to Practical Theology: Catholic Voices and Visions* (New York, Paulist Press, 2014), 313.

¹⁷ Cf. Ankita Deka, "Local and Global Poverty: Insights Using a Rights-Based Approach," (2012), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279341829_Local_and_Global_Poverty_Insights_Using_a_Rights-based_Approach [accessed May 20, 2019].

¹⁸ Cf. Agnes Brazal and Daniel Pilario, "Disciplines, Interdisciplinarity and Theology," *Hapág: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Theological Research* 4, no. 1-4 (2007): 5-25.

¹⁹ For example, cf. GSS, *Non-Monetary Poverty in Ghana*. Jasper Ayelazuno, "Neoliberalism and Growth without Development in Ghana: A Case for State-Led Industrialisation," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 49, no. 1 (2014): 80-99; Kwarteng and Acquaye, "The Role of Ghanaian Churches in the Financial Rehabilitation of the Poor;" Ganasah, "The Church and Development: A Ghanaian Experience;" Ernest Aryeetey and Ravi Kanbur, eds. *The Economy of Ghana: Analytical Perspectives, Growth and Poverty* (Accra: Woeli, 2008), 1-19.

²⁰ Cf. John Bonaventure Kwofie, "Corruption, Religion and Poverty Reduction."

controversies surrounding the World Bank's projections are presented in order to deepen the discussion. After that, the views of some social scientists on the explanatory factors of global poverty and their recommendations are laid bare in view of reflecting on how this relates to the local context. The second part is the Ghanaian context. Here too, the challenges of poverty in Ghana are detailed in terms of its extent and explanatory factors. Material from the Ghana Statistical Service and other sources are used to trace the extent and trend of poverty in Ghana. Then, critical literature on poverty in Ghana is used to figure out its challenges and remedies. It concludes by highlighting key points on how the challenges of poverty in the global and local contexts relate, as well as possible remedies.

The second chapter is a phenomenological qualitative empirical study on poverty alleviation in Ghana. Building on the development economics (secular) voice in chapter one, it features its polar binary (the theological voice). It focuses on basic theological voices of selected agents of poverty alleviation in Ghana. They represent a basic theological voice because they speak as practitioners of poverty alleviation vis-a-vis their faith, and not as professional theologians. Hence, they serve as the espoused and operant theological voices.²¹ Data was gathered by means of interviews, observation, as well as documents, and analysed using the qualitative analysis guide of Leuven (QUAGOL).²² The Nvivo 11 software is used to facilitate the analysis.²³ In compiling the results, instead of integrating them with existing literature, I opted to discuss their key issues in subsequent chapters. This is because the empirical results were so rich that integrating them with other sources might result in losing some of their pristineness.

So, the second chapter focuses on religious actors in Ghana, especially in the Catholic Church, investigating their poverty alleviation approaches and how to improve upon them. It does this in two broad sections, comprising the research design and presentation of the results. The design presents the main research question of the empirical study, as well as the methodology, approach, and paradigm most appropriate to answer this question. To demonstrate how the research meets acceptable ethical standards, the ethical considerations that guide this study are then presented. After that comes the

²¹ Cf. Helen Cameron *et al.*, *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 53-58. The espoused voice refers to what people believe they do; operant voice is a reflection on what they actually do. The normative voice refers to official teachings of religious bodies; formal voice refers to writings of academic theologians.

²² QUAGOL is a theory and practice-based guide developed in 2012 by Professors Bernadette Dierckx de Casterlé, Chris Gastmans, Els Bryon, and Yvonne Denier of KU Leuven to facilitate the analysis of qualitative interview data. It is geared towards enabling the researcher to truly capture the rich insights of qualitative interview data. Cf. Bernadette de Casterlé Dierckx *et al.*, "QUAGOL: A Guide for Qualitative Data Analysis," *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 49, no. 3 (2012): 360-371.

²³ Nvivo is computer software used for analysing data. Exploring of the data is done through various queries after which the data is classified and analysed through coding, sorting, synthesising, and theming [cf. Philip Adu, "Conducting Qualitative Analysis Using Nvivo," (2015), <https://www.slideshare.net/kontorphilip/conducting-qualitative-analysis-using-nvivo-a-quick-reference> [accessed April 12, 2019].

context of the research, how the data has been collected and analysed, and the quality assurance. All these are meant to demonstrate that the entire research process and results are trustworthy and reliable. The second section communicates to readers the results.

The third chapter is a hermeneutic analysis in Catholic (Christian) Social Teachings on formulating a theoretical framework for poverty alleviation. It serves as the professional theological voice. That is, it features representatives of formal and normative voices. This is used to develop a theoretical poverty alleviation framework by critically analysing the notions of charity and justice encountered in the previous chapters. Four relevant sources are critically appraised based on the hermeneutic principle of Catholic social principles, especially the preferential option for people in poverty. The first document is *A Theology of Liberation* (ATL), by Gustavo Gutiérrez, the father of liberation theology. The others are magisterial documents, namely *Libertatis nuntius* (LN), published in 1984, and *Libertatis conscientia* (LC), published in 1986, both by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), under the prefecture of the then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (now Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI). The last is Pope Francis' first synodal document, *Evangelii gaudium* (EG). First, ATL is presented and evaluated. Then, the same is done to LN, LC, and EG, respectively. These are selected because they seem the most appropriate among all the sources I came across. Though, ATL was published in the 1970s, LN and LC, in the 1980s, how they analyse the polar binaries is very helpful for the discussion. ATL seems to be the thesis, LN and LC the antithesis, and EG the synthesis. Though ATL, LN, and LC are old sources, they appear very relevant for the current Ghanaian context. Moreover, they seem not to be known by many people in Ghana. But, care is taken not to impose foreign views on the local context but to foster a healthy interaction between the local and the foreign.

The fourth chapter is an interaction between the above three disciplinary approaches towards formulating a practical theological interdisciplinary framework for poverty alleviation. The four voices are brought together for a practical interdisciplinary theological dialogue. Its aim is to show that a poverty alleviation process should involve listening to all research voices. As such, it develops a practical theological interdisciplinary framework based on the models in chapters one, two, and three. They are synthesised because those in the first two chapters intersect with the model in the third chapter.

To formulate the framework in a systematic manner, section one translates the theoretical implications of kenotic empowerment into their logical practical forms. The theoretical implications are *accompanying people in poverty (especially people who are poorest)*, *interdisciplinary discernment*, and *systematic transformation*. Their logical practical implications comprise establishing kenotic empowerment groups (KEGs), employing the kenotic empowerment spiral (KES), and ensuring that it is an evidence-based and outcome-oriented spiral (EBOOS). Section two, three, and four discuss the relevance of these practical elements, respectively. Finally, section five elaborates the

modus operandi of the framework, and gives some practical recommendations. The discussion ends with the general conclusion.

I make reference to many sources in various disciplines including sociology, history and anthropology, though the primary sources are in development economics, liberation theology, practical theology, and Catholic Social Teaching. These disciplines and research voices (basic, normative, formal theology, and secular sciences) are synthesised through the dialogical interaction to gain a synthesis of the dialectical realities, such as charity and justice. Therefore, the interconnection between the various chapters is much like in theological action research, which involves an interaction between the various theological voices.²⁴ The main difference is that theological action research is bottom-up, while this research is both bottom-up and top-down, and is more open to secular disciplines.

It deals with only selected key authors/sources in each, and not the whole, discipline. For instance, chapter three focuses on only ATL's version of liberation theology, and how LN, and LC, responded to ATL and other liberation theology movements. I make reference to views of secondary sources only if they are very relevant for the discussion. Similarly, in all chapters, the main reference point for choosing sources is how relevant they are for the discussion, irrespective of their age and geographical location.

In terms of literature review, I mix two approaches: a narrative review (a summary of the main ideas of the author) and an integrative review (to select ideas from authors and use them to deepen the discussion).²⁵ This is in line with my desire for an integral research approach. In addition, the dialogue was mainly among the primary sources, and then, relevant ideas are taken from secondary sources to help build the framework.

Furthermore, in line with the need to integrate formality and informality, it is scientific to make reference to some basic academic literature. This explains why I did not rely on only highly academic sources, but also made some references to news articles and other basic academic sources. An integration between basic and expert academic sources may enable ordinary people to access the work. It is one way of promoting intercultural research, an integration this project advocates, in word and deed.

Clarification of Some Key Terms

To help appreciate the use of some key terms in this study, I make concise clarifications, brief because this clarification of these terms is not the main focus of this study.

1. LOVE, CHARITY, JUSTICE, AND CHARITY-JUSTICE

Although the interviewees in the empirical research in chapter two used the terms, charity, justice, and love, they did not define these terms. During the coding of the data, I selected

²⁴ Cf. Helen Cameron *et al.*, *Talking about God in Practice*, 53-58.

²⁵ John Dudovskiy, "Types of Literature Review," <https://research-methodology.net/research-methodology/types-literature-review/> [accessed October 26, 2020].

these terms as key themes under which I categorised other codes, and subsequently used that to describe the results. From their submissions, I have the impression the participants understood love and charity to mean the same thing, and they understood justice as giving people their due. In fact, I had a similar understanding. I thought the only difference between love and charity was that love was the theory and charity, the practice. However, in the course of the analysis of the data, and reading of the literature, I discovered that love is more than just a theoretical rendering of charity, though they could basically be used synonymously.

Then, reading other documents, such as *Deus caritas est*, enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the terms. This magisterial document discusses them into some detail. Based on texts like, “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8), and “faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor 13:13), and on the greatest commandments of love of God and neighbour (Mk 12:30-31), love is viewed as a theological virtue. In the *Compendium*, love is also seen as “the highest and universal criterion of the whole of social ethics.”²⁶ Then, based on Greek philosophy, love is rendered in the forms: “agape” (self-giving love), “eros” (sexual or self-centred love), and “filia” (reciprocal love). The term “charity” is derived by the Douay-Rheims Bible from the Latin “caritas”, used by the Vulgate to translate the biblical term “agape”. It implies that charity is one of the types of “love” which connotes non-obligatory and unconditional love. It is, perhaps, for this reason that the Oxford English dictionary, among other definitions, sees charity as, the “voluntary giving of help, typically in the form of money, to those in need”. Thus, in relation to God and humans, or one who is rich and one in need, it connotes a kind of top-down intervention. That is why in poverty and development literature, “charity” is often viewed as top-down. For instance, Mariana Chilton and Rose Donald view it as a needs-based approach which is top-down.²⁷ This does not exclude the fact that charity can be bottom-up, but it means that, with reference to its origin (God, or the rich person), charity would normally be top-down. Therefore, my use of “charity” in this research is based on this understanding. By a charity-centred paradigm is meant a paradigm where the intervention is top-down and places charity above justice. So, if any intervention, such as social welfare services, social justice advocacy, women’s development project, is offered in a top-down manner, I regard it as a charity-centred paradigm intervention. Similarly, if any of the CST principles, even justice, is viewed or implemented in a top-down manner, I regard that approach as charity-centred, since justice is subjected to charity.

On the other hand, “eros” is self-centred. It implies receiving love from the other. Here, the focus is on the receiver (the one in need), the more vulnerable person. This could be correlated with justice because, with justice, the focus is on the person who needs it, the vulnerable person. So, justice means receiving what one needs or deserves, a form of love. It appears bottom-up. Hence, any poverty alleviation intervention or

²⁶ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, 204.

²⁷ Cf. Mariana Chilton and Donald Rose, “A Rights-Based Approach to Food Insecurity in the United States,” *American Journal of Public Health* 99, no. 7 (2009): 1203-1211.

principle that is bottom-up could be regarded as justice-centred. This approach, in which the focus is on preventing one from being denied one's due is also known in development as the rights-based approach.²⁸

Since the two forms of love integrate to produce "filia" (giving-and-receiving), this form of love could be regarded as the fullest form of love. No wonder that the participants in chapter two unanimously agree that the charity-justice paradigm is the best of the three paradigms. In the Holy Trinity, *perichoresis* could be seen as a perfect form of "filia" (reciprocity), as discussed in chapters three and four of this study.

2. SOCIAL WELFARE AS CHARITY, BUSINESS AS JUSTICE

Chapter two of this study states that the charity paradigm is mainly characterised as a social welfare approach, while the justice paradigm is a business or market economy approach. How? It is because charity and social welfare are normally both top-down (as seen in chapter 2, section 3.1), though sometimes they could be bottom-up. Similarly, justice and business are normally bottom-up (as seen in chapter 2, section 3.2.), but they could also be top-down. For instance, schools built by governments are often social welfare projects because they are usually based on government policy, which may give limited freedom to customers. But, private schools (those built for business) are often bottom-up since the views of the customers play a central role, giving them more freedom (cf. chapter 4, section 4.3.).

3. THEOLOGY, FAITH (BELIEF), SPIRITUALITY, RELIGION, RELIGIOUS STUDIES, RELIGIOUS BODIES (LEADERS, ACTORS), CHURCH, AND CATHOLIC CHURCH

Theology, briefly, is faith seeking understanding (St. Anselm) about the nature of the divine and its relationship with the rest of the universe. Hence, theology implies that one's knowledge and action are coherent with one's beliefs. "Religion" and "spirituality" both refer to the relation between believers and their object of belief, and the practices that flow from this. Though synonymous, "religion" focuses on the communal relationship while "spirituality" on the personal relationship.²⁹ In theology, both faith and knowledge must cohere, and this is necessary for success in poverty alleviation. "Religious body" refers to any religious denomination. "Church" refers to any Christian denomination or any worshipping community, that is, when it is written with a small "c". When it is written with a capital "C", it refers to the Catholic Church, since the focus of this work is the

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Cf. Leanne Lewis Newman, "Faith, Spirituality, And Religion: A Model for Understanding the Differences," *Special Issue on Faith, Spirituality, and Religion on Campus* 23, no. 2 (2004): 102–110.

Catholic Church. In referring to any other particular denomination, its name is written in full, for example, Anglican Church. “Religious actor” could be an individual or a group.

4. ORTHODOX AND NON-ORTHODOX RELIGIOUS BODIES

The term “orthodox” is defined as “conforming to the Christian faith as represented in the creeds of the early church; ... relating to, or designating the Eastern Church, especially the Greek Orthodox Church,” among other definitions.³⁰ In other words, it has two main usages. First, it is used to refer to the Eastern Orthodox Church, also known as the Orthodox Catholic Church. Secondly, the term refers to all Christian denominations which are old and preserve the creed and doctrines of their founders or pioneers. Synonyms to this second rendering are traditional, mainline or conciliar denominations. In this research, “orthodox” refers to the second rendering. As David Kerr writes, for the non-conciliar churches, the “right freely to propagate one’s religion is given priority over all else.”³¹ They seem to place charisma (the prophetic) above authority (leadership).

5. POVERTY ALLEVIATION, DEVELOPMENT, RESILIENCE, & QUALITY OF LIFE

The term poverty alleviation seems paternalistic. As a result, some people prefer to talk about development. However, development also appears paternalistic and secular. Others talk about resilience and quality of life, but these seem to be aspects of poverty alleviation. For this reason, poverty alleviation, understood as sustainable development, is the most appropriate since it appears more encompassing and theological than the others.³²

6. KENOTIC EMPOWERMENT

Kenotic empowerment simply means coming down to the level of people in poverty, prioritising those who are poorest (kenosis) to journey with them out of poverty (empowerment). This is based on the example of the Triune God, who identifies with the least (Dt 7:7; Mt 25:40). It is a dialogue which bridges transcendence and immanence, and all other dichotomies, creating a setting for the liberation and salvation of the universe (2 Cor 8:9). God does this through accompaniment which prioritises those who are poorest,

³⁰ Dictionary.com, “Orthodox,” <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/orthodox> [accessed October 29, 2020].

³¹ David Kerr, “Christian Understandings of Proselytism,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 23, no. 1 (1999), 11.

³² Cf. Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973); cf. Ali Asadi *et al.*, “Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development: The Role of Social Capital,” *Journal of Social Sciences* 4, no. 3 (2008): 202-215; cf. Christophe Béné *et al.*, “Review Article: Resilience, Poverty and Development,” *Journal of International Development* 26 (2014): 598-623.

interdisciplinary discernment (searching with people from various sources for the causes of poverty in all dimensions), and systematic transformation (improving poverty situations based on evidence). This clearly shows that poverty alleviation has a divine dimension, presupposing the indispensability of theology in poverty alleviation and the need for all people to engage in theological formation.

7. A HOLISTIC AND RADICAL APPROACH

Holism is derived from the Greek *holos* translated as all, whole, or entire. It is the notion that viewing a being or system as a whole is better than viewing it in a reductionist manner.³³ Kenotic empowerment is holistic because it implies that it is better to pursue poverty alleviation by integrating all its dimensions than putting a dichotomy between them. A radical approach is one that witnesses against the *status quo*. Kenotic empowerment is radical because it calls on people to become more zealous in witnessing against extreme poverty and against the current situation where some people who are impoverished are abandoned.

The study focuses on the Ghanaian context. Nonetheless, situating it within a global context helps to see that some of the features of the Ghanaian context can be found in other parts of the world. Therefore, please read it, at least, to see if you will find in it yourself or your context.

³³ Cf. J. C. Poynton, "Smuts's Holism And Evolution Sixty Years On," DOI:10.1080/00359198709520121.

CHAPTER ONE

SECULAR VOICES: CHALLENGES OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN GHANA & WORLDWIDE

For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light (Lk 16:8).

... ideology, ignorance, and inertia — the three 'I's — on the part of the expert, the aid worker, or the local policy maker, often explain why policies fail and why aid does not have the effect it should. It is possible to make the world a better place — probably not tomorrow, but in some future that is within our reach — but we cannot get there with lazy thinking.³⁴

1. Introduction

Poverty in Ghana is endemic, and the future of economic development appears bleak. About a quarter of Ghanaians lives below the absolute monetary poverty line and close to a half of the population lives in multidimensional poverty.³⁵ Yet, how to overcome this unpleasant situation remains controversial. Moreover, the impact of the international economic order on Ghana's economic situation, and how to shape it, appear unclear.

The Economy of Ghana: Analytical Perspectives, Growth and Poverty (2008), edited by Ernest Aryeetey and Ravi Kanbur, makes some commendable analyses. It reviewed Ghana's economy when the country was 50 years old, rejecting the unsustainable nature of modern approaches and proposing a form of development, based on an analytical agenda. Suggesting that Ghana needs a broad-based sustainable development approach, spearheaded by a genuine communal moral imagination, it calls for a restoration of healthy relationships among humans, and between humans and nature. These relationships are depleting as a result of the negative effects of modern civilisation.³⁶ However, among other limitations, it focuses on national and international institutions, neglecting small-scale bodies which are grappling with the challenges of poverty. Consequently, it concentrates on macroeconomic analysis to the detriment of the analysis of the experiences of people in poverty. Thus, as others indicate, the informal sector seems missing in its analyses, and it does not draw enough lessons from the best practices within the regional and international community for the Ghanaian context.³⁷

Secondly, authors, like Jasper Abembia Ayelazuno, argue that although the neo-liberal economy has propelled Ghana into a low-middle income country, "the wellbeing of most Ghanaians in the subaltern classes has not improved significantly, and they still suffer grinding poverty."³⁸ He, therefore, opts for a state-led industrial economy: "With its

³⁴ Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 12.

³⁵ Cf. GSS, *Ghana Living Standards Survey Round Six*, 5-7.

³⁶ Cf. Aryeetey and Kanbur, eds. *The Economy of Ghana*, 1-3.

³⁷ Cf. Joost Beuving, "Review of *The Economy of Ghana: Analytical Perspectives, Growth and Poverty*," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 49, no. 1 (2011): 169-170.

³⁸ Ayelazuno, "Neoliberalism and Growth without Development in Ghana," 80.

relatively good politics and open economy, the Ghanaian state should spearhead industrialization, as South Korea and Malaysia did, by supporting selective manufacturing firms with capital, technology, and protective tariffs.”³⁹ Some writers, such as Nana Kwaku Asamoah, agree that a state-led economy has advantages since it promotes social welfare. He, however, argues, “We have to be realistic about the possibility that the government set up to represent the masses may abuse its position and claim power for itself as the Nkrumah Government did by intimidating and muzzling Ghanaians with repressive legislations like the Deportation Act, Avoidance of Discrimination Act and Preventive Detention Act...”⁴⁰ A government with parliamentary majority could be abusive. For him, the weaknesses of a liberal economy can be overcome if it is reenvisioned as “capitalism with a conscience.” Unfortunately, he does not substantiate how such a subjective form of capitalism can be ensured. Readers are left to only hope that business entrepreneurs might abide by goodwill rather than selfishness. Consequently, the best way to pursue economic development remains contentious.

This chapter attempts to contribute towards minimising the controversies, based on literature in development economics, and other disciplines. First, it tackles the global context using literature from the World Bank and views of some international social scientists. Secondly, it discusses the local context, using literature from the Ghana Statistical Service and views of scholars. It concludes by highlighting some key lessons.

2. Global Poverty and Its Alleviation: Challenges and Recommendations

The challenges of global poverty are discussed in terms of its extent and trend, as well as its explanatory factors, respectively. The first issue enables us to see whether global poverty alleviation is on the right track or not. The second issue tries to account for why things are the way they are, and what could be done.

2.1. THE EXTENT OF GLOBAL POVERTY

Global poverty remains a great challenge, considering controversies surrounding the extent of poverty and how poverty is measured. So, it is necessary to understand these issues and their implications, and the extent to which they pose a challenge.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Nana Kwaku Asamoah, “What Ghana Needs Now: Capitalism with a Conscience,” (2018), <https://www.modernghana.com/news/900063/what-ghana-needs-now-capitalism-with-a-conscienc.html> [accessed March 4, 2020].

2.1.1. Measuring Poverty

There is no single universally accepted way of measuring poverty, but diverse ones.⁴¹ This is due to the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, as well as the geographically diverse and multi-cultural nature of the world. Poverty is, on account of that, seen differently by various individuals, communities, national and international bodies. However, the internationally popular forms of measurements are the monetary and non-monetary ones.

a. Monetary Poverty

Monetary poverty is the condition of poverty determined by means of an individual's or a household's income or the amount of money needed to purchase goods and services necessary to sustain their wellbeing.⁴² National thresholds differ but the international one is the same for a particular region or worldwide. This minimum requirement of consumption, known as the poverty line, is determined by studying people's standard of living in a region or worldwide, and locating the minimum required consumption level. People who consume below this line are regarded as living in poverty.⁴³ It is categorised as extreme, absolute, relative, or societal poverty.

Extreme poverty is the situation where the income level of a household or person is inadequate to cater for the minimum requirement of food, usually considered to be between 2000 and 3000 calories per day. The income required to acquire this amount of food is considered the extreme poverty line. People who lack this income are said to be in extreme poverty.⁴⁴ *The World Bank Report* of 1990 regarded \$1 per person per day as the extreme poverty line.⁴⁵ In 2008, this was adjusted to \$1.25 per person per day. Currently, it is \$1.90 per person per day.⁴⁶ It was set using 2011 purchasing power parity,

⁴¹ Cf. Brian-Vincent Ikejiaku, "The Concept 'Poverty' towards Understanding in the Context of Developing Countries 'Poverty qua Poverty': With Some Comparative Evidence in Britain," *Journal of Sustainable Development* 2, no. 2 (2009): 3-13.

⁴² Cf. Dean Jolliffe and Espen Beer Prydz, "Estimating International Poverty Lines from Comparable National Thresholds," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper (2016), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/837051468184454513/pdf/WPS7606.pdf> [accessed August 20, 2018].

⁴³ Cf. Instituto Nacional de Estadística, "Poverty and its Measurement: The Presentation of a Range of Methods to Obtain Measures of Poverty," http://www.ine.es/en/daco/daco42/sociales/pobreza_en.pdf [accessed August 20, 2018].

⁴⁴ Cf. Max Roser and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, "Global Extreme Poverty," (2017), <https://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty> [accessed August 20, 2018].

⁴⁵ Cf. Kwame Ameyaw Domfeh and Justice Nyigmah Bawole, "Localising and Sustaining Poverty Reduction: Experiences from Ghana," *Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal* 20, no 5 (2009): 490-505.

⁴⁶ Cf. The Guardian, "World Bank: 'Extreme Poverty' to Fall Below 10% of World Population for First Time," <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/oct/05/world-bank-extreme-poverty-to-fall-below-10-of-world-population-for-first-time> [accessed April 10, 2018].

considering differences in national economies across the globe, as well as the purchasing power of the poorest countries.⁴⁷

However, poverty goes beyond the deprivation of food, hence the development of the concept of absolute poverty, which was defined in 1995 by the UN as “a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.”⁴⁸ The absolute poverty line is, thus, the point at which an individual’s or a household’s resources are enough for a decent standard of living, determined nationally or internationally. People who lack this income live in absolute poverty. In the US, the absolute poverty line was first set in 1963/64 based on a research which showed that one-third of a person’s income was spent on basic food requirements. The poverty line is, then, three times the income required for food. This is adjusted annually.⁴⁹ However, considering it to be too low, some states in the US use alternative poverty lines.⁵⁰

The absolute poverty line often neglects differences in cultural contexts and inequality. For that reason, the relative poverty line was coined. This refers to an individual’s or household’s economic status in relation to what is considered a decent standard of living, based on the perceptions of the members of a particular community.⁵¹ European Union (EU) member countries rely on this instead of an absolute poverty line, due to the perception that the relative poverty measurements ensure a better quality of life than the absolute measurements.⁵² Similarly, the World Bank introduced the societal poverty line to make up for the different conceptions of basic needs by different societies. For instance, in some societies, food, clothing, shelter, and medicine may be basic needs, while in others, additionally, internet access, and vacation trips are seen as basic needs.⁵³

Since what is considered as poverty may differ in poorer and richer countries, using a single poverty line to determine the level of poverty in all countries might not reflect an accurate assessment. So, the World Bank complements the extreme poverty line of \$1.90 per day with two higher-value poverty lines of \$3.20 for lower middle-income countries

⁴⁷ Cf. Nanak Kakwani and Hyun Son, “Global Poverty Estimates Based on 2011 Purchasing Power Parity: Where Should the New Poverty Line Be Drawn? *Journal of Economic Inequality* 14 (2016): 173-184.

⁴⁸ UN, *The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action: World Summit for Social Development* 6-12 March 1995, New York, UN Department of Publications, p. 57.

⁴⁹ Cf. US Department of Human Services, “FAQ Poverty Guidelines and Poverty,” <https://aspe.hhs.gov/frequently-asked-questions-related-poverty-guidelines-and-poverty> [accessed July 21, 2018].

⁵⁰ Cf. Peter Peterson Foundation, “How Do We Measure Poverty?” (2017), <https://www.pgpf.org/blog/2017/10/how-do-we-measure-poverty> [accessed July 20, 2018].

⁵¹ Cf. DifferenceBetween.Net, “Difference between Relative and Absolute Poverty,” <http://www.differencebetween.net/language/words-language/difference-between-relative-poverty-and-absolute-poverty/> [accessed August 23, 2018].

⁵² Cf. European Anti-Poverty Network, “How Poverty is Measured,” (2007), <https://www.eapn.eu/how-is-poverty-measured/> [accessed July 20, 2018].

⁵³ Cf. World Bank, “Going above and Beyond to End Poverty.”

and \$5.50 for upper middle-income countries.⁵⁴ These countries might be almost free from extreme poverty, but there are still many people in them living in other levels of poverty.⁵⁵

b. Non-Monetary Poverty

Some criticisms have been levelled against monetary poverty measurements. First, it is argued that they are preoccupied with income and consumption to the neglect of other factors needed to ensure quality life⁵⁶, such as security and freedom. Secondly, its methodology is said to be too general to represent the diverse circumstances in the world, compounded by the lack of data in many local contexts, especially in developing countries.⁵⁷ This might be why reduction in global monetary poverty hardly directly tally with living standards in the world.⁵⁸

Criticisms against the income poverty measurements and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s concept of "human poverty", inspired the World Bank to introduce the non-monetary poverty concept. Human poverty refers to the deprivation of basic income and social services. Non-Monetary poverty uses a multi-dimensional index which involves "multiple deprivations, combining consumption or income with measures of education and access to basic infrastructure services, such as electricity, water, and sanitation,"⁵⁹ traced to Townsend's multidimensional conception of poverty:

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the type of diets, participate in the activities, and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Cf. *Id.*, "Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2018: Piecing Together the Poverty Puzzle," (2018), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/poverty-and-shared-prosperity> [accessed July 23, 2019].

⁵⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Cf. Erik Thorbecke, "Multidimensional Poverty: Conceptual and Measurement Issues," in *The Many Dimensions of Poverty*, eds., N. Kakwani, and J. Silber (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 3-20.

⁵⁷ Cf. G. Owusu and P. W. Yankson, "'Poverty in Ghana is basically a Rural Phenomenon': Are We Underestimating Urban Poverty?" *Ghana Journal of Development Studies* 4, no 1 (2007): 87-105; Peter Saunders, "Researching Poverty: Methods, Results and Impact," *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* 21, no. 2 (2013): 205-218.

⁵⁸ Cf. Amartya Sen, "A Decade of Human Development," *Journal of Human Development* 1, no. 1(2000): 17-23; Sabina Alkire, and Maria Emma Santos, "Acute Multidimensional Poverty: A New Index for Developing Countries," (2010), https://www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/OPHI-wp38_with_note.pdf [accessed July 20, 2018].

⁵⁹ World Bank, "Going Above and Beyond to End Poverty;" Ghana Statistical Service, *Non-monetary Poverty in Ghana*, 7.

⁶⁰ Peter Townsend, *Poverty in the United Kingdom* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), 15.

Consequently, the non-monetary poverty measurement is based on the welfare composite index (WCI). This consists of 11 primary indicators put into three categories: durable goods (radio, television, refrigerator, gas cooker, and telephone); housing conditions (water access, toilet facilities, quality of floor and number of people per bedroom); and education (literacy of wife/household head).⁶¹ It determines the poverty level of people based on the extent to which they are deprived of these 11 items, ensuring that poverty measurements take care of two key components: “Given two relevant pieces of information about a household — income and deprivation — each with limitations from both conceptual and measurement perspectives, incorporating both into the measurement process is one way to seek to improve reliability in identifying the poor. A relatively straightforward way of doing so is to focus on those who are both on low (relative) income and experiencing high (relative) levels of deprivation.”⁶² Thus, non-monetary poverty measurements are a supplement to monetary poverty measurements.

However, non-monetary poverty measurements have also been accused of a dichotomy between economic growth and human development, neglecting human rights,⁶³ insecurity and inequality.⁶⁴ To avoid the focus on economic development at the expense of integral development, already in 1990, UNDP introduced the concept of human development into the poverty discourse.⁶⁵ Indices such as the human development index (HDI), the inequality-adjusted human development Index (IHDI), and the gender inequality index (GII) were developed to measure human wellbeing, economic inequality, and gender inequality respectively.⁶⁶ In a similar vein, the 2016 *Human Development Report* of the UNDP focuses on freedom for all: “Human development is all about human freedoms: freedom to realize the full potential of every human life, not just of a few, nor of most, but of all lives in every corner of the world — now and in the future. Such universalism gives the human development approach its uniqueness.”⁶⁷ For that matter, it seems the meaning of poverty has become so general that people who are poorest do not get the necessary attention.

⁶¹ Cf. Mohammed Ayadi *et al.*, “Poverty and Inequality in Tunisia: A Nonmonetary Approach, Poverty and Economic,” Policy Research Network Working Paper No. PMMA-2007-1405 (2007). <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1348708> [accessed April 6, 2018].

⁶² Cf. Brian Nolan and Christopher Whelan, “Using Non-Monetary Deprivation Indicators to Analyse Poverty and Social Exclusion: Lessons from Europe?” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 29, no. 2 (2010): 305-325.

⁶³ Cf. Martin Ravallion, “Good and Bad Growth: The Human Development Reports,” *World Development* 25, no. 5 (1997): 631-638.

⁶⁴ Cf. Lars Osberg and Andrew Sharpe, “How Should We Measure the ‘Economic’ Aspects of Wellbeing?” *Review of Income and Wealth* 51, no. 2 (2005): 311-336.

⁶⁵ Cf. UNDP, *Human Development Report 1990: Concept and Measurement of Human Development* (New York: Oxford Press, 1990), 1-7.

⁶⁶ Cf. UNDP, *Human Development Report 1990*.

⁶⁷ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone* (New York: Communications Development Incorporated, 2016), iii.

2.1.2. Global Poverty Trends

Here, I discuss the World Bank's data on the trend of global poverty, due to their popularity. Then, I present how these views are received by other scholars. The Bank measures global poverty through the extreme poverty line and the societal poverty line.

a. Extreme Poverty

The World Bank and its development partners, such as the United Nations (UN), seem to have an optimistic vision of poverty alleviation. Their agenda for achieving that vision was implemented through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The chief target of the MDGs was, by 2015, to halve the number of people living in poverty in the world as at 1990. In 1990, an estimated number of 1.85 billion people, representing about 36% of the world's population, were said to live below the extreme poverty line. The prediction of halving poverty would be fulfilled before its targeted date, since the 1990 figure was halved in 2010. Moreover, by 2013, it was reduced to about 11.2% (804.2 million people), and by 2015, to about 9.6%, representing nearly 735 million people in the world. This implies that, within a quarter of a century, 1.2 billion people exited extreme poverty.⁶⁸

Motivated by this unprecedented feat of the MDGs, the World Bank and its partners continued this mortal attack on poverty in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). So, their topmost priority is the reduction of global extreme poverty to at least 3% by 2030.⁶⁹ Hailing the 2013 decline in poverty as “the best story in the world today”,⁷⁰ the World Bank Group President, Jim Young Kim, predicted that our generation would make history by being the first ever to end extreme poverty.⁷¹ In 2015, he declared, “This new forecast of poverty falling into the single digit should give us new momentum and help us focus even more clearly on the most effective strategies to end extreme poverty.”⁷² In the same year, the 193-Member United Nations General Assembly adopted this goal which was touted by its Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, as “an agenda for people, to end poverty in all its forms — an agenda for the planet, our common home”.⁷³ It is a statement of hope.

⁶⁸ Cf. World Bank, “Understanding Poverty,” (2016),

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview> [accessed August 20, 2017].

⁶⁹ Cf. UN, “Sustainable Development Goals,” <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs> [accessed August 20, 2017].

⁷⁰ Jim Young Kim, “Ending Extreme Poverty by 2030: The Final Push,” (2015), <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/speech/2015/04/07/speech-by-world-bank-group-president-jim-yong-kim-ending-extreme-poverty-final-push> [accessed August 20, 2019].

⁷¹ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁷² UN, “Extreme Poverty to Fall below 10 Percent, Advancing towards UN Goal by 2030: World Bank,” (2015), <https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/10/511742-extreme-poverty-fall-below-10-cent-advancing-towards-un-goal-2030-world-bank> [accessed May 21, 2019].

⁷³ *Ibid.*

It is, thus, clear that, for the World Bank and UN, the global economy is progressing. What remains is to sustain the current drive. The strength of the global economy has been fuelled by economic revolutions in Asian tigers like China, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam. It is hypothesised that maintaining this revolution and replicating it in the poorer nations is what is needed to achieve the number one goal of the SDGs. According to Betsy McKay, a senior economist at the World Bank, Francisco Ferreira, remarks that this “was a goal that was chosen because according to our calculations it was possible under very sustained high growth rates to get there.”⁷⁴ For him, there are hopeful signs because, for instance, in a survey on 56 of 94 countries, 40% of the poorest ones showed a faster growth in average income than the overall number of countries. McKay also states that some economists have noticed some improvement in developing countries in terms of governance, financial management, technology, education and other areas.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, there are some stumbling blocks to deal with. These include the weaknesses of the poor nations as well as risks and uncertainties that are likely to occur. To succeed, the countries lagging must replicate the economic revolution of those rising and of richer ones, since wealth distribution alone is inadequate.⁷⁶ In line with that, the United Nations reports,

For the last several decades, three regions, East Asia and Pacific, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, have accounted for some 95 per cent of global poverty. ... Poverty is declining in all regions but it is becoming deeper and more entrenched in countries that are either conflict ridden or overly dependent on commodity exports. ... The growing concentration of global poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa is of great concern. ... Reliable current poverty data is not available for the Middle East and North Africa because of conflict and fragility in key countries in the region.⁷⁷

It is for this reason that the Bank’s President, Jim Kim, cautions that although the world is better positioned to end extreme poverty by 2030, accomplishing the vision “will be extraordinarily hard”.⁷⁸ It implies that, to succeed, a lot is required from the poor regions.

Moreover, the Bank observes that fulfilling the vision is threatened by a slowing down of the poverty reduction rate, though about half of all countries in the world have already achieved that target, in “the 25 years, from 1990 to 2015, the extreme poverty rate dropped an average of a percentage point per year — from nearly 36% to 10%. But, the rate dropped only one percentage point in the two years from 2013 to 2015.”⁷⁹ In 2015, the number of people in poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa was more than those in the rest of the world. It is also predicted that, by 2030, extreme poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa will

⁷⁴ Betsy McKay, “World Economic Forum Outlook 2016, A Special Report: Slow Growth Clouds Fight against Poverty,” *Wall Street Journal* January 20, 2016, R.7.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ UN, “Extreme Poverty to Fall.”

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ World Bank, “Decline of Global Extreme Poverty Continues But has Slowed: World Bank,” (2018), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/09/19/decline-of-global-extreme-poverty-continues-but-has-slowed-world-bank> [accessed July 3, 2019].

remain in double digits and 9 out of 10 people living in extreme poverty in the world will be in that region.⁸⁰ Consequently, Carolina Sánchez-Páramo, Senior Director of the World Bank's Poverty & Equity Global Practice, is of the view that the "current forecast presents a very grim yet realistic picture of the probability of ending extreme poverty by 2030." However, Francisco Ferreira, who oversees the World Bank's research programs on poverty, inequality and agriculture, remarks that the goal is not unattainable, but only requires "a lot of political will and focus in leadership."⁸¹ To achieve the ultimate goal, the issue of global inequality has to be seriously dealt with. Yet, the situation appears more complex than this.

b. Societal Poverty

The Bank further reports that though about half of all the countries in the world have reduced extreme poverty to below 3%, there are other forms of poverty in these countries.⁸² In 2015, 2.1 billion people (a quarter of the world's population) lived below the societal poverty line of \$3.20 per day as compared to the 735.9 people below the extreme poverty line, and about half of the world's population lived below \$5.50 per day. So, global societal poverty is more endemic and entrenched than extreme poverty. It is worst in Sub-Saharan Africa:

In a sample of 119 countries for the years around 2013, only one in eight are poor in monetary terms, but among them eight out of nine are also deprived in at least one other dimension, lacking education or basic infrastructure services. In Middle East & North Africa and Latin America & the Caribbean, despite the low prevalence of monetary poverty, almost one in seven people lack adequate sanitation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, more than in any other region, shortfalls in one dimension go hand-in-hand with other deficiencies.⁸³

This scenario implies that, although the world's economy is growing, over half of its population lacks basic needs. Hence, inequality remains a serious problem. The World Bank's survey on shared prosperity, which refers to "the growth in income of the bottom 40 percent in each country",⁸⁴ reveals that while some regions are performing creditably in terms of wealth distribution, others perform miserably: "In 70 of the 91 countries for which data were available, incomes of the bottom 40 percent improved between 2010 and 2015. In addition, in 54 percent of those 91 countries, their income grew faster than the average."⁸⁵ For instance, between 2010 and 2015, the bottom 40 percent grew by 4.7% in East Asia, 2.6% in South Asia, and 3.2% in Latin America and the Caribbean. However,

⁸⁰ Cf. *Id.*, "Going above and Beyond to End Poverty."

⁸¹ McKay, "World Economic Forum Outlook 2016."

⁸² Cf. World Bank, "Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2018."

⁸³ *Id.*, "Going above and beyond to End Poverty."

⁸⁴ *Id.*, "Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2018."

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*