



The many hidden faces of extreme poverty

Inclusion and exclusion of extreme poor people in development interventions in Bangladesh, Benin and Ethiopia

Anika Altaf



African Studies Centre
Leiden



Universiteit
Leiden

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“The Many Hidden Faces of Extreme Poverty provides a valued and timely contribution to our knowledge of extreme poverty. Altaf develops, through several case studies, our definition and identification of extreme poverty, and goes beyond commonly accepted approaches “

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Preface

Development is not about countries, but about people, all people. This had been understood right from the outset in development policy making, but efforts to design development strategies were based on the assumption that the development of a country was a precondition for improving the lot of the people. When in a later stage policy makers came to the conclusion that increasing a country's prosperity was neither a necessary nor a sufficient means to increase people's welfare, they still considered this a possible means to achieve this.

Gradually the attention shifted into another direction: from increasing people's welfare to decreasing poverty. In the nineteen seventies this led to a new priority: providing in the basic needs of people, in particular poor people. However, in the eighties countries had to adjust their economies in order to counter the effects of a world economic recession. Adjustment took place by cutting investment in agriculture, education, health, drinking water, sanitation, housing and other expenditure which is essential in a battle against poverty.

In the nineties the pendulum swung back again. The crisis was over and the Cold War had come to an end. Attention again could be given to poverty reduction. This led to new policies with consequences for the poor: social protection, securing women's rights, fighting climate change, halting biodiversity decline, stemming environmental pollution and preserving nature. Poverty received renewed attention in development theory as well as in social and political sciences. New concepts were developed, such as human development and human security and the responsibility to protect vulnerable people which have been caught in conflict ridden processes. Researchers in different disciplines developed new approaches to study poverty, such as a capability approach (A. K. Sen), a participatory approach (Robert Chambers) and other approaches as described by Anika Altaf, in the first chapters of this book.

Around the turn of the century the renewed attention culminated in the Millennium Declaration and the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals. The setting of goals was important, because while many of the world's people had experienced economic growth and progress, many others had stayed behind. They had been deprived of opportunities to

share and enjoy the fruits of Post-World War II economic growth; many even had been excluded from reaping those fruits. The Millennium Declaration demonstrated an awareness that the persistence of poverty amidst ever-increasing global wealth was not only the result of erroneous policies, based on the assumption that in the end, despite temporary lags, everybody would benefit from growth. The exclusion of people was to a large extent due to systemic failures, more than policy failures. Economic and political systems of countries were inherently flawed, unjust, biased against unprivileged people, who are powerless and poor. Poor people were bound to remain poor because they had been denied fair access to the means necessary to empower themselves: capital, information, knowledge, credit, technology, water, a fertile soil, affordable energy, a safe habitat, and other necessary resources.

These insights led to the adoption of seven Millennium Development Goals, selected in order to cut world poverty in half, in a period of fifteen years. In the Declaration poverty was defined in different terms: not only insufficient income, but also, for instance, unemployment, hunger and malnutrition, inadequate access to drinking water and primary education, child mortality and maternal health. Other dimensions and indicators of poverty could have been selected, but the set as a whole did offer a truthful picture of people's welfare, its level, composition and shortcomings.

Cutting world poverty in half was quite an ambitious goal. However, if the ambition would not go beyond the first half of the world's poor, permanently disregarding the other half, this would have been disappointing. However, the Millennium Declaration clearly stated that the ultimate aim was to 'free the entire human race from want'. This could only be read as an aim to fully eradicate poverty. Halving poverty within a period of fifteen years had never before been accomplished.

During the fifteen years allotted to these goals they have not been met, anyway not by all countries and not fully. However, greater progress has been achieved than sceptics had expected. For that reason for the period after 2015 new goals were adopted, broader and more ambitious: the Sustainable Development Goals. Safeguarding the natural environment of all people on the earth is a key objective. To reach that objective would require inclusion of people which run the risk of being marginalized or even excluded, the poor and very poor. However, goal setting is not a numbers game. Poverty has many dimensions. A person can be poor in absolute terms, but also relatively (in comparison to others), or in terms of relations with other people, but also

mentally, in his or her own mind. So, assessments of poverty should focus on the quality of the process of development, a person's subjective experience of progress, and his or her personal perception of fully belonging to a society, rather than quantitative and measurable indicators.

World poverty may have been brought down with somewhat less than 50%, the goal which had been set in the Millennium Declaration, lifting the other half of the world's poor out of unworthy and inhuman circumstances would require a different approach. There are reasons why people belong to a poorer second half of the world's poor and why they can be reached less easily, or not at all, with the help of traditional policy instruments. Many of those people cannot be reached with the help of market instruments, because they don't have access to the market. Many cannot be reached with the help of public instruments of the state either, because state authorities are not interested, or have a bias against the communities to which these people belong. From their side people may have completely lost confidence in public authorities, and in supposedly democratic procedures. They may have different values or beliefs. They may be held in subjection to social control. They may be victims of oppression, discrimination, conflict or war. They may be more vulnerable, living in the worst parts of the earth: dry, polluted, unhealthy, and prone to floods, hurricanes or earthquakes. They may be ignorant or, rather, prefer to live inspired by a different wisdom.

So, policies with the aim of cutting the other half of poverty to nil, poverty should be based on a thorough analysis of the origins and causes of poverty of specific groups of people: different regions within a country; distinct age groups of men and women; specific cultural, religious, ethnic or national minorities, tribes and indigenous groups; special categories of the rural population and of urban slums, and so on. The poorer people are, the farther they are beyond the reach of the market and the state; the more they have been excluded - or feel excluded - by both the market and the state, the greater the need to tailor anti-poverty policies to the specific circumstances in which they live.

The other half: they are the extreme poor people mentioned in this book. They have, as argued by Anika Altaf, the author of the book, many different faces, mostly hidden. They have difficulty participating in the society to which they belong, often have been excluded from society, or feel excluded because other people label them as unworthy or inferior. Not seldom they have also been excluded from well-meant but wrongly focused development interventions.

As a policy maker in the seventies I had been involved in such interventions, including those meant to address basic human needs. Our aim was to reach out to “the poorest of the poor”, the jargon of those days. We were not naïve: we dismissed top down approaches, we held dear principles of bottom up development and local participation, we knew that fighting poverty implied fighting inequality, we were aware of cultural diversities and constraints and we understood that long-drawn poverty often resulted from colonial oppression by the same countries which were preaching the gospel of development. But maybe that because we understood all this and wanted to deal with all the intricacies concerned, we became naïve again: naïvely believing that it was really possible to fully do away with poverty.

Around ten years later I read a dissertation written by one of my colleagues, Brigitte Erler, who for many years had been active in the field of international development cooperation. The title of her book was *Tödliche Hilfe. Bericht von meiner letzten Dienstreise in Sachen Entwicklungshilfe.* (Freiburg, Dreisam Verlag, 1985) Her last official journey indeed, because her book was meant as a farewell, based on deep-seated feelings of disillusion. Many of her criticisms were well known. Most of those referred to abusing development aid in order to serve the interests of donor countries, rather than people in developing countries. I shared such criticism, but I had not been disillusioned by the practices which I had witnessed. However, I was struck by one of her arguments in particular: it is impossible to reach out to the poorest of the poor in a small village in the remote areas of Bangladesh, because in the same village there is always a small layer of somewhat less poor people. The less poor have the power, economic power, political power and the power of the network to which they belong. They will always use their, however small it is, to reap the fruits of progress, however small those may be, and to deny access to the extreme poor. This is unavoidable and for this reason development interventions from outside are bound to fail. So far Brigitte Erler.

I must confess that I have never found a convincing answer to this argument. I refused to be disillusioned myself, preferred to see this as a major challenge, worked even harder to do the right thing and sought ways and means to address a remaining twinge of conscience. During the decades thereafter, designing, negotiating and implementing development interventions meant to lift people out of poverty and misery, I heard some success stories and witnessed quite a few disappointments. But I felt that I did not have the right to be disillusioned, because there was always another route which could be tried.

So, the lesson I drew was: do not give up, but intensify the efforts, challenge conventional wisdoms and study. Study and ask questions, accept counter arguments and criticism, and listen. Go to the field, meet poor people and do not shy away from meeting the poorest of them. Go, watch, listen, feel, smell, taste and meet.

That is what Anika Altaf has done studying extreme poor people in a number of countries: Bangladesh, Benin and Ethiopia. She came home with new insights, enriching our common knowledge and paving the way for interventions which truly aim at inclusive development.

Jan Pronk

Abbreviations and acronyms

AF	Alkire Foster
BLI	Your Better Life Index
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CBN	Cost-of-basic-needs
CFPR-TUP	Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction-Targeting the Ultra-Poor
CGAP	Consultative Group to Assist the Poor
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
DFID	Department for International Development
FEI	Food-Energy-Intake
FFW	Food-for-Work
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IGT	Intergenerational transmission of poverty
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPHI	Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative
PADev	Participatory Assessment of Development
RPF	Resource Profiles Framework
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SGDs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLA	Sustainable Livelihoods Approach
TZ	Tuo Zaafi
UN	United Nations
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
WeD	Wellbeing in Developing Countries
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHOQOL	World Health Organisation Quality of Life Group

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Executive summary

Introduction and problem statement

Since the start of this millennium, the poorest half of the world has received a mere one per cent of the total increase in global wealth, while half of the increase in wealth went to 62 individuals (Oxfam, 2016). Despite decennia of devoting energy and money to development programmes, the documented results have been disappointing (Gough, McGregor & Camfield, 2006). In many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, growth has been, at best, modest and coupled with increasing poverty (Gough *et al.*, 2006).

There is growing attention for this inequality through the debate on inclusive development for the most marginalised (Gupta, Pouw & Ros-Tonen, 2015). A commitment to “leave no one behind” has been made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UNSCEB, 2017, p. ii). With the current technological advances, there is no longer a need for people to suffer as a result of poverty (UNA-UK, 2013). Furthermore, extreme poor people cannot sit around and hope for good governance to emerge or economic growth to trickle down, they may die waiting for it or have their capabilities disabled or destroyed (Lawson, Hulme, Matin & Moore, 2010). Hence, the commitment made in the Sustainable Development Goals should be upheld; not only for moral reasons, but also to counter several (global) issues, e.g. inequality fuelling anger, alienation, nationalism and xenophobia (Basu, 2017), environmental degradation due to the dependency and overuse of environmental resources by (extreme) poor people (Angelsen & Vainio, 1998). The impact of environmental degradation locally can have severe global impacts (Van der Heijden, 2016). In an increasingly globalised world, the effects of environmental exploitation and degradation in one place will affect people elsewhere on the planet, e.g. in terms of export of food and resources and air pollution as a result of deforestation (Van der Heijden, 2016). Thus, it is not only extreme poor people who are affected by growing inequality, we all can be!

While the inclusion of extreme poor people is a noble and necessary objective, it is challenging, and attempts to include extreme poor people in development interventions have often been disappointing (Lawson *et al.*, 2010; Kazimierzczuk, 2010a, 2010b; Pouw *et al.*, 2016; Altaf & Pouw, 2017; Lawson, Ado-Kofie & Hulme, 2017). Deeper understanding of e.g. mechanisms of in- and exclusion of extreme poor people, the structural causes of extreme poverty and the desirability of a univocal definition are

required. The aim of this book is to contribute to such an understanding through an analysis of extreme poor people and their multiple dimensions of wellbeing: material, relational and cognitive. The structural causes of their poverty and processes of in- and exclusion of the extreme poor at different levels, i.e. family, community and at institutional level, are scrutinised. Furthermore, discourses and practices applied by development agencies in order to draw lessons about how the extreme poor can be sustainably included in development interventions based on original field research carried out in Bangladesh, Benin, and (rural and urban) Ethiopia, are studied.

Contributions to knowledge

This book contributes to several gaps in knowledge, both on a theoretical and a practical level, within the field of International Development Studies: 1) building further knowledge on the disaggregation of poverty through the investigation of differences between poor and extreme poor people and by paying attention to different categories within the category of extreme poor people; 2) economic definitions and measurements of poverty, including income and consumption levels, at regional, national and international levels, prevail. Nevertheless, there is growing recognition of definitions including multiple deprivations or forms of illbeing to build a sound understanding of the dynamics and causes of poverty and ill- and wellbeing. In particular, the cognitive dimension of ill- and wellbeing remains underexposed in poverty research, especially research conducted in the Global South. Therefore, this book addresses the cognitive dimension of ill- and wellbeing alongside the material and relational dimensions; 3) using an ill- and wellbeing lens to approach poverty is relatively new within the social sciences and the field of International Development Studies. Researching (subjective) wellbeing can contribute to enhance understandings of the processes behind in- and exclusion of extreme poor people in development interventions, as both people's own perceptions of their capabilities and resources, as well as structures (e.g. political, socio-cultural and environmental) surrounding them, are considered; 4) there is still much ground to be explored on causes of (extreme) poverty. These (structural and individual) causes can be important to grasp processes of in- and exclusion of extreme poor people. Furthermore, this book answers the call of the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) for the collection of more qualitative data and in particular life histories; 5) participatory approaches have the potential to empower poor people, making them visible and giving them voice. Nevertheless, there is little known about whether such potential is present for extreme poor people as well. This

research investigates this potential by making use of participatory research methods; 6) the book contributes to practical knowledge about targeting practices and programme designs of development interventions to include extreme poor people through the case studies.

Research questions

To address the problem statement and the knowledge gaps described above, the following research questions have been developed:

The overarching research questions for this book are: (1) How are extreme poor people included or excluded by development interventions? (2) What are the lessons learnt from discourses and practices that development agencies applied in the case studies in Bangladesh, Benin and Ethiopia?

The sub-questions are:

- (I) How are extreme poor people conceptualized in the literature and how does this differ from the definitions of poor people?
- (II) According to the literature, what are the causes of extreme poverty?
- (III) How are extreme poor people defined and categorised by the local communities in the selected research locations and how does this differ from the definitions of poor people in these locations presented by the local communities?
- (IV) What are the causes of being extreme poor in multiple dimensions of wellbeing and are these reproduced through context specific social and political institutions and power relations in the selected research locations?
- (V) What targeting strategies (concepts, methods and implementation) to include the extreme poor are applied by development interventions in the selected research locations?
- (VI) What explains the relative failures and successes of inclusive development interventions for extreme poor people?

Methodology

To answer the research questions, the research is based on interpretivism as the epistemology, assuming that reality is socially constructed and multiple realities can coexist. This implies that extreme poverty is time-, culture-

and value-bound and is relational. The ontology upon which this research is based, is constructivism, whereby humans construct knowledge through interaction with the world.

A qualitative inductive approach, inspired by the methodology and framework of the ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries, was used with comparative case studies as an overarching methodology supported by PADev (Participatory Assessment of Development). In total, four case studies were conducted, a rural case in Bangladesh, another rural case study in Benin and two case studies in Ethiopia, one rural, one urban, in order to compare extreme illbeing in both contexts.

A mix of qualitative methods are used in this research: 1) PADev methods: essentially the PADev approach focuses on local people's own perceptions of the impact of development interventions on their and their community member's lives in the context of wider changes that have occurred in their society from a long-term perspective (Dietz *et al.*, 2013; Pouw *et al.*, 2016, p. 3). But the PADev exercises also release inter-subjective knowledge from the interactive discussions between focus group members themselves. In total, 152 locals with various socio-economic backgrounds participated in these focus group discussions; 2) life histories with locally defined extreme poor people, 71 extreme poor people participated; 3) institutional interviews (development agencies, government institutions, religious institutions, etc.), 16 interviews were conducted; 4) several informal interviews in the studied villages and slum areas. Additionally, two focus group discussions in Bangladesh were conducted with sex workers and people with intersex conditions, and one day was spent observing at a soup kitchen in Addis Ababa, conducting informal interviews with people visiting the soup kitchen. The fieldwork for this research was carried out in three blocks in 2012 and 2013, amounting to approximately 28 weeks. During these three blocks, both primary and secondary data for this research was collected.

The data collected during the fieldwork was analysed using meta-analysis and narrative synthesis (PADev workshops), thematic coding (life histories and institutional interviews) and document analysis (institutional interviews). The prime units of analysis and observation in this research were extreme poor people and development agencies carrying out interventions (aimed for extreme poor people).

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework upon which this research is based consists of two parts: 1) which poverty approach(es) is/are most desirable as guiding theoretical framework to study extreme poor people; 2) how are extreme poor people defined in the theoretical literature, how are they differentiated from poor people and what underlying factors are identified that explain extreme illbeing/poverty. Additionally, literature concerning existing and past development interventions that have included extreme poor people in their interventions is reviewed in order to draw lessons.

The literature review of poverty approaches provides an overview of the most important approaches, including the monetary approach, the capability approach, the participatory approach, the livelihoods approach, the relational approach, the multidimensional approach and the wellbeing approach. The strength and limitations of each approach are discussed in this review and the (potential) contribution to this research. The review concludes by stating that this research draws predominantly on the wellbeing approach, conceptualising humans as social beings who strive to improve their wellbeing in relation to others. Extreme poor people are placed at the centre of the analysis, but in relation to their family, community and wider society. By doing so, insights into possible processes of in- and exclusion can be uncovered. Furthermore, focusing on extreme poor people's wellbeing (or sources of illbeing) changes the perspective from studying their 'deficits' to what they are able to be and do and thus views them as active agents. The following definition of wellbeing is adopted in this research: "A state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals, and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life." (ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries, 2007, p. 1) This research makes use of McGregor's (2004) three dimensions of the wellbeing framework, i.e. "material (material determinants of quality of life), relational (people's quality of life in respect of the relationships that are important for them in their social and physical environment) and cognitive (people's satisfaction with what they are able to have and do in any given natural or societal context)" (Pouw & McGregor, 2014, p. 16).

Besides the wellbeing approach, this research draws on the relational approach by paying attention to power relations and political and social-cultural inequalities (Ferguson, 1994; O'Connor, 2001; Harriss-White, 2005a; Harriss, 2007; Hickey & Du Toit, 2007; Mosse, 2010; Mosley, 2012). This

approach is used to help uncover underlying (structural) causes of extreme poor people.

Furthermore, the participatory approach is included through (extreme) poor people's own perceptions on their lives and their (extreme) poverty/illbeing (Chambers, 1988, 1992, 1997). This approach plays a particularly important role in the methodology of this research as described above.

In sum, extreme illbeing in this research is approached from a wellbeing perspective, as a multidimensional concept that is subject to relational aspects of poverty and takes a bottomup participatory approach that is predominantly qualitative.

From the literature review concerning extreme poverty, it can be concluded that the conceptualisation of extreme poor people is ambiguous. Nevertheless, there is a growing consensus that extreme poverty is multidimensional, longitudinal and requires definitions beyond merely economic aspects (e.g. Drèze, 2002; Harris-White, 2002; Devereux, 2003; Lawson *et al.* 2010). However, literature concerning definitions and measurements /assessments of extreme poverty appear to lack attention to the cognitive dimension of wellbeing. Furthermore, differentiations between poor people and extreme poor people are rare and, if present, made on a material level. While the literature identifies several different (structural) causes/causes of extreme poverty (poor work opportunities, denial of or limited citizenship, insecurities, (social) discrimination, and spatial disadvantage (Addison *et al.*, 2008, p. vii; Lawson *et al.*, 2010, pp. 263-264), it suggests building further knowledge of the causes/causes of extreme poverty and their interrelation. What causes and sustains extreme poverty is not always straightforward and there is still much to learn with regards to developing an in-depth understanding of the individual and structural causes.

The literature on 'successful' interventions for extreme poor people suggests holistic interventions, combining different elements such as social protection, economic promotion and attention to cognitive aspects of poverty, are most desirable (Lawson *et al.* 2010; Lawson *et al.*, 2017). Extreme poor people do not benefit from single instruments like poor people do. Multiple instruments including non-material elements are required. Furthermore, extreme poor people require targeted support and do not benefit from opportunity alone. While it is important and possible to draw lessons from 'successful' interventions, they need to be adapted to the context they are being implemented in (Lawson *et al.*, 2017). 'Successful' interventions for

extreme poor people are relatively new and their long-term impact and whether results achieved are sustainable is yet unclear and requires further investigation. The literature on extreme poverty is used as an analytical hook to study development agencies in the case study areas attempting to include extreme poor people. This means that conceptualisations of extreme poor and poor people, the strategies to targeting extreme poor people and the implementation of these strategies are explored.

Findings

It is difficult, if not impossible, to point out a single cause that pushes people into extreme poverty. There can be a main cause that drives people into poverty, such as a disaster, an illness, old age, being cast out by family or even depression; however, it is frequently a combination of multiple factors and events that keeps people trapped in extreme poverty. People mostly experience extreme poverty as a result of individual causes, but remain extreme poor due to structural causes, such as poor work opportunities, lack of citizenship, spatial traps and cultural values and norms.

Extreme poor people do not belong to a homogenous group, amongst them are e.g. migrants, victims of natural disasters, vagrants, people with disabilities, chronically ill, orphans, elderly, addicts, sex workers and people with intersex conditions. Broadly, however, they can be divided into (i) those that require permanent or long-term assistance or support (e.g. people with mental health disabilities), and (ii) those that require temporary assistance or support and can eventually sustain themselves again. Apart from the studied NGO in Addis Ababa, the vast majority of development interventions in the case study areas were unsuccessful in including anyone from these two categories in their development interventions. This can be explained by the lack of clear conceptualisation of extreme poor people, the lack of (proper) targeting (e.g. methods susceptible to nepotism and elite capture), the lack of transparency in the targeting process, as well as the lack of (consistent) monitoring and evaluation from the side of NGOs and government institutions.

Furthermore, alongside institutional exclusion, the inability to include extreme poor people can be attributed to what this research refers to as a two-way process of exclusion. On the one hand, social exclusion of extreme poor people by their family and community members; on the other hand, self-exclusion of extreme poor people.

The extreme poor people in this study often experienced mistreatment and were verbally and sometimes physically abused, made fun of or not even noticed at all, as if they did not exist. These forms of ill-treatment often left extreme poor participants feeling dehumanised. Exclusion by family (parents, partner, children) was considered especially painful and difficult. The lack of family affected the extreme poor participants materially (e.g. food or shelter), relationally (exclusion from family often meant lack of access to other social relations as well) and cognitively (negative self-image, sadness, hopelessness and depression).

Simultaneously, extreme poor people appeared to self-exclude. Negative encounters that implied their inferiority were internalised, which led to them actually feeling inferior. In all the rural case studies, the extreme poor participants described themselves predominantly in a negative manner. Their negative self-image and low levels of confidence may explain their often passive and fatalistic behaviour. They reported having little hope for improvement of their wellbeing. They felt unwanted and unwelcome in their community and wider society and, as a result, they tended to self-exclude. The case studies showed that extreme poor people did not attend community meetings, as they were convinced that they would not be included in any decision-making process by the average and rich wealth categories in their communities. Moreover, they felt ashamed of their wealth status and therefore avoided any social events. In the few cases where an extreme poor person was included in a poverty reduction intervention and was part of a group (e.g. savings group), they soon dropped out, because they felt out of place and uncomfortable.

In the case study conducted in the urban area, several poverty reduction interventions included extreme poor people, often in cooperation with the municipality. The reason behind this success is twofold; firstly, extreme poor people are more visible as they are predominantly clustered in one area, making it easier to identify extreme poor households. Furthermore, since it is predominantly poor and extreme poor people living in the area, and they are considered equal to each other socio-economically, they generally showed greater confidence and had higher levels of self-esteem and a more positive self-image than extreme poor people in the rural areas. Furthermore, they shared networks and valuable information with each other, such as job opportunities or chances of receiving assistance. Secondly, the poverty reduction agencies (in particular the studied NGO) active in the area appeared to have thorough and transparent targeting systems (sometimes a

combination of different targeting methods), and thorough M&E systems in place that were open to revision and critique if necessary.

Conclusions

This research concludes that extreme poverty is theoretically contested and conceptually blurred, which makes the discourse on extreme poverty unclear. This research proposes the following definition of a long-term state of extreme illbeing:

The extreme poor are those facing severe and chronic deprivations in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing: material, i.e. they cannot meet subsistence needs; relational, they are socially, politically and legally excluded and invisible (at family, community and institutional level); and cognitive, they experience severe mental stress, self-exclude, have a negative self-image, low confidence levels, and are often fatalistic and passive. They have little hope and opportunity to climb out of their chronic state of illbeing and frequently depend on charity, predominantly in the form of food.

This definition is in line with and combines the work of Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher, & Koch-Schulte (1999), the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (Hulme, Moore & Shepherd, 2001), Drèze (2002), Harriss-White (2002), Devereux (2003), Lawson *et al.* (2010) and Lawson *et al.* (2017). The definition proposed in this research differs from other definitions of extreme poverty in that it combines different aspects of definitions of the aforementioned authors and, most importantly, pays specific attention to the cognitive dimension and, in particular, the psychosocial aspects of self-exclusionary behaviour of extreme poor people. Furthermore, this definition is a plea to define extreme poverty beyond the material dimension, often measured through monetary metric measures. The case studies have shown that monetary income is difficult to estimate for extreme poor people, due to seasonal fluctuation or due to its absence.

While it is generally safe to say that extreme poor people face deprivations in the three dimensions of wellbeing, this research concludes that definitions and measurements of extreme poor people are best defined and understood locally to capture important context specific accents and details.

This research differentiated between poor people and extreme poor people and concludes that while there are apparent differences in the material

dimension of wellbeing, this is not the decisive factor. The biggest difference (in the rural case studies) is seen in the socialrelational and cognitive dimension. Poor people were generally not excluded from their societies and took part in community groups and meetings and had access to important networks (family, community, institutions). Moreover, they were perceived much less negatively than extreme poor people. Furthermore, deprivations in the relational and cognitive dimensions often led (directly or indirectly) to deprivations in the material dimension. This is an important insight, since the (few) differentiations that were made in the literature (Chapter 3) between poor and extreme poor people (e.g. Lipton, 1983 and the CPRC (Hulme *et al.*, 2001) were focused on the material dimension of wellbeing.

While the causes pushing people into extreme poverty are mostly at an individual or household level, the sustainers of extreme poverty are structural. Contrary to the individual causes, these structural sustainers are context specific and can be broken down into the five main causes of extreme poverty identified by CPRC (Addison *et al.*, 2008) and Lawson *et al.* (2010). These are: poor work opportunities (Ethiopia rural), denial of or limited citizenship (Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia urban), insecurities (Bangladesh), (social) discrimination (Benin and Bangladesh), and spatial disadvantage (Jeldu). These structural causes and sustainers kept extreme poor people in the case study areas in survival mode and prevented them from establishing a safety net and being able to invest in long-term wellbeing measures (e.g. education, healthcare, social networks, mental wellbeing).

In conclusion, both the relational and the wellbeing approach were necessary in order to capture micro/individual/household processes of (extreme) illbeing and the more macro/structural processes of inclusion and exclusion of extreme poor people. By bridging these two approaches, this research transcends both the individualistic agency approach, which equates poverty with a lack of income, and the more structuralist approach, which sees poverty as the product of structural inequalities (only). This research therefore proposes a more comprehensive approach towards (extreme) illbeing that derives its principles from a range of sources: (i) multi-dimensional human wellbeing (ii) lifetime dynamics, and (iii) agency and structure, to carry out research on extreme poor people and their ill-/wellbeing.

On a methodological level, this research concludes that participatory research methods, in this case PADev, in order to gather context specific information, prove to be a useful tool when studying extreme poor people. The methods have been specifically helpful in identifying the different wealth

categories in the research areas, making it easier to locally identify the extreme poor. At the same time, these methods provide a broader context of historical, political and socio-cultural information from the perspective of locals. As Robb (2002) stated, this deepens the understanding of poverty. However, participatory methods alone are not sufficient for studying extreme poor people. The intention of participatory research to give agency and voice to the poor by engaging them in poverty research, however, does not necessarily work for extreme poor people. They did not attend the meetings and even when organising separate meetings with the extreme poor, they were sometimes reluctant to voice their concerns, but most importantly they lacked information on certain topics and could therefore not give their opinion. For example, during one of the exercises conducted as part of a participatory workshop, the extreme poor were asked to list and evaluate poverty reduction interventions in their area. Since they were unaware of many of the interventions, they could not participate in this exercise. What did yield a wealth of information, however, was the life histories; not only because the extreme poor are more comfortable sharing things one on one, but also because it provides information over a long period of time, allowing the researcher to analyse different aspects of poverty, such as the dynamics, causes and different dimensions of extreme poverty. Thus, the combination of participatory research and life histories is highly recommended for studying the extreme poor. However, reciprocating the methods used in this research requires a lot of effort, is very time consuming and both physically and (especially) mentally straining.

On a practical level, this research concludes that the bulk of development interventions attempting to include extreme poor people in the rural case study areas, in fact were unable to reach these people or excluded them. The studied development agencies lacked clear targeting strategies (i.e. local conceptualisations of extreme poor people, differentiation between poor and extreme poor people, targeting methods and implementation). Development agencies showed neither attention to (interrelations between) relational and cognitive aspects of ill-/wellbeing, nor to individual causes that trigger extreme poverty and context-specific structural causes that keep people extreme poor. While development agencies in the urban case study appeared to include extreme poor people (due to sound targeting strategies), most development agencies paid attention to multiple dimensions of poverty, however, there was little to no attention to the psychosocial aspect of poverty. This research shows that there is a likelihood that this may influence the sustainability of an intervention in the long run. Furthermore, here too attention to individual and context-specific structural causes of extreme poverty was missing.

Recommendations

This research present several recommendations towards including extreme poor people and addressing their state of extreme illbeing:

Context specific conceptualisations

Since poor people and extreme poor people clearly belong to different categories and extreme poor people are not a sub-category within the category of poor people, any attempt to include extreme poor people should start with a solid context-specific conceptualization and understanding of extreme poor people – a conceptualization and understanding that includes (i) multi-dimensional human wellbeing and their interrelations (ii) lifetime dynamics, and (iii) agency and structure.

Multiple forms of exclusion

This research has shown an important interrelation between social exclusion/adverse incorporation and self-exclusion. Both processes are to be considered in the design of interventions aiming to include extreme poor people. It is important to state that instruments to counter social exclusion/adverse incorporation mechanisms should be designed after context-specific exclusionary mechanisms and controlling forces are identified.

Holistic interventions

This research shows that in order to lift extreme poor people, who require temporary aid, out of their extreme state of illbeing, a holistic intervention is necessary. Hence, an intervention that pays attention to not only asset transfers, but also skill training, coaching, takes a community approach of local communities and elites and makes them responsible in ensuring inclusion of extreme poor people. However, carrying out such interventions require high capacity organisation and administration (financing, complex targeting systems, analysing complicated data, expertise, thorough M&E). These type of interventions are hard to reproduce and implement by low capacity development agencies. Moreover, further research will have to

reflect on its long-term effects and whether the initial successes are sustained over time.

Social protection policies

Social protection policies are also essential in addressing those extreme poor people who require permanent or long term assistance (e.g. elderly, people with severe disabilities). Development interventions that have been able to address extreme poor people focus on 'economically active' extreme poor people. This means that 'economically inactive' extreme poor people are and will be excluded from these interventions. Taking responsibility for the human wellbeing of these people is a responsibility of society collectively.

Global responsibility

This is an invitation to fellow researchers and organizations/institutions to look at the macro level to research the relations between extreme poverty, in- and exclusion and inequality and macro processes and policies, because the majority of development agencies in the studied cases hardly address the multiple causes of (extreme) poverty. They provide relief and assistance to individuals or communities, but often do not address the underlying (macro) causes, e.g. corruption, lack of citizenship, elitism, climate change and cultural traditions sustaining systems of values reproducing extreme poverty. Some agencies even contributed to and reproduced existing causes. The effect of this is that people continue to fall into (extreme) poverty. Development agencies and government authorities are advised to address and pay more attention to the multiple causes of (extreme) poverty in their interventions to prevent rather than cure (extreme) poverty; in other words, to work systematically instead of predominantly symptomatically. Moreover, the international community also has a responsibility to engage in diminishing the macro level causes that are affecting the Global South, such as the climate change and trade liberalisation policies causing cuts in the revenue base of some countries in the Global South. There is a need to diverge from a neo-liberal agenda and move towards paying substantial attention to power inequities and focus on the human dimension. Hence, eradicating poverty and especially extreme poverty is not only the responsibility and concern of the Global South, but requires global commitment and effort. Only then can we realise the goal of 'leaving no one behind'!



1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Today, 900 million people are living in extreme poverty, on less than \$1.90 a day (Sulaiman, Goldberg, Karlan & De Montesquiou, 2016). At the same time, the world's richest one per cent own more wealth than the rest of the world combined and in 2015, 62 individuals together had as much wealth as the poorest 3.6 billion people (Oxfam, 2016). Since the start of this millennium, the poorest half of the world has received a mere one per cent of the total increase in global wealth, while half of the increase in wealth went to the few people at the top (Oxfam, 2016). Despite decennia of devoting energy and money on development programmes, the documented results have been disappointing (Gough, McGregor & Camfield, 2006). In many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, growth has been at best modest and coupled with increasing poverty (Ibid.).

There is increasing attention for the debate on inclusive development, which specifically calls for the inclusion of the most marginalized populations and builds on three pillars: 1) increased human wellbeing without discrimination, 2) social and environmental sustainability, 3) voice and empowerment (Gupta, Pouw & Ros-Tonen, 2015). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development pleads for the inclusion of people living in extreme poverty and a promise to “leave no one behind” (UN, 2014, p. 11; UNSCEB, 2017, p. ii). Today's world is marked by great wealth and technological advances, hence there should be no need for anyone to suffer as a result of poverty (UNA-UK, 2013). Furthermore, those facing extreme poverty cannot afford to wait for the emergence of good governance or economic growth to trickle down as they may die in the process or see their capabilities destroyed or disabled (Lawson, Hulme, Matin & Moore, 2010). This plea however is not solely on moral or social justice grounds; there are many other good arguments in favour of inclusion of those facing extreme poverty. Basu (2017) stated that with the rising inequality comes a “surging sense of disenfranchisement” that has led to anger and alienation and even caused nationalism and xenophobia.¹

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/04/why-reducing-inequality-could-be-a-matter-of-survival/>.

Conflicts, violence, insecurity and injustice often have their roots in social and economic deprivations and inequality (UNA-UK, 2013). Structural inequalities also lead to situations of adverse inclusion (Hickey & Du Toit, 2007). Moreover, adhering to development as freedom, according to Sen (2001), would imply that people also have a right to opt-out (Cornwall, 2008).

At an environmental level, poor people are both agents and victims of environmental degradation; they are dependent on their environmental resources and often overuse them in order to survive. At the same time, this degradation makes their survival even harder (Angelsen & Vainio, 1998). The impact of environmental degradation locally, however, can have severe global impacts (Van der Heijden, 2016). In an increasingly globalized world, the effects of environmental exploitation and degradation in one place affect people around the world, e.g. in terms of export of food and resources and air pollution as a result of deforestation (Ibid.).

In addition, several studies have shown an association between people that are poor, unemployed or low educated and mental and emotional health issues (e.g. depression and low self-esteem) (Belle, 1990; Kuruvilla & Jacob, 2007; WHO, 2013). Happy people tend to show more positive work behaviour and other desirable characteristics, such as volunteering (Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2002) and can thus contribute in a more “productive way” to society than those who are unhappy.

The eradication of extreme poverty is primarily ethically grounded, but strengthened by social-economic and environmental arguments that affect not only extreme poor people, but people globally. Ultimately, the battle against inequality is a win-win situation.

1.2 Problem statement

Thus the inclusion of extreme poor people is a noble and necessary objective. However, reaching extreme poor people with development interventions has proven to be a difficult and often unsuccessful task (Lawson *et al.*, 2010; Kazimierzczuk, 2010a, 2010b; Pouw *et al.*, 2016). The literature shows that extreme poor people are distinctly different from poor people and therefore require a different approach in terms of targeting and reaching them (see Chapter 3). And, although the literature specifically addressing extreme poor people is growing (Lawson *et al.*, 2010; Lawson, Ado-Kofie & Hulme, 2017), there are still many issues that require more longitudinal and deeper

investigation. These include e.g. the structural causes of extreme poverty, whether a univocal definition of extreme poor people can be developed and is desirable, and how extreme poor people can be targeted and what role context plays in this (see Chapter 3).

Therefore, in order to meet the first goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), i.e. to end poverty in all its forms everywhere and to secure the promise that is central to the SDG: “to leave no one behind” (UN, 2014, p. 11; UNSCEB, 2017, p. ii), a critical inquiry and understanding of who extreme poor people are, what the structural causes of their poverty are, what the mechanisms of their inclusion or exclusion in development interventions are, and how they can be targeted and included, is necessary. The aim of this book is to try to contribute to such an understanding through an analysis of extreme poor people and their multiple dimensions of wellbeing - material, relational and cognitive. The structural causes of their poverty and processes of in- and exclusion of the extreme poor at different levels, i.e. family, community and at institutional level, are scrutinised. Furthermore, this book addresses discourses and practices applied by development agencies in order to draw lessons on how the extreme poor can be sustainably included in development interventions based on original field research carried out in Bangladesh, Benin and (rural and urban) Ethiopia.

1.3 Contributions to knowledge

This book contributes to several gaps in knowledge, both on a theoretical and a practical level, within the field of International Development Studies. First, much of the current literature on poverty distinguishes poor people from non-poor people and, although attention to the differences between poor people and extreme poor people is growing, there is a need not only for more knowledge on the disaggregation of poverty and what it means to different groups of poor people, but also on what the underlying causes are. This research contributes to deepening such understandings by critically investigating definitions and differences between poor people and extreme poor people through the selected case studies and by reviewing the literature. Furthermore, this book also pays attention to the different categories of extreme poor people.

Secondly, the economic dimension of poverty, including income and consumption levels, prevails in defining and measuring poverty at regional, national and international levels. Nevertheless, there is growing recognition that poverty needs to be defined beyond the economic dimension, in terms of its multiple deprivations or forms of illbeing, in order to understand its dynamics and underlying causes. The cognitive dimension of poverty, for example, has remained underexposed in poverty research. The multifaceted effects of deprivation on poor people in this regard, and on extreme poor people in particular, require closer investigation. Literature studying the relationship between poverty and mental illbeing, especially in the South, is scarce. This research considers and studies the multiple dimensions of poverty, with special attention to the cognitive dimension of poverty.

Thirdly, looking at poverty through the lens of wellbeing is relatively new within the social sciences and the field of International Development Studies. In particular, the relationship between subjective wellbeing and poverty is currently underdeveloped, despite a great need for better understanding in this regard. Studying (subjective) wellbeing may provide useful insights for explaining the processes behind the inclusion or exclusion of extreme poor people in development interventions, as it considers both people's own perceptions of what they think they have and can do, as well as the structures (e.g. political, socio-cultural) surrounding them. Moreover, theories of (subjective) wellbeing have been mostly tested in a Western context and from an individualistic perspective. This book will therefore provide insights into and build further on the conceptual knowledge of wellbeing related to poverty in the South.

Fourthly, without a thorough understanding of the underlying (structural) causes of extreme poverty, it is not possible to understand the complex processes of inclusion and exclusion of extreme poor people. There is still much to learn regarding the causes. The Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) calls for the collection of more qualitative and quantitative panel data and life histories in order to fill this knowledge gap (Addison *et al.*, 2008). This research attempts to contribute to this by undertaking qualitative research, including life histories of extreme poor people.

Fifthly, participatory approaches within poverty research are considered effective ways of including the poor in the decision-making processes of development interventions, making participants visible and giving them a voice in doing the research and designing interventions. However, while participatory approaches may be empowering for 'poor people', little is

known about their effect on the sustainable empowerment of extreme poor people. The latter is therefore explored in this book, as this research makes use of participatory research methods.

Finally, this research builds on the (practical) knowledge about targeting practices and programme designs of development interventions for the inclusion of extreme poor people. It does so using the outcomes of the selected case studies. This book aims to contribute to building further understanding of the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of the extreme poor in development interventions.

1.4 Research questions

The overarching research questions for this research are: (1) How are extreme poor people included or excluded by development interventions? (2) What are the lessons learnt from discourses and practices that development agencies applied in the case studies in Bangladesh, Benin and Ethiopia?

The sub-questions are:

- (vii) How are extreme poor people conceptualized in the literature and how does this differ from the definitions of poor people?
- (viii) According to the literature, what are the causes of extreme poverty?
- (ix) How are extreme poor people defined and categorised by the local communities in the selected research locations and how does this differ from the definitions of poor people in these locations presented by the local communities?
- (x) What are the causes of being extreme poor in multiple dimensions of wellbeing and are these reproduced through context specific social and political institutions and power relations in the selected research locations?
- (xi) What targeting strategies (concepts, methods and implementation) to include the extreme poor are applied by development interventions in the selected research locations?
- (xii) What explains the relative failures and successes of inclusive development interventions for extreme poor people?

1.5 Epistemology and ontology

The epistemology upon which this research is based, is interpretivism, whereby it is assumed that reality is socially constructed and multiple realities can coexist. This implies that (extreme) poverty is time, context, culture and value bound and is relational. (Extreme) poverty is constituted in the interaction between agents and social structures. The ontology upon which this research is based, is constructivism, whereby knowledge is constructed by humans through interaction with the world (e.g. Jean Piaget) (Harlow, Cummings & Aberasturi, 2007). This research uses a qualitative inductive approach and is inspired by the wellbeing methodology and framework developed by the ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries. Poverty in this research is approached from a wellbeing perspective, as a multidimensional concept, that is subject to material, relational and cognitive aspects of poverty or illbeing and takes a bottom-up participatory approach through the adoption of elements of the Participatory Assessment to Development (PADev) approach.

1.6 Research methodology

Literature review

In order to make a well-informed decision about which guiding framework is suitable for the study of poverty for this research, a literature review is conducted of the most important and influential poverty approaches (Chapter 2). In addition, literature specifically addressing extreme poor people, i.e. definitions, categories, structural causes, targeting and interventions, form the foundation of Chapter 3. The subsequent Chapters, 4 to 7, analyse the empirical data collected in Bangladesh, Benin and Ethiopia, whereby findings are crucially compared and contrasted with existing literature, specific to the context of the case studies.

Comparative case study and selection of case studies

The overarching methodology of this research is comparative case study. The purpose of a comparative case study is to uncover and compare mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of extreme poor people, and what this implies for development interventions in the selected research locations.

A recent research project on the development of a new methodology for monitoring and evaluation, namely Participatory Assessment of Development (PADev), presented a striking conclusion, namely that extreme poor people are not reached by the bulk of development interventions (Pouw *et al.*, 2016; Pouw and Baud, 2012). One of the partners in this research was the Dutch Non-Governmental Organization (hereafter, NGO) Woord en Daad. This organization aims to reach extreme poor people through their development interventions. The conclusions of the PAdDev project were reason enough for Woord en Daad to support further research into the difficulty of effectively reaching extreme poor people. Therefore, four case studies are conducted in three of Woord en Daad's partner countries, respectively, Bangladesh, Benin and two cases in Ethiopia. Although, Woord en Daad partner organizations have been selected and used as entry points into the respective communities, the research is carried out in a scientifically independently manner.

There are solid reasons for including Bangladesh as the first case study in this research. Firstly, Bangladesh is still amongst the poorest countries of the world. With an HDI of 0.579, it ranks 139 out of 188 (UNDP, 2016a). Even though improvement in social-economic indicators are visible, Bangladesh scores below average in comparison to other medium human development countries in South Asia. According to Bangladesh's Household Income and Expenditure survey of 2010, 17.6 per cent of the population belong to the extreme poor category (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2012). Secondly, there is an enormous NGO presence in the country and, in particular, many interventions that specifically address extreme poor people. Any successful interventions in this regard generally originate from the NGO BRAC. With a history of 41 years of doing development work, BRAC has considerable experience of undertaking participatory development work and experimenting with the targeting of extreme poor people. Over the years, BRAC has developed a method to target extreme poor people, called: 'Targeting the Ultra Poor (TUP)' programme (see Chapter 3.5).

It is worthwhile scrutinizing whether these attempts have indeed been successful and, if so, whether it is possible to reproduce this success in a different context, specifically in an African context. For obvious reasons, the research cannot include all NGOs in Bangladesh, but it takes the 'potential influence' of BRAC into account in the research areas and especially with regard to Woord en Daad's Bangladeshi partner and their approach to targeting extreme poor people.

The second location that was selected for a case study is Benin. The country is classified as a low human development country with an HDI of 0.485 (UNDP, 2016b). Despite improvements in the HDI, the country scores below average in comparison to other low human development countries (average HDI of 0.497) (UNDP, 2016b).

Benin was also selected on the basis of Woord en Daad's Beninese partner, which is implementing multiple types of interventions, e.g. in the education, economic and agricultural sector. This provides an opportunity to compare different types of interventions and examine whether certain interventions have greater potential than others to effectively reach and include extreme poor people.

Lastly, Ethiopia is included as a case study. Like Benin, Ethiopia is classified as a low human development country with an HDI of 0.448 (UNDP, 2016c). Two Ethiopian partner organizations of Woord en Daad were selected for this case study due to their experience in targeting extreme poor people. One of the partner organizations is also active in an urban context. Given that the other two case studies are in a rural context, it is important to include an urban environment as well, since 54 per cent of the world's population resides in an urban environment. It is estimated that the majority of Africa's and Asia's population will reside in urban areas by 2050, an expected 56% and 64%, respectively (UN DESA, 2014). The other Woord en Daad partner organization works in a rural area and was selected in an attempt to draw comparisons and differentiate with the two other rural case studies in Bangladesh and Benin.

The fieldwork for this research was carried out in three blocks in 2012 and 2013, amounting to approximately 28 weeks. The first fieldwork block was in Bangladesh from the beginning of April to mid-May 2012. From mid-October to mid-December 2012 the fieldwork in Benin was conducted. The third block of fieldwork was conducted at the beginning of February until the beginning of May 2013. During these three blocks both primary and secondary data for this research was collected.

Research methods and techniques

A mix of different qualitative research methods was used in this research. Firstly, a selection of methods from the PADev approach (workshops, focus group discussions) were used to gather context specific historical and holistic

information on poverty in a participatory and bottom-up manner. Before examining the PAdDev methods used in this research, it is important to briefly explain the PAdDev approach in order to understand the added value of the approach and choice of PAdDev methods for this research.

The PAdDev approach was developed between 2007 and 2013 in order to address shortcomings in existing methodologies for evaluating development interventions. Some of these shortcomings included: a focus on a single intervention, a focus on a short period of time (usually the period that an intervention was carried out), they were predominantly sponsor-driven, they were focused on input and output, interventions were evaluated in isolation and without attention to wider, regional developments, and the voices of intended beneficiaries were often neglected (Dietz *et al.*, 2013).

In response to these shortcomings, the PAdDev approach was developed as a participatory, holistic (not focused on one single development intervention) and bottom-up method that gives intended beneficiaries and local communities room to assess the impact of development interventions (linked to life changes in the area) according to their own perceptions (Ibid.). Thus people's values, experiences and knowledge are highly valued. The PAdDev approach differentiates between different subgroups existing in a community (e.g. old men, young women). Each of these subgroups may attribute different value to the same development intervention; in this way, the impact of development interventions can be interpreted differently across subgroups and diverse voices within the community can emerge from the assessment. New meaning is derived from subjective and inter-subjective knowledge by drawing on in-depth focus group discussions, and by identifying evaluation criteria for assessing development interventions in a participatory manner. The assertion is that through this stakeholder involvement, the PAdDev approach is an empowering tool and fosters transformative change within the community (Pouw *et al.*, 2016).

Essentially, the PAdDev approach focuses on local people's own perceptions of the impact of development interventions on their and their community member's lives in the context of wider, long-term changes that have occurred in their society (Ibid., p. 3). But the PAdDev exercises also release inter-subjective knowledge from the interactive discussions between focus group members. The PAdDev approach can play an important role in processes of local history writing, capacity development, knowledge sharing, providing input for community action plans and strategies (Ibid., p. 1).

In order to collect the data, the PADev approach makes use of three day-long workshops, whereby around 50 to 60 participants of different age and gender groups (i.e. old men, old women, young men, young women) and a group called “officials” (e.g. local leaders, religious leaders, teachers, administrators, NGO staff) are invited to represent a geographic area (Ibid.). With the help of facilitators, participants of the workshops are asked to complete nine exercises/modules:

1. Historical events (developing a time line of major events)
2. Changes and trends (describing historical changes in six domains)
3. Wealth classes (describing characteristics of wealth classes)
4. Inventory of projects (making an inventory of all interventions people experienced)
5. Assessment of projects (assessing each of these interventions)
6. Relation between changes and projects (finding which projects contributed to which changes)
7. Selection of five best and five worst projects (selecting which projects were experienced as most and least beneficial)
8. Wealth group benefits (describing which wealth classes benefitted from interventions)
9. Assessment of agencies (assessing values of major agencies in the area) (Dietz *et al.*, 2013)

For the purpose of this research and due to practical constraints (e.g. time and logistics of the workshops), a selection of PADev exercises was made. The following PADev exercises were included in the research: Exercises 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7. Exercises 1 and 2 were selected in order to gather data to build a (better) understanding of the local history and context of the research areas. The purpose of Exercise 3 is to develop definitions and characteristics of the different local wealth categories in the research areas, specifically focusing on the category of extreme poor people. Exercise 4 is included to get an idea of the different development agencies active in the research areas and the different interventions carried out by them. Lastly, Exercise 7 is taken up to gain insights into what types of development interventions are most appreciated by local people and why, and which interventions are viewed as “bad” and why. These exercises were conducted in a one-day workshop per subgroup (i.e. old men, old women, young men, young women, officials, beneficiaries men and beneficiaries women²). In addition, each workshop ended with a

² In order to get more detailed information on the impact of the partner organisations of Woord en Daad, separate workshops were conducted inviting only beneficiaries of these

group discussion, whereby participants were encouraged to raise any issues related to the topics discussed earlier during the exercises and to discuss the effectiveness of development interventions in reaching extreme poor people. Since the full set of the nine exercises was not implemented, these group discussions added valuable information on the effectiveness of development interventions, especially in relation to extreme poor people. In total, 152 local people and 39 officials participated in the workshops (see Photo 1.1). To save time, the participants of the workshops were invited with the assistance of Woord en Daad's partner organizations. However, during the workshops, there was no presence of or interference from any organization or government institution. Moreover, at the beginning of each workshop, it was made clear that the research was being carried out independently and that participants may freely speak their minds. Given the strong criticism that was at times expressed, it did not appear that participants felt constrained in sharing their opinions.

During the development of the PADev methodology, it was concluded that extreme poor people tended not to participate in the PADev workshops, because they felt out of place and uncomfortable (Kazimierczuk, 2010a, 2010b; Pouw *et al.*, 2016). In order to gather the perceptions of extreme poor people and avoid running the risk that they would not attend the PADev workshops organized for the purpose of this research, a second method of data collection was included, i.e. life histories. Through life histories, a general picture of the life of an extreme poor person in a particular context can be drawn. Insights into why people become extreme poor (causes/causes) and how this impacts the different dimensions of their wellbeing can be captured. Moreover, their perception on whether and how they are included or excluded by development agencies and their community can be understood. Guided by the local definition of an extreme poor person, drawn during the PADev wealth categorization exercise, participants were invited. Village walks, household visits (poor and non-poor households) and informal chats formed the initial basis to finding an extreme poor person or household. Once an extreme poor person or household was identified, the local definition was used to see if the person or household (to a great extent) matched the local definition. In total, 71 life histories of extreme poor people in the four research areas were conducted (see annex 2 for topic lists/questions for the life histories).

partner organisations. Men and women attend separately.



Photo 1.1:

Participants of the PADev workshops. Top left: Bangladesh, top right: Benin, bottom left: Ethiopia (urban), bottom right: Ethiopia (rural)

Thirdly, institutional interviews were conducted to explore the policies and targeting strategies that were put in place by NGOs and government institutions active in the research areas to reach extreme poor people (see annex 1 for interview questions). The targeting strategies were explored to unravel processes and practices of inclusion, paying specific attention to adverse inclusion and right to opt out. In total, 16 institutional interviews were conducted. Their length varied from interview to interview (15 minutes to 1,5 hour). On some occasions the interviewee could not explain much about their policies and programmes for extreme poor people and referred to their brochures. The interviews were conducted at the respective offices, except for Jeldu. The offices were too scattered and, due to time constraints, a focus group discussion was organized for NGOs and government institutions working in the area. In Bangladesh and Addis Ababa, these offices were located in the research area. In Benin most offices were located in Parakou.

In addition to these institutional interviews, a fourth method, document analysis, was used to study policy documents and reports of development agencies active in the selected research locations.

Lastly, many informal interviews were conducted in the studied villages and slum areas in order to gain a better understanding of the research areas and to learn about the extreme poor from the perspective of the community. Furthermore, in Bangladesh, two focus group discussions were organized with sex workers and people with intersex conditions. Finally, a day was spent observing at a soup kitchen in Addis Ababa, whereby informal interviews/chats were held with beneficiaries.

In gathering the above data, independent research assistants in all three case study countries were recruited. Their main task was to act as a translator. All of the research assistants had completed a master's degree and had no personal ties with the research locations.

Table 1.1
Data collection methods per research question

Research (sub)question	Methods
How are extreme poor people conceptualized in the literature and how does this differ from the definitions of poor people?	Literature review
According to the literature, what are the causes of extreme poverty?	Literature review
How are extreme poor people defined and categorised by the local communities in the selected research locations and how does this differ from the definitions of poor people in these locations presented by the local communities?	PADev workshops, life histories and informal interviews
What are the causes of being extreme poor in multiple dimensions of wellbeing and are these reproduced through context specific social and political institutions and power relations in the selected research locations?	Life histories, PAdDev workshops, institutional interviews, document analysis and informal interviews
What targeting strategies (concepts, methods and implementation) to include the extreme poor are applied by development interventions in the selected research locations	Institutional interviews, document analysis
What explains the relative failures and successes of development interventions for the extreme poor?	Literature, PAdDev exercises, life histories, institutional interviews, document analysis and informal interviews

Data analysis

The different methods of data collection were analysed in the following way: The data from the PADev workshops was analysed (meta-analysis and narrative synthesis) and reduced through the use of themes, i.e. historical and geographical context (to give contextual background information of the research areas), wealth categorisations (in order to draw local definitions of especially extreme poor and poor people) and development interventions (exploring the development agencies and interventions in the research area). Not all outcomes of the conducted exercises were included in this book, only relevant parts are shown or summarised. The full outcomes of the conducted PADev workshops and exercises can be found in the field reports (Altaf, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016d; 2016e). The analysis of the parts of the PADev exercises included in this research are conducted inductively. By analysing bottom-up and (intersubjective) participatory data, an attempt is made to contribute to theory both of poverty conceptualisations and on criteria for 'successful' interventions aimed at extreme poor people.

The life histories are analysed through thematic coding (Gibbs, 2007). Three main themes are selected along the lines of the three dimensions of wellbeing, i.e. material, relational and cognitive (see annex 4 for operationalisation of wellbeing). These three themes are used in all four case studies, additionally themes are added per context, e.g. fetishism in Benin.

The conducted institutional interviews were analysed using the following themes: conceptualisation of extreme poor and poor people, targeting strategies to reach extreme poor people, implementation and M&E.

Document analysis was used to analyse the policy documents of the studied development agencies. These documents were scrutinised regarding the conceptualisation of extreme poor and poor people according to the development agencies, their strategies to include extreme poor people in development interventions and the actual implementation.

Conceptual analysis was conducted for the informal interviews. Analysis of these informal interviews contributed to building a better understanding of local conceptualisations of poverty, cultural context and sensitivity of inclusion and exclusion of extreme poor people and targeting strategies in the research locations.

Units of analysis and units of observation

There are two prime units of analysis: extreme poor people and development agencies carrying out interventions (aimed for extreme poor people). Extreme poor people are the most important source of information. It was not always easy to get information from them, as they were not used to being heard and sometimes had difficulty concentrating or remembering things. It was therefore a time consuming task to speak to them. Nevertheless, in the end they provided a wealth of data. The second prime unit of analysis is development agencies and their interventions for extreme poor people. The development agencies were studied to understand their targeting strategies (conceptualisation of extreme poor people, targeting methods and the actual implementation). The secondary units of analysis are social institutions and family relations of extreme poor people.

The units of observation are: extreme poor people, development agencies and the communities of the studied extreme poor people.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The main limit of this study is that it did not incorporate macro level structures and causes/causes of extreme poverty, such as macroeconomic policies, the effects of global capitalism and global climate change. Moreover, given the explorative and inductive nature of the research, the findings are not representative for large population sub-groups. However, study findings could be used as input into the design of follow-up research on mapping extreme poverty across larger numbers of people and regions.

1.8 Structure of book

The remainder of this book is organised as follows: Chapter 2 provides an overview of the main poverty concepts and compares and contrasts them. The chapter explains why a wellbeing approach is the most suitable/desirable approach for this research. Chapter 3 deals with the literature specifically concerning extreme poor people (definitions, causes) and zooms in on development interventions that have been successful in reaching extreme poor people to draw out important lessons. Chapter 4 discusses the case study in Bangladesh and explains how power abuses and environmental vulnerabilities keep extreme poor people trapped in their poverty. Chapter 5

presents the case study in Benin and pays specific attention to socio-cultural value systems that seem to be important in explaining causes of extreme poverty in the research area. Chapter 6 discusses the rural case study in conducted in Ethiopia and pays attention to geographical factors that are responsible for pushing especially young people into extreme poverty. Chapter 7 presents the urban case study in Ethiopia and focuses on the fact that this is the only case study whereby extreme poor people were reached by development interventions. Chapter 8 provides the main conclusions, theoretical and methodological reflections and makes recommendations.



2

A short review of poverty approaches

This chapter answers the question about which conceptual approach(es) to poverty is/are considered to be most desirable in terms of being a guiding theoretical framework within which to conduct this research. The chapter presents a (more or less) chronological overview of the most important and influential poverty approaches, showing what the strengths and limitations are of each approach, and how they differ. The overview begins by explaining the monetary approach, followed by the capability approach, participatory approach, livelihoods approach, relational approach, multidimensional approach and ends with the wellbeing approach, explaining why this approach is considered to be most desirable as a guiding framework for this research. The chapter ends with presenting the conceptual model. This research is inspired by the inclusive development (meta level) theory (Gupta, Pouw & Ros-Tonen, 2015) and zooms in on the first pillar: human wellbeing and to some extent on the third pillar: voice and empowerment.

2.1 Monetary approach

For more than a century and until the beginning of the 1980s, the most influential way of defining and measuring poverty has been through a monetary approach, whereby the lack of monetary means i.e. income and consumption expenditures were used to measure poverty with a poverty line as a threshold (Atkinson, 1970; Deaton, 1980; Foster, Greer & Thorbecke, 1984; Lipton & Ravallion, 1993; Ravallion, 1998). “GNP per capita continues to be regarded as the quintessential indicator of a country’s living standard” (Dasgupta, 2001, p. 53) and governments and leading development institutions such as the World Bank use monetary poverty lines (e.g. \$1.25 a day and more recently, \$1.90³) as key indicators for defining poverty.

3 <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/10/04/world-bank-forecasts-global-poverty-to-fall-below-10-for-first-time-major-hurdles-remain-in-goal-to-end-poverty-by-2030>.

Benjamin Seebohm Rowntree's poverty studies on York inspired many to see poverty as the result of a lack of wage income. Rowntree, a social researcher, reformer and industrialist, was inspired by the descriptive poverty maps of London city developed by Charles Booth back in the late nineteenth- early twentieth century. Rowntree's systematic characterization of the different groups of poor in York is considered the first scientific study of poverty, and fundamental to the construction of a poverty line (Booth, 1887; Rowntree, 1901). His study was a breakthrough in the sense that he showed that poverty of York's working class was not merely a consequence of "vice" and "improvidence", as was believed, but that low income played a significant role. It is important to note that especially Booth acknowledged that poverty is not just defined in terms of income. However, both Booth and Rowntree have been influential for the monetary approach in the sense that they considered their approach to be objective (income can be measured objectively by a survey), external (an outsider can do the measuring), and individualistic (poverty is seen as a result of individual circumstances rather than a social process) (Laderchi, Saith & Stewart, 2003).

Within the monetary approach, the focus has been on economic welfare (generally defined in terms of personal command over commodities (Ravallion, 2015), whereby the concept of utility is generally regarded as the anchor for setting poverty lines (Ravallion, 1998). This has been a dominant approach and one that is preferred by economists; however, it is not the only one. Amartya Sen, for example, pleads for a functioning-based⁴ anchor to set poverty lines. Thus people's freedom to be and do are the focus and utility may be seen as a functioning, but only of the many functionings that are important for people (Sen, 1985; 1992). Like Sen, Van Parijs values freedom or, as he refers to it 'real freedom' highly (Van Parijs, 1995). What he means by 'real freedom' is that people are not just free to do, but that they also have the means to do what they want to. For him a universal unconditional basic income for every individual would provide people with a basis from which they can make their choices and attain this 'real freedom' (Ibid., 1995). To Van Parijs, unlike Sen, basic income is the means to satisfy people's rights and needs. This plea for a basic minimum income for all (the minimum rights perspective) is also supported by Atkinson, who emphasised that the minimum should be defined in terms of income and not consumption. Unlike Van Parijs's proposal, the basic income would be conditional and

⁴ Functionings are people's beings and doings..

only provided to those willing to participate in some form⁵ (Atkinson, 2011). While Atkinson prefers to look at income, others find it useful to also look at consumption levels (World Health Organisation, 1985; Deaton, 1997).

Before going further into these methods, it is useful to make a distinction between the different types of poverty lines. Broadly speaking, there are relative and absolute poverty lines, the former being defined in relation to an overall distribution of income or consumption in a country, while the latter is defined using an absolute standard of what is needed to meet basic needs (Ravallion, 1998).

Within absolute poverty lines, two main methods can be identified, the food-energy-intake (FEI) method and the cost-of-basic needs method. The food-energy-intake method looks at the consumption expenditure or income level at which the intake of food-energy is sufficient to meet food-energy requirements that are predetermined (Ravallion, 1998, p. 10). Since food-energy intakes vary according to income, the FEI method takes this into account by calculating the expected food-energy intake at a given income (Ibid.). There are, however, some concerns regarding this method, as it cannot guarantee taking comparisons over time into account and it does not consider the fact that the relationship of food-energy intake and income will shift according to differences in tastes, activity levels, relative prices, publicly provided goods and so forth (Ibid., p. 11).

The cost-of-basic needs method (CBN), estimates the cost of acquiring enough food for adequate nutrition and adds to that the cost of other basic needs, such as shelter, clothing, fuel and household sundries (Haughton & Khandker, 2009, p. 39). However, setting the nonfood component of the CBN is challenging, as determining the household sundries basket may differ per context and even per household (Ravallion, 2008). It is interesting to note that Ravallion and Bidani (using data from Indonesia) showed that by using these two methods (FEI and CBN), they found virtually zero correlation between regional poverty profiles (Ravallion & Bidani, 1994).

Besides relative and absolute poverty lines, poverty can be defined and measured through subjective (monetary) poverty lines. These can be defined in terms of satisfaction with one's income. Collecting people's own perceptions

5 Atkinson writes that: "Participation is defined broadly to include all forms of paid employment, full-time education, active engagement in seeking employment, caring for children, the disabled or the elderly, and those below a certain age (say 18) or above another age (say 70)." (Atkinson, 2011, p. 2).

of whether their income is sufficient is important as what is considered necessary and luxury is not objective and immutable, but is determined socially and is always in flux (Scitovsky, 1978). However, it is important to consider the inconsistency that may occur using this method. People with the same income may value it differently and thus the same income is measured differently. But income may not be the best way to define subjective poverty lines in developing countries, particularly in rural areas, as income is not well-defined there. In these cases, consumption adequacy may be a better threshold (Ravallion, 1998). Developing a unique poverty line based on nutritional requirements, however, seems somewhat problematic, as age, gender, metabolism, and activity may vary amongst people (Sukhatme, 1989; Dasgupta, 1993). Furthermore, the availability of food and fluctuation in prices influence the amount of income that is required to secure a particular level of nutrition (Laderchi *et al.*, 2003). Poverty lines are generally set at the household level, but the distribution of resources within a household may affect the nutritional levels of individuals in the household (Ibid.). Laderchi *et al.* (2003) therefore adopt an approach of two poverty lines, whereby a range of income is considered. They propose a minimum line below which poverty is certain, and a line above which there is no poverty (in nutritional terms) (Ibid.).

Defining and measuring poverty through a monetary perspective has evolved over the years and, as a result, many different sophisticated methods have been developed. These methods are widely used as they are considered to be relatively objective, comparable at multiple levels of aggregation, comparable across contexts when corrected for price differences and comparable over time. Although this research pays attention to the material dimension of poverty, which includes income and consumption, it does not solely define poverty in monetary terms and therefore does not use the monetary approach as a guiding framework.

2.2 Capability approach

In the early 1980s Amartya Sen developed the capability approach as an alternative to the mainstream economic growth approach to development (Sen, 1985). According to Sen, poverty is defined as a deprivation of capabilities (1980, 1985) and later as a lack of freedom (1999a). He asserted that human capabilities and their maximisation were both instrumental and intrinsic values of development, with freedom being its proxy and not income (Ibid.). Sen also valued commodities (and income) and economic growth,

however as means to development and instruments for enhancing freedoms and not as an end in itself. He explained that development should not just be judged by aggregated income or economic growth, technical progress and industrialisation, but also and above all by the expansion of human freedoms (Ibid.; Drèze & Sen, 2002).

The focus of the capability approach is thus on people's capabilities (freedom to achieve) and functionings (people's beings and doings), this means that people should have the freedom to be and to do what they wish and to be able to get rid of barriers that are in the way of the (quality of) life they want to have and value (Sen, 1987, 1993, 1999b). When people are free to be and do, they can decide the functionings that are valuable for them and that they wish to pursue. Thus, human agency is central in assessing people's capabilities and freedoms (Sen, 1985; Alkire & Deunelin, 2002). Human agency, however, does not stand in isolation; whether people are able to convert e.g. their commodities to their benefit is influenced by conversion factors. Sen identified three such conversion factors: personal (IQ, psychical condition, sex etc.), social (cultural norms/values, gender, power relations, policies and so forth) and environmental (for example climate and infrastructure) (Sen, 1999a; Alkire & Deunelin, 2002). People are not isolated from their environments and are dependent on their relationships with other people and institutions (Drèze & Sen, 2002).

What, then, does all this mean for the way poverty is defined and understood? Sen stated that there are basic capabilities that provide the freedom to be able to do those things that are necessary for people's survival and which allow them to climb out of poverty. These capabilities could act as a cut-off point to assess poverty (Sen, 1987, 1993). Martha Nussbaum collaborated with Amartya Sen in an attempt to operationalise capabilities. She stated that basic capabilities are innate (e.g. being able to see) and allow people to develop more advanced capabilities (Nussbaum, 2001). Nussbaum has done much to develop her work on capabilities into a theory. She viewed the capability approach from a (political) philosophy perspective and developed a universal list of capabilities that all governments in her opinion should underwrite. Nussbaum identified the following central human capabilities: life, bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play and control over one's environment (Nussbaum, 2001, pp. 78-80; 2002; 2003). Although, according to Nussbaum, all of these capabilities weigh equally, she gives special significance to practical reason and affiliation, as these organise and cover the other capabilities (Nussbaum, 2001; Gough, 2003) and she identifies bodily integrity as crucial

(Nussbaum, 2001; Gough, 2003). Sen has always pleaded against a 'fixed' list of capabilities. According to him, freedom to reason, agency, processes of choice and context are hugely important in selecting capabilities and value given to capabilities may differ from person to person (Sen, 1993). According to Nussbaum, the list of capabilities is universal and general and can be adopted according to the context (Nussbaum, 2001). She expounded on this and presented three arguments in favour of the universalism of capabilities, respectively culture, the "argument from paternalism" and the "argument from the good of diversity" (Ibid., p. 50). Firstly, the critique that universal and general lists would be paternalistic is countered by the argument that there are many cultural systems that are paternalistic. Moreover, allowing people to think freely and make their own choices underwrites a universal value, that of having freedom and choice. Secondly, culture is dynamic and ever changing, people exchange ideas. Lastly, (cultural) diversity is good, as long it does not affect people negatively, and since this is not always the case, universal values can be of importance in protecting people from harmful cultural practices (Nussbaum, 2001; Gough, 2003).

In terms of measuring human development, the capability approach has functioned as an inspiration for the Human Development Index (HDI), which offers a broader concept of human development than e.g. GDP (Ul Haq, 1995, 2003; Sen, 2000). Sen, initially hesitant of an index to measure human development, was persuaded by Ul Haq, who pointed out that there was a need for a measure that could capture human development in one number like the GNP. It would be a measure "of the same level of vulgarity as GNP",⁶ however, the advantage of this measure would be that it would include social aspects of human development as well. HDI combines: 1) health; 2) education; and 3) a decent standard of living. The first proxy is represented by life expectancy, the second by literacy and school enrolment, and the third by GDP per capita. Although HDI as a measure went beyond income and included other dimensions of human development, it has been critiqued for lacking spiritual and moral dimensions of poverty (Basu, 2005). Furthermore, HDI has also been critiqued for not paying attention to unequal distribution within a country (UNDP, 1993). According to the United Nations Development Programme, the HDI is not a static measure, it evolves, improves, is open to revision and active participations from those using the measurement is strongly encouraged (Ibid.).

⁶ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/assessing-human-development>

Thus, the capability approach has put human development and development that goes beyond monetary means on the agenda. In Sen's own words: human development is an "illuminating concept that serves to integrate a variety of concerns about the lives of people and their well-being and freedom" (Sen, 2000, p. 17).

The capability approach influences this research in that it takes a people-centred approach, considers the beings and doings of extreme poor people and views development beyond economic growth.

2.3 Participatory approach

Embracing the people-centeredness of the capability approach, the participatory approach goes a step further and pleads for the inclusion of poor people's own perceptions. This approach is distinct from the other poverty approaches in the sense that it is predominantly about the methodology of doing poverty research.

According to Robert Chambers, understanding poverty and how to do reduce it can be achieved either through the perceptions of researchers and practitioners or through the perceptions of the poor (Chambers, 1988). The former defined poverty in terms of deprivation, often assessed using so-called money-metric measures discussed earlier. However, measures such as the poverty line do not take social disadvantage, selfrespect, physical weakness, isolation, migration, education and so forth into consideration, despite these being crucial aspects of poverty for the poor (Chambers, 1988, 1992). This is not to say that income and consumption are not important; on the contrary, they are vital, as are the social and psychological aspects of poverty. Thus, including people's own perceptions means that there is more room for these qualitative social and psychological aspects (Chambers, 1988, 1992).

Chambers was inspired by Freire (1970) and his *Educação popular* programme in Brazil, an education programme intended for poor and (politically) disempowered people. Freire wanted to create awareness amongst those who were socially and politically marginalised that they were facing structural inequalities. He did this through an education method that allowed the marginalised to take charge of their own learning process and allowed them to co-create knowledge. The goal eventually being that the marginalised and become empowered and thus capable of initiating social

change. Freire explained that in order to accomplish this, active participation of the marginalised is required as owners of their learning process.

Chambers used Freire's ideas of participation and introduced rapid rural appraisal (RRA) and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) (Chambers, 1997) to do poverty research. RRA methods were developed to gather relevant local information in a quick, accurate and less expensive way, rather than doing formal surveys (Ellis, 2000, p. 193). The difference is that RRA analysis is informed by local people, but conducted by outsiders, whereas PRA seeks active participation of local people, empowering them and giving them ownership. The role of outsiders here is to facilitate local people in conducting their analysis, rather than controlling it. Oral communication techniques are important tools for collecting data in these approaches, as they give illiterate people a chance to participate as well.

These participatory approaches are meant to enable research subjects to conduct their own research, rather than being analysed by an outsider. Chambers believes that this is a basic right of the poor (1995, p. 201). It is important as unless the poor themselves are put first, development cannot be achieved (Chambers, 1988). This approach views poverty alleviation as a (participatory) process that should be approached bottom-up, rather than top-down. According to Robb "the moral imperative of giving the poor a voice in the poverty debate is self-evident" (2002, p. 104). Engagement of (extreme) poor people provides better diagnosis of problems, better implementation of solutions, deepens the understanding of poverty and potentially influences policymaking (Robb, 2002).

However, in practice there is still a danger that the most vulnerable, often extreme poor people, in society may not be included in these types of analyses (Kazimierczuk, 2010a, 2010b). Cooke and Kothari (2001, p. 171) add that while participatory interventions are recognized as empowering beneficiaries – as they are bottom-up and planned and implemented by beneficiaries – in practice, participatory interventions tend to be top-down and reproduce existing power structures. It is also difficult to overcome unequal power relations between donors and beneficiaries. This links back to Freire's idea that people need to become aware of their subordinate position before they can empower themselves and take action. Moreover, participatory interventions are often driven by the expectations and knowledge of donors, when, in fact, they should be driven by local knowledge and respond to local needs (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Despite good intentions and methodologies, knowledge tends to be constructed by the agenda of the donor and its institutional needs

are then projected onto recipient communities (Ibid., p. 24). Beneficiaries, in turn, may be inclined to ask for things that they believe they can get (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Cooke and Kothari, though, do not view themselves as being 'anti-participation' (Ibid., p. 13), but point out the pitfalls.

Thus, it is important to consider the set-up when using participatory approaches to ensure participation of vulnerable groups. While participatory approaches were initially developed for rural areas, they can also function in urban contexts (Altaf, 2016d).

This research is very much inspired by the participatory approach, as participatory methods for data collection (see Chapter 1.6.3) form a large part of the research methodology.

2.4 Livelihoods approach

Both the capability approach and the participatory approach have been influential in developing the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA), in the sense that this approach acknowledges people's potential to be agents of change and recognises that poverty is a dynamic process (DFID, 2000 as cited in Kollmair & Gamper, 2002). The approach engages with the livelihoods of those who are intended beneficiaries of development interventions and policies (Morse & McNamara, 2013). Rather than focusing just on economic aspects of people's lives, the approach focuses on people's livelihoods comprehensively; how do people make a living and strategize their livelihoods in a particular context? People's livelihoods consist of what they can be and do (capabilities) and of what they have (assets/capitals). These livelihoods are considered sustainable if they can cope with and recover from shocks (sudden pressure on livelihood, e.g. flood) and stresses (long-term pressure on livelihood, e.g. economic crisis) and maintain or enhance their capitals and assets, in the present and in the future (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Carney, 1998; Moser; 1998, Scoones, 1998; Rakodi, 1999; Ellis, 2000; De Haan & Zoomers, 2005). Capital is a crucial part of people's livelihoods and receive much attention in the SLA framework. Capital is not just the means to make a living, but gives meaning to people's worlds and allows them to engage with the world and gives them the capability to change it (Bebbington, 1999, p. 2022). Capital is, therefore, important as a vehicle for instrumental action (making a living), hermeneutic action (giving meaning to life) and emancipatory action (challenging the structure under which a living is made) (Ibid.). The SLA framework includes: human capital (e.g.

health, education, skills), physical capital (e.g. farm equipment or a sewing machine), social capital (e.g. networks), financial capital (e.g. credit, cattle, savings) and natural capital (natural resource base) (Ellis, 1999). Whether people have access to these capitals in a meaningful way for them, is affected by social factors, such as institutions and by exogenous trends and shocks (Ibid.). Although all types of capital are, theoretically, equally important, their relative weights vary across households and vulnerability context. One form of capital may be sacrificed in order to strengthen another if necessary for the survival of the livelihood. There is thus a complex dynamic involved in the use of capital, and most poor households diversify (Bebbington, 1999).

Sustaining and improving a livelihood can be strengthened through diversification, meaning that people engage in a diverse portfolio of activities (Ellis, 1999), for example by farming and sewing clothes. The diversification of livelihoods can benefit households at and below the poverty line, and can make the difference between being destitute or minimally viable (Morse & McNamara, 2013). However, poor people, especially women have less opportunity to diversify their livelihoods as a result of a lack of certain capitals, e.g. skills or education (Ibid.), capabilities and greater exposure to vulnerability and risks. Moreover, diversifying livelihoods in rural areas can bring negative effects, such as withdrawal of labour during harvest time. On the other hand, it can reduce vulnerability to shocks and stresses due to, for example, a poor harvest. There are both positive and adverse effects of diversifying livelihoods. Some of the positive effects of diversification are: a higher income, reduced risk (poor harvest), seasonality (peaks of crop production, but need for food throughout the year), improved assets (e.g. human capital by sending children to school), environmental benefits (investing income/resources in natural resource base and less exploitation of natural resources when more beneficial options are offered), and in terms of gender (women, if receiving the possibility to diversify, can have their own income, which is usually spent on the family) (Ellis, 1999, p. 5). Negative effects can impact: income distribution (gap widens between poor and well-off), farm output (absent labour), and gender (if diversification is focused on male labour, women are even more restricted to the domestic sphere) (Ibid.). According to Ellis, the positives outweigh the negatives, as these typically “occur when labour markets happen to work in particular ways in particular places” (Ibid.).

SLA was initially often discussed in relation to rural livelihoods; however, as a methodology and framework it can also be used to research urban survival strategies (Ellis, 1999, p. 2). Even though an urban environment

is a different context, it is a fact that no matter where they live, people are always dependent on basic needs and have the desire for certain rights and entitlements (De Haan, Drinkwater, Racodi & Westley, 2002). The SLA approach is thus centred around people's livelihoods, but also pays great attention to their (wider) environment. This (wider) environment is important to consider, certainly in relation to poverty. People living in absolute poverty often use environmental resources as their main source of subsistence. They use it to ensure short-term survival instead of thinking about the long-term consequences of cutting trees, for example (Carney, 1998).

There has, however, been criticism of the SLA approach as it seems to be missing key elements of human existence, e.g. culture and enjoying life (Morse & McNamara, 2013). Moreover, there is the question of measurement and assessment of capital: are all forms of capital equal and how is this determined? (Ibid.).

Although these points have to be considered, they do not take away from the fact that SLA is a flexible approach that is implementable in different contexts and has a multidimensional focus on people's livelihoods, in contrast to the single-dimensional monetary approach or a sectoral approach that is common in development policy circles (Carney, 1998). It tries to eradicate poverty through a sustainable approach that promotes both human development and also considers environmental conservation (DFID, 1997).

The present research partially draws upon the livelihoods approach, in a sense that it focuses on the livelihoods of extreme poor people and studies their exposure to multiple vulnerabilities, e.g. social-cultural, political, economic and environmental.

2.5 Relational approach

In the early 1990s, James Ferguson started an important discussion about how poverty, as a societal problem, is depoliticized by means of the institutionalization of poverty measurements, indicators, and multilateral institutions set-up to fight poverty in the developing world. Ferguson refers to this institutionalisation as the *anti-politics machine* (Ferguson, 1994). Over the years, there has been growing attention to the idea that poverty (knowledge) is deeply political, but that poverty literature pays little to no attention to political and economic processes and (institutional) power relations (Ibid.; O'Connor, 2001; Mosley, Hudson & Verschoor, 2004; Alsop,

2005; Harriss-White, 2005a; Harriss, 2007; Hickey & Du Toit, 2007; Mosse, 2010; Mosley, 2012). Furthermore, poverty is predominantly studied through the perspectives of individuals and households (Harriss, 2007; Mosse, 2010; Hickey, 2013) and the effects of poverty are sometimes represented as causes (Harriss, 2007, p. 6). In contrast, a relational approach to poverty attempts to reveal exactly those structural processes, policies and institutions that reproduce inequality and power relations that reproduce and sustain poverty and inequality.

According to Mosse (2010, p. 3), a relational approach to poverty assumes that poverty is a consequence of historically developed economic and political relations with power being a central concept. The assertion is that people are poor because others have more power than them, and therefore the poor are unable to exercise agency to counter structural inequalities and change their lives (Mosse, 2010). Processes that make it possible for some to escape poverty traps are the same that make the exploitation of others possible (Ibid.). The focus of poverty research should therefore be on wider economic and social systems that poor people are part of, and on people's interrelations not only between themselves, but also with structures and institutions, rather than on individuals exclusively (Harriss, 2007). O'Connor (2001) emphasized that the focus on poverty as an individual condition is influenced by poverty research funding. According to her (2001), policymakers, many politicians and researchers attribute poverty to the failure of individuals and welfare systems, ignoring the influence of the economy that diminishes opportunities for middle and working class people, in this case in America. O'Connor takes the view that studying poverty is not the same as studying poor people; therefore, it is important to shift towards explaining inequalities that occur in the distribution of wealth, power and opportunities (Ibid.). A good example of this would be disability, which is not just a physical condition, but is also a social construct that results in a general view that disabled persons are unable to work (Harriss-White, 2005a). Social capital is generally studied as a factor influencing a person's poverty, but hardly any attention is paid to how and why social capital is distributed in a society (Harriss, 2007). Moreover, again taking the example of social capital: relations, networks, association, trusts and so forth, are construed as 'asset endowments' of individuals and households; however, people's assets go hand in hand with their power, or lack of it, over people (Mosse, 2010). Thus, questions concerning political economy, cultural politics and contemporary capitalism seem to be ignored in poverty research and play a role in depoliticising what are, essentially, political problems (Harriss, 2007, p.2; Green & Hulme, 2005).

This is problematic for poor people in general; however, it is even more so for extreme poor or destitute people as Harriss-White calls them. Destitution is a condition that is a result of political economic processes that are sometimes institutionalised within the law and state practice (Harriss-White, 2005a). Institutions, be it state, market or civil society, tend to regard the destitute as 'non-people' and they are often denied access to these institutions (Ibid.). Moreover, rights of these 'non-people' are often stripped, which means that there are no rights left to be violated (Ibid.). For example, not having an address in India means that people are not eligible for inclusion in a development intervention (Harriss-White, 2005a). The same is true in terms of people below the poverty line for accessing the system of benefits (Ibid.). This is contradictory, as being homelessness and destitute/extreme poor often go hand in hand. Thus, the absence of political conditions to ensure citizenship for poor people and consciously making them expendable sustains destitution and "leave[s] the most destitute people reliant on their own heavily constrained forms of agency" (Ibid., p. 889). Beall & Piron (2005) also mention processes and states that prevent people from fully participating in their society as a result of distorted power relations. They refer to this as 'social exclusion' and define it as:

[...] a process and a state that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic and political life and from asserting their rights. It derives from exclusionary relationships based on power (Ibid., p. 9).

Hickey and Du Toit (2007) also discuss social exclusion and state that while not every person that is excluded is poor, many poor people face social exclusion. Furthermore they describe adverse incorporation in order to complement the concept of social exclusion (Ibid.). By adverse incorporation Hickey and Du Toit are referring to inclusion of people, as opposed to exclusion of people, but on highly unfavourable terms, which exist as a result of unequal (economic, social and political) power relations.

Besides the absence of the 'right' political conditions, there also seems to be an absence of the 'right' economic conditions in achieving the eradication of poverty (Harriss-White, 2005b; Hickey & Du Toit, 2007; Mosse, 2010). By defining poverty reduction as a development goal achieved through economic growth, policy discourses obscure and simplify this relationship (Mosse, 2010, p. 5). Poverty is inseparable from capitalist economic development processes, e.g. dispossession, confiscation or privatisation of crucial livelihood resources (Harriss-White, 2005b; Mosse, 2010, p. 17). This is not to say that economic growth is not of importance in eradicating

poverty, but it is necessary to understand how capitalism sustains poverty through the logic of concentration and exclusion (Mosse, 2010). Harris-White provides such an understanding by setting out eight processes of capitalism that constantly create and recreate poverty: “the creation of the pre-conditions; petty commodity production and trade; technological change and unemployment; (petty) commodification; harmful commodities and waste; pauperising crises; climate-change-related pauperisation; and the unrequired and/or incapacitated and/or dependent human body under capitalism” (2005b, p. 1). These processes of capitalism are primarily focused around maximising profit and production, often at the expense of the poor and the(ir) environment. Those who are not able to contribute to maximising profit or production are considered ‘undeserving poor’, for example, sick, people with disabilities, or the elderly (Ibid.). In order to counter these processes, regulation is required both at a national and global level. At the national level, the state should be responsible for implementing social security systems based on universal entitlements and protect its citizens from market forces. At the environmental level, it is important to look for new models of industrialisation, preferably based upon renewable energy. The processes of capitalism creating poverty are embedded in institutions and need to be countered through these institutions; empowerment of the poor alone is not enough (Ibid.).

Furthermore, empowerment of the poor is also subject to power relations. Efforts by development agencies to form associations of poor people in order to empower them and overcome unequal power relations have been questioned (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). The domination of more powerful and affluent members of the community tends to occur within such groups, as these people are important resources (political and material) for (development) agencies (Mosse, 2007). Development interventions therefore may intervene without considering or changing the economic and political structures within which they intervene (Mosse, 2007). It seems that power relations that sustain poverty are hard to combat, whether it is through community-based participatory development and social reengineering or political mobilisation. The latter is problematic in the sense that political representation of poor people is constrained by structures of class and caste, and these classifications, through which they are organised and recognised, are determined by wider political systems (Ibid.). Votes of the poor are important for those in power, but their votes do not ensure that their interests will be served; they may even be harmed (Harris-White, 2005a; Mosse, 2007; Hickey, 2013). When poor people are so well organised that they can no longer be ignored or are seen as having value for keeping a coalition in power, they are incorporated by

elites into ruling coalitions. This is what Hickey refers to as elitism (Hickey, 2013). Through elitism, the poor may exercise their agency meaningfully, however their status remains a subordinate one (Ibid.). Sen also addresses the role of political freedom and participation. According to him strengthening democratic systems is an essential component for the process of development, and he identifies three virtues that mark the significance of democracy, i.e. intrinsic importance (people's intrinsic values and how they want to live their lives), instrumental contributions (using democracy to express critique, have an opposition and hold rulers accountable) and constructive role (using democracy and public debate to ensure that needs of people are met) (Sen, 1999a, p. 157). These virtues are important in creating values and norms in a society. If marginalised groups are to have true freedom of choice and capabilities, they should then be considered in the formation of solutions (Glassman & Patton, 2014).

For development agencies (and others involved in the development sector) this means that they need to make headway in understanding the political and economic contexts in which they wish to intervene (Moore & Putzel, 1999) or, as Hickey (2013, p. 5) states: “[...] a realisation that what lies behind the emergence and functioning of institutions is the complex world of politics and power relations.”

The present research will draw on the relational approach, as it looks at power relations and social-cultural, economic and political inequalities concerning extreme poor people. It does so at family, community and social institutional level. The added value of including a relational perspective for this research is that it may shed light on the underlying causes of poverty of extreme poor people.

2.6 Multidimensional approaches

Multidimensional approaches to poverty long existed, e.g. Booth (1887) and the Townsend Deprivation Index (Townsend, 1987; Townsend, Phillimore & Beattie, 1988); however, over the last decade multidimensional approaches have gained ground in development research. These approaches define/ understand multidimensionality in different ways. Some approaches focus on the physical and material aspects of poverty, while other multidimensional approaches take a broader perspective of multidimensionality and include non-material aspects as well.

Multidimensional approaches aim to view poverty in a comprehensive way, that is by including multiple deprivations that poor people face and showing the complexity of poverty (Anand & Sen, 1997; Alkire, 2007a, 2007b, 2011; Kakwani & Silber, 2007; Alkire & Sarwar, 2009; Alkire & Foster, 2011a). A multidimensional approach also emphasises the importance of viewing poverty beyond monetary means, income alone is not enough as a measure and should be complemented by other dimensions of poverty (Alkire *et al.*, 2015). Kakwani and Silber therefore define poverty as ‘failures’ in the many dimensions of human life, be it unemployment, health, hunger, social exclusion, powerlessness and so on (Kakwani & Silber, 2007). Moreover, the poor themselves also define poverty in multiple dimensions (Chambers, 1988, 1992).

Poverty is not just multidimensional, but also increasingly multidisciplinary and thus it can be researched sociologically, economically, psychologically (Lever, Piñol, & Uralde, 2005) and so forth, and each angle is important in building further understandings of poverty and its multiple causes (Kakwani & Silber, 2007). Research conducted by Alkire and the OPHI⁷ identify five dimensions of poverty that seem to be missing in poverty data and are considered important in people’s experiences of poverty, i.e. employment (informal employment and quality of employment), empowerment (ability to advance goals that people value), physical safety (freedom from violence against people and property), social connectedness (relationships and freedom from shame and humiliation) and psychological wellbeing and happiness (happiness, satisfaction and a meaningful life) (Alkire, 2007a, p. 348; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Lugo, 2007; Zavaleta Reyes, 2007; Samman & Santos, 2013). Thorbecke acknowledges the importance of filling the gap of missing data. According to him, “most of the remaining unresolved issues in poverty analysis are related directly or indirectly to the multidimensional nature and dynamics of poverty” (2005, p. 3).

In order to measure the multi-dimensions of poverty, Alkire and Foster developed the AF (Alkire Foster) methodology. Through this methodology, regional, national or international measures of poverty can be created incorporating dimensions and indicators that are relevant to the context (Alkire & Foster, 2011a, 2011b; OPHI⁸). Alkire and Foster (2011b, p. 12) base the AF methodology on a concept of poverty as multiple deprivations that are experienced simultaneously and, people suffering from a broad range

7 <http://www.ophi.org.uk/research/missing-dimensions/>.

8 <http://www.ophi.org.uk/research/multidimensional-poverty/alkire-foster-method/>.

of deprivations are identified as poor. The choice of dimensions, weight of indicators and cut-off point are flexible and researchers can decide these in accordance with the context (OPHI⁹). Moreover, the AF methodology differentiates between the poor below the poverty line (Alkire & Santos, 2010; Alkire & Foster, 2011a, 2011b).

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which is constructed using the AF methodology, builds on the HDI. MPI is composed of ten indicators (nutrition, child mortality, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, improved sanitation, safe drinking water, electricity, flooring, assets) that correspond with the three dimensions of HDI, i.e. education, health and standard of living (Alkire & Santos, 2013, p. 12). Those deprived in a third of the indicators are identified as poor. The intensity of people's poverty is determined by the number of deprivations that are experienced (OPHI¹⁰). Using MPI, a comprehensive picture of people's poverty can be drawn. It is also possible to draw comparisons across regions, countries and globally by e.g. ethnic/sub-groups or in rural or urban contexts and over time. Furthermore, MPI is a valuable analytical tool in identifying extreme poor people (OPHI¹¹). Like HDI, MPI has also been critiqued for missing spiritual and moral dimensions of poverty. A multidimensional approach that does take these dimensions into consideration is the Gross National Happiness Index, which will be discussed next.

With regards to this research, a multidimensional approach is embraced. But this research not only includes the material/physical aspects of poverty (e.g. income, food, shelter), but also looks into relational aspects of poverty (e.g. social exclusion) and subjective aspects of feeling poor. In doing so, the research will contribute to filling the gaps of three of the five missing dimensions in poverty data that have been identified by Alkire and OPHI:¹² empowerment, social connectedness and psychological well-being and happiness.

2.7 Wellbeing approach

The wellbeing approach partially builds on the SLA approach as it examines people's needs, capabilities, resources and vulnerability context. It adds to

9 <http://www.ophi.org.uk/research/multidimensional-poverty/alkire-foster-method/>

10 <http://www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/>

11 <http://www.ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/>

12 <http://ophi.org.uk/research/missing-dimensions/>

this people's relations to society around them and to the environment in which they live, and subjectivity (Gough, McGregor & Camfield, 2006).

The wellbeing approach argues for considering development in terms of human wellbeing and illbeing and not just in terms of poverty (Gough *et al.*, 2006). By doing this, poor people's humanity and their desire to achieve wellbeing for themselves and their loved ones are recognised; thus, these are not solely defined by their poverty (Ibid.). Although, for the extreme poor trying to achieve well-being this may imply that they are fighting to minimise the extent of their illbeing (Ibid.).

Within current development thinking, the concept of wellbeing has gained more ground in recent years with the work of McGregor (2004) and the Wellbeing in Developing Countries Research (WeD) by the University of Bath (ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries, 2007), inspired by Doyal and Gough's "Theory of Human Need"¹³ (Doyal & Gough, 1991), Sen's and Nussbaum's human development approach, the livelihoods approach, particularly the Resource Profiles Framework (RPF)¹⁴ and the subjective wellbeing/quality of life approach¹⁵ (McGregor, 2006). However,

13 Doyal and Gough in their "Theory of Human Need" identify universal goals, which are defined as "the pursuit of one's vision of the good" and since this is never created in isolation, (social) participation (without serious harm) is viewed as the "most basic human interest" (Doyal & Gough, 1991). Needs in this theory are universal, whereas wants can be personal and culturally influenced. In order to meet these basic needs, Doyal & Gough (1991) developed universal satisfiers and grouped these together in eleven categories: nutritional food and clean water, protective housing, a non-hazardous work environment, a nonhazardous physical environment, safe birth control and child-bearing, appropriate health care, a secure childhood, significant primary relationships, physical security, economic security and appropriate education (Doyal & Gough, 1991). The first six satisfiers contribute to physical health, whereas the last five contribute to autonomy. These satisfiers are open for discussion and improvement, as knowledge on how to satisfy human needs continues to grow (Doyal & Gough, 1991, p. 168). Furthermore, basic needs are universal, but their satisfiers are context dependent, e.g. the need for food is universal, however the type of food can vary according to the context. It is therefore important to take the universal satisfiers as guides without losing sight of local perceptions of wellbeing.

14 Inspired by the livelihoods approach, RPF was developed at the university of Bath in order to put more emphasis on social and cultural dimensions in exercising agency in the struggle for livelihoods (Gough, McGregor & Camfield, 2006). RPF intended to provide a bottom-up perspective to understand what different people do to secure their livelihood and have a meaningful and bearable life. Instead of assets RPF used a wider notion of resources (material, human, social, cultural and natural) and these are considered socially and culturally negotiable (Gough, McGregor & Camfield, 2006).

15 Gough, McGregor & Camfield (2006) explained that the subjective wellbeing approach (also referred to as quality of life, happiness and life satisfaction) placed subjective feelings and evaluations of people at centre-stage. These subjective feelings and evaluations are measured

as an approach to poverty, the wellbeing approach is still in its infancy. There is a lot of literature on poverty and on wellbeing, but empirical research connecting the two is relatively scarce. Moreover, as a concept within the field of International Development Studies, there is no consensus (yet) on the definition/meaning of wellbeing (Gough *et al.*, 2006, McGregor, 2006). This may not be surprising, as many of the definitions of wellbeing are contextual descriptives, rather than fixed definitions, which makes the concept slightly elusive.¹⁶ This begs the question whether wellbeing is best defined universally or locally, objectively or subjectively, or all of these, and how should it be operationalised in measurable indicators?

WeD has proposed the following definition of wellbeing: “Wellbeing is a state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one’s goals, and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life” (ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries, 2007, p. 1). Breaking this definition down, ‘human needs’ are explained as universal needs that, if denied, would generate harm in all circumstances. Needs are described in terms of autonomy, health, security, competence and relatedness. ‘Goals’ inform people’s actions and ‘satisfactory quality of life’ is explained as the achievement of goals that are important for a person’s life. According to WeD, studying wellbeing includes people’s ability and extent of attaining this ‘state of being’ and the social conditions that either enable or restrain their wellbeing (Ibid.). Furthermore WeD stressed that this notion of wellbeing can be useful to better understand why poverty persists in developing countries (ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries, 2007). This definition aims to harmonise both objective and subjective wellbeing.¹⁷ It

directly and not through other proxies, e.g. human development or resources (Gough, McGregor & Camfield, 2006).

16 There have been debates on what wellbeing means as far back as at least the ideas of Buddha (450 B.C.) and since then many have attempted to understand and define wellbeing, e.g. Aristotle (384 B.C.), Mencius (372 B.C.), Epicurus (341 B.C.), Avicenna (980) Al-Ghazali (1058), Bentham (1748) and many more, but there is no consensus reached on its definition.

17 Although the dividing line is contested and far from perfect, broadly speaking there are two strands of thought on wellbeing (Gough, McGregor & Camfield, 2006). These are commonly referred to as the more hedonic or subjective wellbeing (Bradburn, 1969; Diener, 1984; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999; Frey & Stutzer, 2002) and the eudemonic or more objective wellbeing (Rogers, 1961; Ryff, 1989; Doyal & Gough, 1991; Nussbaum & Sen, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Subjective wellbeing, according to Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders (2012), is defined in terms of positive and negative affect, happiness and life satisfaction. It looks at how people themselves view their wellbeing. Objective wellbeing, according to Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders (2012) is best described in terms of human development and positive psychological functioning. It can be externally observed and approved, is normatively endorsed, and is universal (Gough, McGregor & Camfield, 2006).

tries to take both people's objective circumstances as well as their subjective evaluations of these circumstances into account, while not losing sight of the fact that the circumstances and evaluations are subject to people's contexts. McGregor (2006, p. 3) stated that wellbeing is dynamic and relational and is not just an outcome, but also a process. Wellbeing according to McGregor arises from the combination of: "the resources people have, the needs they are able to fulfil and their subjective evaluation of their state of wellbeing" (Ibid., p. 4). "People's resources, needs and subjective evaluation are interconnected and produced in interaction with wider structures of family, community and society" (McGregor, 2004, p. 345). Wellbeing is considered multidimensional and interdisciplinary (anthropology, economics, political theory, psychology and sociology) and builds along three dimensions, i.e. material, relational and cognitive (McGregor, 2004, p. 345; ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries, 2007). Pouw and McGregor explain the three dimensions as follows:

The first dimension - material wellbeing - resonates with the narrower definition of welfare by looking at material determinants of quality of life. The relational dimension considers people's quality of life in respect of the relationships that are important for them in their social and physical environment. The cognitive or subjective dimension of wellbeing recognises that the quality of the material and relational achievements are then translated into a person's subjective evaluation of their quality of life. This raises questions about how satisfied people are with what they are able to have and do in any given natural and societal context. (2014, p. 16)

In an attempt to further build a wellbeing theory concerning poverty and connecting objective and subjective wellbeing, McGregor (2006, p. 5) identifies five key conceptual ideas: "centrality of the human being; harms and needs; meaning, culture and identity; time and processes; and resourcefulness, resilience and adaptation".

The first key idea is about putting the 'human' at the centre of analysis. This way, the entire social nature of human beings is acknowledged. Often, broader structures are studied, such as 'the market' or 'the village' and, although they include the human, they do not place them at the centre. This is not a plea for individualism, after all, the human being is to be understood

with what they can be and do (Douglas & Ney, 1998; McGregor, 2006). It also provides insights into the meanings that people attach to their perceptions and doings. These systems are inter-subjective and are social constructs; they cannot be divided in just objective or subjective terms. Norms, values, ideas and other elements of meaning are considered 'real', in the sense that failure to meet socially constructed needs can lead to physical human harm, just like the denial of food (McGregor, 2006). Thus, when researching wellbeing, attention should be given to the various systems of meaning at different levels. Culture and identity today are influenced by globalisation and capitalist consumerism and systems of meaning are no longer just rooted in one's own society, but are influenced by global communications and travel (Clammer, 2005; Graham, 2005).

Time and processes, the fourth key idea, is about both outcomes and processes of wellbeing. It is explained through the metaphor of a 'snapshot' and a 'movie', whereby time is the former and processes the latter and both require attention (McGregor, 2006). Time affects poor people's wellbeing in many ways, one of which is the trade-offs that they have to make in order to provide security for them and their loved ones (Wood, 2007). McGregor (2006) presented an example from Bangladesh where, when flooding occurs sooner than expected and when crops are not yet ripened and harvested, it becomes a problem. It is not so much the flooding itself, but the timing that is problematic. Bevan (2004) identifies three ways of viewing time that are relevant for poverty analysis, i.e. calendars and clocks (formally organised, e.g. hours, days), rhythms (biological and social) and histories (present human interactions and relations are influenced by the context of a past and a future) (quoted in McGregor, 2006). At the same time, processes are also crucial. Poverty reduction interventions are ultimately about changing processes in a specific context. Whether it is about changing or affecting behaviour, interactions or rules and structures, it is crucial to understand the underlying processes (Gough *et al.*, 2006; McGregor, 2006).

The fifth key idea mentioned is resourcefulness, resilience and adaptation. People experiencing material poverty manage to adopt strategies that allow them to survive, even when their poverty appears life-threatening (Camfield & McGregor, 2005). One explanation given by McGregor (2006) is that material assets are only a part of the resources that people command. They stress the importance of relationships for poor people and their wellbeing, and state that even the poorest people can be resourceful in this way. Moreover, people in poverty also manage to experience some level of satisfaction and enjoyment from their life (Camfield & McGregor, 2005). Biswas-Diener and

Diener's (2001) case study in the slums of Calcutta shows that poor people are, overall, only slightly less satisfied than middle-class people and, in some areas of life, satisfaction is positive, especially the area of relationships.

Biswas-Diener and Diener (2001) expected people to be less satisfied, however people reported that family life is rewarding and they believe they are 'good people'. Sen (1999a) argues that adaptive expectations and mental conditioning can influence people's perceptions of their wellbeing. This means that people may experience severe hunger, but still report being happy and this should be considered both analytically and morally (Ibid.). However, McGregor (2006) try to build a richer understanding of quality of life by moving beyond the material as a resource for subjective wellbeing and recognise the importance of e.g. relationships, health and occupation.

Lastly, McGregor (2006, p. 18) stressed that even though a theory of wellbeing can be 'universal', the 'local' should define the manifestations of different analytical concepts in various contexts in a more concrete way. "Iteration between the 'universal' and 'local' should confirm the validity of the relationships being proposed and, if necessary, modify the 'universal' conception" (Ibid.). Thus, researching wellbeing means that analyses "must be founded in local understandings of how wellbeing and poverty are perceived and reproduced, but can be commensurate with universalist interpretations of these local realities" (McGregor, 2004, p. 337).

McGregor (2006) has developed a corresponding methodology to assess wellbeing, however he states that is difficult to study all aspects of wellbeing in empirical studies, although it would be desirable to at least consider them in some way. He provides three broad questions that can serve to operationalize the three dimensions of wellbeing, i.e. "material (What do people have?) relational (What can they do with what they have?) and cognitive (How do they think of what they have and can do?)" (McGregor, 2004, p. 346; McGregor, 2006, p. 4).

Empirical research conducted on wellbeing is often conducted at micro (individual, household, firm/business and community) or meso (social-cultural institutional) level. Whether and the extent to which one feels a sense of wellbeing may vary from person to person. However, especially subjective wellbeing is a concept that is mostly studied and tested in a northern, post-materialistic and individualistic context (Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2002; Gough *et al.*, 2006). This means that people's own wellbeing is central, rather than that of the community. The reverse is often true in southern contexts, where

collective cultures and the wellbeing of others are considered very important (Masolo, 2010). Pouw and McGregor (2014) stated that it is therefore important to distinguish individual and collective wellbeing. Moreover, people in individualistic societies may experience life satisfaction through e.g. high self-esteem, whereas those in collectivistic societies acquire life satisfaction through e.g. the opinions of others about them (Suh, Diener, Oishi & Triandis, 1998; Lucas, Diener, Grob, Suh & Shao, 2000). For collectivists, the extent to which their life corresponds with wishes of significant others is more important than their own emotions in the prediction of their life satisfaction (Suh *et al.*, 1998).

Wellbeing can also be studied at macro level. There are a few examples of macro level studies and methodologies on wellbeing. One important and pioneering methodology and measure for macro level analysis of wellbeing, is the Gross National Happiness (GNH) Index. This is an alternative to Gross National Product (GNP) and assesses people's wellbeing in terms of their happiness. The GNH was implemented by the fourth king of Bhutan in 1972, who believed GNH is more important than GNP (Ura, Alkire, Zangmo & Wangdi, 2012). Bhutan has a long history of prioritising its citizens' happiness, from the eighteenth century onwards, and its government believes its purpose is to create happiness for their citizens (Ura, 2010). The GNH Index is more holistic than GNP as it considers both material and spiritual aspects of development, these aspects are both complementary and reinforcing (Ura *et al.*, 2012). GNH is multidimensional and also includes subjective wellbeing, not only individually, but also collectively, concern for each other and harmony with nature are important aspects. In total, GNH consists of nine domains: living standards; ecological diversity and resilience; community vitality; good governance; cultural diversity and resilience; education; time use; psychological well-being; and health. These nine domains consist of 33 indicators and 124 variables, whereby highly subjective variables are weighed lighter (Ura *et al.*, 2012). Four cut-off points are identified in order to assess happiness. The first category is of deeply happy people, whereby the cut-off point is between 77-100% sufficiency in the weighed indicators, the second is extensively happy (66-76%), then narrowly happy (50-56%) and, lastly, unhappy (0-49%) (Ibid.). The 2015 survey showed that "men are happier than women, urban residents are happier than rural residents, single and married people are happier than widowed, divorced or separated people, educated people are happier and that farmers are less happy than people in other occupational groups" (Centre for Bhutan Studies & GNH Research, 2016, p. 2). Moreover, GNH differed across the different regions in Bhutan. Results from GNH surveys also show that happiness means different

things to different people and this can be captured due to the nature of the multidimensional index. This in contrast to GNP, which only allows an analysis of material wellbeing (Ura *et al.*, 2012).

Another example of macro level research and assessment of wellbeing is the Better Life Initiative, developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017). This initiative tries to understand the causes of wellbeing of people and nations and consequently what can be done to achieve a greater sense of wellbeing. The Your Better Life Index (BLI) is part of the Better Life Initiative and is an interactive (web)tool that tries to gather citizens' opinions on what wellbeing means for them (Ibid.). Citizens of OECD and a number of other countries (e.g. Brazil, Russia, South Africa) are invited to give their feedback on 11 dimensions of wellbeing developed by the OECD.²⁰ These are: housing; income; jobs; community; education; environment; governance; health; life satisfaction; safety; and work-life balance. Each dimension is further divided into (a maximum of four) indicators. For example, health is divided into self-reported health and life expectancy. The indicators of the 11 dimensions are equally weighed. The advantage of such a tool is that it can provide insights into wellbeing on a national level and make a comparison between countries. The disadvantage is that the dimensions and corresponding indicators are fixed. Although citizens are encouraged to participate and share their views on the 11 dimensions of wellbeing, they cannot include other dimensions or indicators that may be valuable to them. Moreover, citizens can only indicate how they feel about the dimensions through a scale (five bars) going from minus to plus. Citizens cannot explain why they select minus or plus, for example.

The discussion above shows that wellbeing is a broad concept including both fulfilment of needs/capabilities/functionings and subjective accounts of individuals' happiness (Guillén Royo & Velazco, 2006, p. 3) and it can be studied at different levels (individual, household, community and national level). It has also become clear that, in relation to poverty, there is still much ground to explore when it comes to wellbeing research and Gasper (2004, p.30) suggests that "wellbeing does not always need more research on its measurement and need not always be addressed by measurement, but sometimes also and even instead through rich qualitative data."

This study uses the wellbeing concept (McGregor, 2004, 2006; Gough *et al.*, 2006) as a guide to frame poverty research. The research places people, their

²⁰ <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/#/111111111111>.

humanity and their desire to achieve wellbeing at the centre of analysis. This research follows the three dimensions of wellbeing, i.e. material, relational and cognitive, as formulated by Pouw and McGregor (2014) and McGregor (2004). The research also aims to look more deeply into wellbeing as a process by recognizing: 1) The centrality of the human being; 2) harms and needs; 3) meaning, culture and identity; 4) time and processes; and 5) resourcefulness, resilience and adaptation (McGregor, 2006, p. 5) of extreme poor people in the four case studies.

2.8 Conceptual framework

This chapter has described the many different ways of defining and measuring/assessing poverty, each with its own strengths and limitations (see annex 5). This research draws predominantly on the wellbeing approach and conceptualises humans as social beings who strive to improve their wellbeing in relation to others (McGregor & Pouw, 2016). The aim is to put extreme poor people at the centre of analysis, but in relation to their family, community and wider society. This is necessary to understand possible processes of in- and exclusion. Choosing to focus on extreme poor people's wellbeing (or sources of illbeing) changes the perspective from studying their 'deficits' to what they are able to be and do and thus views them as active agents. In this research, the definition of wellbeing provided by the WeD group is adopted, whereby wellbeing is defined as "A state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life." (ESRC Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries, 2007, p. 1). This research follows McGregor's three dimensions of the wellbeing framework i.e. material, socio-relational and cognitive (McGregor, 2004). The second approach this research draws on is the relational or social-political approach to poverty in order to pay attention to power relations and political and social-cultural inequalities (Ferguson, 1994; O'Connor, 2001; Harriss-White, 2005a; Harriss, 2007; Hickey & Du Toit, 2007; Mosse, 2010; Mosley, 2012). This approach is used to help uncover underlying (structural) causes of extreme poor people. Lastly, this research draws on the participatory approach to poverty that gives room to poor people's own perceptions on their lives and their (extreme) poverty (Chambers, 1988, 1992, 1997).

This chapter ends with the conceptual framework, which serves as a theoretical frame to guide this research. The model in Figure 2.1 shows that, in this research, extreme poor people and their wellbeing, consisting

of material, relational and cognitive dimensions, are central and studied in relation to their environment, i.e. at family, community and institutional level. The aim is to uncover, on the one hand, the perception of extreme poor people of their own wellbeing (or, indeed illbeing) and whether and how they strive to improve their (lack of) wellbeing. On the other hand, the research looks at the relationships between extreme poor people and their environment (family, community and institutional level) and how these influence the wellbeing of extreme poor people. The model also depicts the relationship between extreme poor people and development agencies and the latter's ability to include the extreme poor or not. This topic has not yet been discussed in this chapter, but will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3. Specifically, Chapter 3 will explain how the targeting strategies of intervening agencies (i.e. conceptualisation of the extreme poor, strategies and implementation) can be unpacked systematically, in order to better understand in what ways and under what conditions the extreme poor are targeted and included, or not. Finally, the conceptual model incorporates contextual factors - consisting of socio-cultural, political, economic and environmental context-specific factors that influence extreme poverty. This research aims to signal those context factors in an inductive manner, building on the life histories of the extreme poor, to explain processes of inclusion and exclusion of extreme poor people.

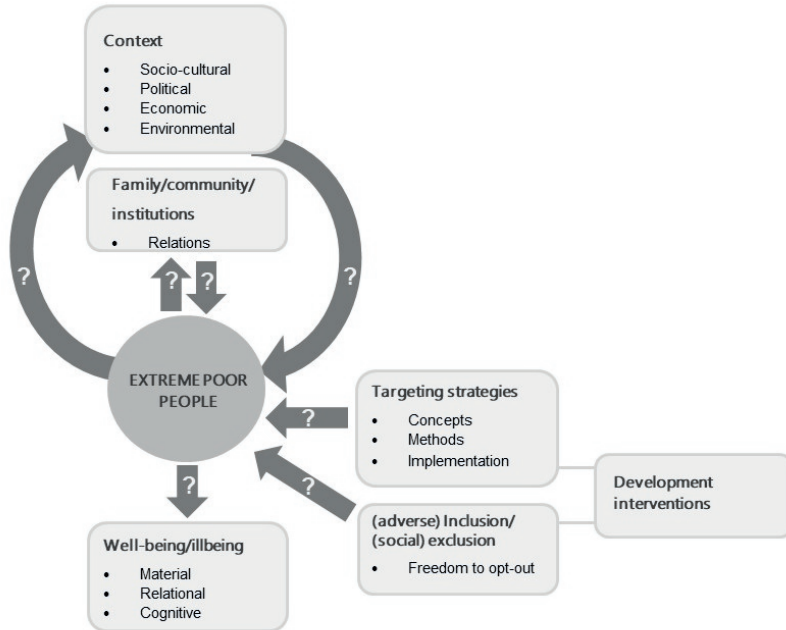


Figure 2.1
conceptual scheme



3

Extreme poor people: theory and practice

3.1 Introduction

Destitute, poorest of the poor, core poor, chronic poor, highly dependent poor, ultra-poor and extreme poor; these are some of the terms used to indicate those that are struggling most to make ends meet and survive (e.g. Wood, 1999; Hulme, Moore & Shepherd, 2001; Parker & Kozel, 2005). For the purpose of this research, the term extreme poor people is used. Although the concept of extreme poverty is not new within development studies (Sen, 1981; Lipton, 1983), the bulk of the literature on both the concept of extreme poverty and interventions aimed at extreme poor people stems from the last decade (Lawson *et al.*, 2010; Karlan & Thuybaert, 2016; Sulaiman *et al.*, 2016; Lawson *et al.*, 2017).

This chapter addresses the question of how extreme poor people are defined in the theoretical literature, whether, and how they are differentiated from poor people and what underlying factors are identified by the literature that explain extreme poverty. Furthermore, the chapter reviews existing and past development interventions that have managed to include extreme poor people in their programmes and examines what lessons can be drawn from these interventions. The chapter is organised as follows: firstly, the different definitions and measures of extreme poor people in the existing literature are discussed. Secondly, the structural causes of extreme poverty identified by the existing literature are discussed. This is followed by the different targeting strategies for extreme poor people, and an exploration of development interventions that have successfully included extreme poor people. The chapter ends with important conclusions, which will be taken forward to analyse the case studies in Chapters 4 through 7.

3.2 Who are extreme poor people? Definitions and measures

As Chapter 2 has demonstrated, there are different approaches and definitions of poverty; this is also the case for extreme poverty. This section

therefore pays attention to the different definitions and measures of extreme poverty presented in the literature. It also investigates the different categories of extreme poor people and the differences in definitions between the poor and extreme poor people.

Nutrition and labour

In the 1980s, Lipton was one of the first to pay specific attention to extreme poor people, who he referred to as the ultra-poor (Lipton, 1983). His empirical research on the characteristics of poor and extreme poor people was given special urgency when a report by the World Bank stated that, while its lending activities benefited poor people, the poorest 20% did not benefit (Lipton, 1983). Lipton found sharp differences between the category of 'poor' and 'extreme poor', particularly concerning nutritional and labour characteristics.²¹ Hence, Lipton concluded that extreme poor people were not to be regarded as a subgroup of the poor (Lipton, 1988). Rather, Lipton defined extreme poor people as those who spent at least 80% of their income on food, but fail to meet 80% of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)/World Health Organization (WHO) weight-adjusted energy requirements (WHO, 1973; Lipton, 1983). He defined the poor as those who spent 70% or more of their income on food and were able to meet 80-100% of the FAO/WHO weight-adjusted energy requirements. Lipton explained that the poor would often be hungry and illiterate, for example; however, they would only rarely be confronted with nutritional risk to their health and performance (Lipton, 1983). For Lipton, nutrition was thus vital in defining who belonged to the category of 'extreme poor' and who did not, and he used the 80%/80% poverty line, as explained above, to measure this.

21 Lipton linked the fragility of nutrition among extreme poor people with their problems concerning labour participation (Lipton, 1988). Firstly, the resistance of extreme poor people to illnesses is weakened (thus affecting their ability to work). Secondly, extreme poor people do not have many calories spare to search for work. Lipton mentioned "discouraged worker effects", especially amongst men, meaning that the search for employers, especially in slack seasons took so long that it led to deterred participation (Lipton, 1988). Thirdly, the higher frequency of child deaths and replacement births raised the dependency-ratios and workforce withdrawal of women. Moreover, because of lower incidence of extended kin-groups helping with child-care, women's participation rates are constrained (Lipton, 1988, p. 17). Hence, due to their bad physical condition, extreme poor people cannot respond to their poverty by working harder (Lipton, 1988). And as extreme poor people are so dependent on income from labour, these limits to their capacity to "work their way out of poverty" are severe (Lipton, 1988, p. 17).

Entitlements

Although Sen also looked at (the lack of) nutrition (starvation and famines) in his definition of extreme poor people, or destitute as he called them, he connected the poverty problem to a lack of entitlements. He defined entitlements as “the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in a society using the totality of rights connotations” (Sen, 1984, p. 497). According to Sen, people become extreme poor when their full set of entitlements fail to provide sufficient food for their subsistence (Sen, 1981). Hence, these people become dependent on public or private transfer-based entitlements for a large part of their livelihoods (Sen, 1981; Devereux, 2003, p. 10). He identified four categories of legal sources concerning the ability to command food: “production-based entitlement”, “trade-based entitlement”, “own-labour entitlement” and “inheritance and transfer entitlement” (Sen, 1981, p. 2). In other words, growing food, buying food, working for food and being given food by others (Devereux, 2001).

Unequal distribution of resources

Dasgupta combined Lipton’s perspective on the importance of nutrition and labour with Sen’s ideas on lack of entitlements and unequal distribution of resources. He stressed that people require food and care in order to be able to produce food and care (Dasgupta, 1993, p. 11). According to Dasgupta, extreme poverty (destitution) can be defined as an “extreme condition of ill-being” (p. 8) or as “extreme commodity deprivation” (p. 9) leading to an inability to meet “basic minimum” living standards” (p. 4) or “basic physiological needs” (p. 11) (Dasgupta, 1993, pp. 4, 8-11). Dasgupta identified such needs as “fundamental (commodity) needs”, e.g. food, water, shelter, health care, sanitation (Ibid., pp. 9, 11, 38).

According to him, destitutes or outcasts²² are those “[...] living on common-property resources (or alternatively as beggars). They gradually waste away; their life expectancy is low even by the standards prevailing in poor countries. Such people exist in large numbers; they are the outsiders.” (Ibid., p. 475). Furthermore, Dasgupta stressed that the deprivation that destitute people suffer is of a chronic nature (Dasgupta, 1993).

²² Dasgupta uses both these terms.

Dependency

Devereux also used the term destitution and, inspired by Sen and Dasgupta, described it as “the inability to meet subsistence needs, ‘assetlessness’ and dependence on transfers” (Devereux, 2003, pp. 11-12). Destitution is understood as a state of poverty that affects people so severely that they are dependent on the goodwill of others in order to survive, such as charity from people or welfare support from governmental and non-governmental organisations (Devereux, 2003). People classifying as destitute are beggars, the disabled without family assistance and victims of natural disasters. These are people with a minimum of material assets, but also no social assets (Ibid.). Devereux described destitution as an intrinsically multidimensional concept with the emphasis on the severity of poverty, rather than the duration of poverty (Ibid.). However, he stressed that the identification of destitute people is complicated, because it is difficult to come up with a minimum basket of productive assets,²³ in this case for Ethiopia. The resources that are necessary for a viable livelihood may vary across geographical space.²⁴ Moreover, livelihood diversification makes the analysis more complicated, as rural households, who lack agricultural inputs (e.g. land, oxen), still manage to survive through off-farm income-generating activities and may even be better off than households meeting the criteria of a minimum basket of productive assets. Devereux (2003) presented the example of a widowed woman lacking productive assets, but having a more stable and higher level of food consumption (due to support from a child working in a town and remitting money or food) than her farming neighbours.

Social invisibility

The lack of social assets, mentioned by Devereux features prominently in Drèze’s definition of extreme poor people. He found that, in India, destitute households “keep a low profile and are often socially invisible”, and they will go unnoticed by casual visitors (Drèze, 2002²⁵). The destitute struggle quietly to earn a meal or even starve patiently in their dark mud huts (Ibid.). Drèze (2002) described the extreme poor (destitute) as those households lacking an able-bodied adult member, earning no regular source of income, and surviving by engaging in informal activities, e.g. selling minor forest produce,

23 E.g. 0.5 hectares of land + access to a pair of draught oxen + two adult labour equivalents for a highland farming household (Devereux, 2003, p. 11).

24 E.g. highland and lowland in the case of Wollo, Ethiopia.

25 <https://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/2002/07/29/stories/2002072900661000.htm>.

gathering food for village commons and making baskets. This resonates with the findings of Harris-White. She referred to extreme poor people (destitute) as “non-people” and as “having and being nothing” (Harris-White, 2002, p. 7). It also resonates with the observations by Narayan, Chambers, Shah & Petesch (2000, p. 264), who stated that extreme poor people (bottom poor) “[...] in all their diversity, are excluded, impotent, ignored and neglected.”

Duration of poverty

In contrast to Devereux, the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, put emphasis on and studied extreme poverty specifically through the lens of chronic poverty (duration), which means focusing on those whose emergence from poverty seems to be most difficult (Hulme *et al.*, 2001). Through the chronic poverty approach, the durational aspect of the intensity of poverty and the dynamics of intergenerational transmission of poverty can be examined (Hulme *et al.*, 2001, p. 5). Moreover, the interaction between the duration and different aspects of the intensity of poverty, such as multidimensionality and severity, can be studied (Hulme *et al.*, 2001). Poverty that is severe and multidimensional, but which lasts less than a period of five years, is not considered chronic (Ibid.). However, those experiencing chronic poverty are likely to experience multidimensional and severe poverty as well (Ibid.).

The chronic poor are not a homogenous group and require attention at the individual, inter and intra-household, and social group level (Ibid.). The chronic poor are those who, for example, are socially discriminated against, experience health problems, live in remote areas, urban ghettos, conflict areas or those deprived due to their stage in the life cycle (Ibid.). Generally, the chronic poor suffer from multiple disadvantages, e.g. gender, ethnicity, age (Ibid.).

Based on research conducted by Jalan and Ravallion (2000), the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC), identified a five-tier category system (Hulme *et al.*, 2001, p. 12), including the:

- Always poor: expenditure or incomes or consumption levels in each period below a poverty line.²⁶
- Usually poor: mean expenditures over all periods less than the poverty line, but not poor in every period.
- Churning poor: mean expenditures over all periods close to the poverty line, but sometimes poor and sometimes non-poor in different periods.
- Occasionally poor: mean expenditures over all periods above the poverty line, but at least one period below the poverty line.
- Never poor: mean expenditure in all periods above the poverty line.

The first two categories, i.e. ‘always poor’ and ‘usually poor’, are considered to be ‘chronic’. However, the definitions of these categories do not take into account the severity of poverty. Hulme *et al.* (2001) therefore suggested including the severity of poverty by, for example, showing how far below or above the poverty line a household is (be it mean expenditure, income or consumption). They further stressed that the severity of poverty should not only be captured through a single index (poverty gap index), but through several dimensions in which people experience deprivations and thus take into account the poverty gaps existing within each dimension. The severity of poverty furthermore entails the trade-offs and time preferences that people are able and willing to make (Ibid.). Therefore, it may be useful to develop multidimensional indicators of depth and severity, partly in consultation with the poor, and complementary to quantitative measures of income, expenditures and consumption (Ibid., p. 19). Thus, chronic poverty, as defined by the CPRC, is characterised by long duration, multidimensionality and severity (Hulme *et al.*, 2001).

Spatially and social relationally trapped

Lastly, Lawson *et al.* (2010) stated that defining extreme poor people is not easy, as it is a heterogeneous group; however, they go on to say that extreme poor people can be defined through spatial and social relational dimensions. The former as extreme poor people are often concentrated in particular areas, “[...] chars in Bangladesh, drylands Southern Andhra Pradesh India, mountainous and landlocked areas across Africa, and ‘settlements’ outside South-Asia’s major cities.” (Ibid., p. 2). The latter as they identified that extreme

²⁶ Normally defined in terms of a monetary indicator (income, consumption), but may also be more widely defined, e.g. subjective aspects of deprivation (CPRC, 2018) <http://www.chronicpoverty.org/page/about-chronic-poverty>.

poor people often belong to specific social groups, such as indigenous and tribal groups (for example in India, Botswana, Bolivia, Uganda, Vietnam), internally displaced people, refugees and ethnic and religious minorities (Ibid.). At micro level, they identified extreme poor people as vulnerable individuals such as disabled, older people, widows, and orphans; those who can barely maintain their lives and have little to no prospect of improving their lives (Ibid.). “At the extreme, the poorest simply disappear, dying unregistered but easily preventable deaths” (Ibid.). The majority of extreme poor people survive mainly through their own efforts, be it through casual labour, gleaning, recycling waste, begging, gathering common property resources and through support from relatives and neighbours (Ibid., p. 7).

From this review of definitions and categorisations, it can be concluded that extreme poor people are living in different conditions than poor people. Extreme poor people are a different category, and not just a subcategory of ‘the poor’. However, how extreme poverty is defined remains ambiguous. The definitions and ways of measuring extreme poor people vary considerably. Lawson *et al.* identified five different ways of defining and measuring extreme poverty: income and consumption levels, human development²⁷ (multidimensional deprivation), duration of poverty (chronic poverty), intuitive (identifying an indicator easily assessed, e.g. food), or participatory (Ibid., pp. 3-6).

Despite the difference in approaching the definition of an extreme poor person and measuring extreme poverty, the different definitions are in line with Devereux (2003), in the sense that they entail either the inability to meet subsistence needs, assetlessness (material and social), or dependence on transfers or a combination of these aspects. Moreover, the majority of the definitions are multidimensional and the measures, where presented, are also increasingly multidimensional (e.g. CPRC). Although there is no consensus about which measure to use to measure extreme poverty, there at least seems to be an agreement that measures of extreme poverty should be multidimensional. For example, Devereux stated the need to look beyond economic proxies to measure extreme poverty and to include indicators such as marginalisation, social exclusion, and social status (Devereux, 2003,

²⁷ Lawson et al. (2010) noted that although human development is valuable to defining extreme poverty, it is not easily measured with human development. They argued that it seemed impossible to specify proponents of human development for individual or household level. They stated that efforts to use human development measures at individual and household level (e.g. Barrientos (2003)) have been critiqued for e.g. number of deprivations classifying someone as extreme poor and cut-off points (Lawson et al., 2010, p. 4).

pp. 8-9). The CPRC acknowledge the multidimensionality in defining and measuring extreme poverty and add to this severity and duration of extreme poverty (Hulme *et al.*, 2001). There is also a temporal dimension to extreme poverty, according to CPRC (Ibid.). While material and relational dimensions of wellbeing are extensively discussed in the different definitions presented above, hardly any attention is given to the cognitive dimension of wellbeing in defining extreme poverty.

What also becomes clear from the above is that 'the extreme poor' are not a homogenous group, and there are many different 'categories' of extreme poor people, e.g. elderly, orphans, migrants/displaced people, people with psychical or mental health disabilities, and widows, and that the 'categories' are dependent on the context. The level of dependency that characterises extreme poor people is related to what society around them provides for or not.

Lastly, it is notable that although the literature agreed that extreme poor people are a different group than poor people, it does not generally unravel the differences most of the time. The literature focused on extreme poor people and their characteristics and not on the difference between poor and extreme poor people per se. Lipton (1983) and the CPRC (Hulme *et al.*, 2001) are exceptions in this regard, the former defined poor and extreme poor people in terms of food requirements (80%/80%), while CPRC make a distinction on the basis of mean expenditure, income or consumption levels being below a poverty line for a certain period. Both Lipton and the CPRC thus focused on material aspects in determining the difference between poor and extreme poor people.

3.3 Structural causes of extreme poverty

The literature on extreme poverty identifies different structural causes that are seen as leading to and sustaining extreme poverty. This section examines these identified causes.

CPRC (Addison *et al.*, 2008) and Lawson *et al.* (2010) identified five main causes of extreme poverty: poor work opportunities, denial of or limited citizenship, insecurities, (social) discrimination, and spatial disadvantage (Addison *et al.*, 2008, p. vii; Lawson *et al.*, 2010, pp. 263-264).

Firstly, when growth is concentrated in certain areas or is limited, the opportunities to work become limited and are often on a causal or short-term basis. While this type of work may assist extreme poor people to stay alive, it does not contribute to any accumulation of assets. Moreover, it may stimulate poor work conditions and contribute to exploitation of extreme poor people.

Lipton was clear that poor work opportunities (casual labour status and severe fluctuations in unemployment) are the cause of extreme poverty (Lipton, 1988). He linked the fragility of nutrition among extreme poor people with their problems concerning labour participation (Ibid.). Firstly, extreme poor people have low resistance to illnesses, thus affecting their ability to work. Secondly, extreme poor people do not have many calories spare to search for work. Lipton mentioned “discouraged worker effects”, especially amongst men, meaning that the search for employers, especially in slack seasons, takes so long that it deters participation (Ibid.). Thirdly, the higher frequency of child deaths and replacement births raise the dependency ratios and workforce withdrawal of women. Moreover, because of a lower incidence of extended kin groups helping with childcare, women’s participation rates are constrained (Ibid., p. 17). Hence, due to their bad physical condition, the ultra-poor cannot respond to their poverty by working harder (Lipton, 1988). Moreover, as the ultrapoor are so dependent on income from labour, these limits to their capacity to “work their way out of poverty” are severe (Ibid., p. 17).

Dasgupta also explicitly mentioned poor working conditions as a primary cause of extreme poverty. According to him, “economic disenfranchisement” (the inability to participate in the labour market) and undernourishment (affecting people’s productivity) that result from unequal distribution of resources are the main reasons behind extreme poverty (Dasgupta, 1993, p.475). Dasgupta wrote that it is often claimed that the assetless at least have labour power. He disagreed with this, saying that those who are assetless have potential labour power. This potential can only be converted into labour power if they have access to nutrition and healthcare (Ibid., p. 474). The assetless are identified as being particularly vulnerable and these “economic out-casts”, as Dasgupta referred to them, predominantly come from this segment of the population (Ibid.). More specifically, he mentioned “involuntary unemployment”. A person falling under this category is someone who “cannot find employment in a market that employs someone very similar to him, and if the latter person, by virtue of his employment in this market, is distinctly better off than him” (Dasgupta, 1993, p.482). Although

he considered destitution to be a personal calamity, he also viewed it as a grave weakness of any society that allows it to exist (Dasgupta, 1993, p. viii). He therefore advised including an analysis of “the forces that bring about states of affairs where a large part of people can be destitutes” (Dasgupta, 1993, p. 8).

The second cause identified by CPRC (Addison et al., 2008) and Lawson et al. (2010) is limited citizenship. This means that extreme poor people lack basic rights and needs, have no or very limited political influence/voice and lack access to institutions (i.e. state, market, civil society). This political and economic exclusion keeps extreme poor people trapped in their poverty (Harris-White, 2005a; Addison et al., 2008; Lawson et al., 2010).

Sen explained this lack of power in his work on entitlements (Sen, 1981). He explained that starvation is the characteristic of people not getting enough food; starvation, however, does not necessarily mean that there are food shortages – indeed, this is just one of many possible causes (Sen, 1981, p. 1). According to Sen, people face starvation because they lack sufficient food entitlements, e.g. because they are not able to produce food (“direct entitlement failure”) or other goods to exchange for sufficient food (“trade entitlement failure”) (Sen, 1981, p. 51).

Third, CPRC (Addison et al., 2008) and Lawson et al. (2010) mention insecurities as a cause of extreme poverty. Insecurities means that extreme poor people often live in insecure environments and lack the assets or entitlements (Sen, 1981) to deal with any shocks or stresses that come their way. Consequently, they are forced to trade long-term goals for short-term survival.

Fourth, CPRC (Addison et al., 2008) and Lawson et al. (2010) have identified (social) discrimination as a cause of extreme poverty. They state that the relationships that extreme poor people have are often of an exploitative nature and can lead to denial of access to both public and private services or goods. These exploitative relationships are based on e.g. caste system, religion, ethnicity and gender.

The fifth cause identified by CPRC (Addison et al., 2008) and Lawson et al. (2010) is spatial disadvantage, e.g. weak economic integration, political exclusion, and remoteness, which can contribute to intra-country spatial traps. This can also occur across nations.

Lastly, it is noteworthy that CPRC identified intergenerational transmission of poverty (IGT) as both a characteristic of, but also a cause of extreme (chronic) poverty (Bird, 2007; Bird & Higgins, 2011; CPRC, 2018²⁸). IGT can be studied through intergenerational transfer of capitals and assets, e.g. parental investment in the education of their children, inheritable diseases, pensions, debts, bonded labour and coping strategies, meaning that strategies for survival, passed on to a next generation, may indeed help them survive, but also keep them in poverty (Hulme et al., 2001; Bird, 2007; Bird & Higgins, 2011). In relation to IGT, it is good to mention Lewis' work on a "culture of poverty", in which he explained that poverty is sustained because of inherent psychological, sociological, economic, and political traits (Lewis, 1959; 1966). This is a controversial theory, however, (see e.g. Eames & Goode, 1996; Small, Harding & Lamont, 2010) as cultures and the corresponding norms are not static. According to Hulme et al. (2001), Lewis' theory requires more reflective and qualitative research.

Although the literature has identified multiple causes of extreme poverty, there is a need to further investigate their interrelationship. Individual, household and larger-scale causes interact with each other and different causes can be at play simultaneously, e.g. insecurities and limited citizenship. Addison *et al.* (2008) stated that what causes and sustains extreme poverty is not always straightforward and there is still much to learn if we are to establish an in-depth understanding of the individual and structural causes. They suggested that both quantitative and qualitative panel data and life histories could contribute to this understanding (Addison *et al.*, 2008).

3.4 Targeting extreme poor people

This section examines (effective) strategies targeted at extreme poor people and looks at the differences, strengths, and challenges of these methods.

In the literature on extreme poor people, it is often mentioned that they are frequently excluded by institutions and civil society and do not, or hardly benefit from development interventions (Narayan *et al.*, 2000; Drèze, 2002; Lawson et al., 2010, Lawson et al., 2017). Narayan *et al.* (2000, p. 264) stated that extreme poor people are a "[...] a blind spot in development" and are hard to reach. Drèze confirmed this and wrote that extreme poor people are "[...] beyond the pale of most development programmes and welfare schemes"

28 <http://www.chronicpoverty.org/page/igt>.

and that “[...] even “self-help groups tend to shun them” (Drèze, 2002²⁹). Moreover, some (extreme) poor people are mobile and without a permanent place to live (Pouw et al., 2016).

However, the fact that development interventions and other institutions currently fail to reach extreme poor people, does not mean that they are unreachable. Lipton made this clear by stating that he disagreed that the poorest 5-15% of people in developing countries have the characteristics of an “underclass”, which make it either too costly or impossible for them to raise their income and productivity in a way that would be self-sustaining (Lipton, 1983, p. 3).

These so-called underclass characteristics are linked to misfortunes (e.g. mental deficiency), demographic circumstances (e.g. widow) or earlier choices (e.g. alcoholism) (Ibid.). The result is that these people cannot be helped to become self-sustaining at a reasonable cost and should therefore rely on charity or social security measures (Lipton, 1983). Lipton disagreed that extreme poor people are an “unreachable underclass” (Ibid., p. 3). According to him, the majority of extreme poor people in developing countries were not aged, addicted or severely ill people, but young members³⁰ of large families able to fully participate in society if properly nourished (Lipton, 1988). Lipton viewed extreme poor people as a resource rather than a “burdensome underclass” (Lipton, 1983, p. 3).

If extreme poor people are reachable, how can they be included and benefit from development interventions? Sen and Begum (2010) argued that extreme poor people require specific analytical and policy attention. According to most of the empirical literature, targeting efforts differentiate between poor and non-poor people and not between poor and extreme poor people (Ibid.). Since policies aimed at poor people in general do not reach extreme poor people, they propose the development of targeting methods directed to extreme poor people, in order to ensure that they are not excluded from development interventions and policies (Ibid.). However, they state that targeting extreme poor people has not proven to be an easy task, as there is, apparently, not one single factor that can act as a proxy for extreme poverty (Ibid.). Karlan & Thuysbaert (2016) concurred that targeting extreme poor people is not straightforward, as the criteria for eligibility are difficult to

29 <https://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/2002/07/29/stories/2002072900661000.htm>.

30 According to Lipton, children under five (most of them not yet permanently harmed by undernourishment) were heavily represented amongst the extreme poor.

define and verify, and since eligibility criteria are mostly multidimensional, they are much debated (Karlan & Thuysbaert, 2016). Moreover, Alviar, Ayala and Handa (2010) conclude that, currently, there is no one method of targeting that is successful in reaching (extreme) poor people, but multiple methods combined do appear to be more effective than single methods (Alviar *et al.*, 2010). Alviar *et al.* (Ibid.) identified three criteria on the basis of which targeting methods can be evaluated: effectiveness (inclusion or exclusion errors), efficiency (administrative costs) and transparency (entire process of beneficiary selection, procedures, rules and whether the procedure is clear for intended beneficiaries) (Ibid., p. 100). Broadly speaking, they identified four ways of targeting the (extreme) poor: 1) individual/household targeting; 2) categorical targeting; 3) self-targeting; and 4) combining targeting methods (Ibid.). These methods are explained in Table 3.1, which shows the strengths and challenges of each targeting method. Reflecting on these different strengths and challenges, a few things can be concluded from Table 3.1. Firstly, chances of inclusion of extreme poor people, as proposed by Alviar *et al.* (2010), seem highest when combining different targeting methods; however this approach is costly and complex. Community-based targeting and self-targeting methods that are less expensive and complex have the potential to include extreme poor people; however, the former is highly susceptible to e.g. nepotism and favouritism, while the latter runs the risk of an intervention being stigmatised and the quality of an intervention being compromised in order to discourage non-poor people from engaging with such programmes.

Targeting methods specifically aimed at extreme poor people are relatively new and still being tested (Ibid.). While literature dealing with these methods is expanding, there are still significant knowledge gaps that require (deeper) investigation (e.g. how to scale-up, what do beneficiaries think of these methods) (Standing & Kirk, 2010). Moreover, more research (e.g. case studies) may shed light on whether and what role context plays in determining effective targeting methods to include extreme poor people in development interventions.

Table 3.1
Targeting methods for the extreme poor

Type of method	System	Strengths	Challenges
Individual/ household	Direct evaluation and verification of each eligible household. Eligibility decided by programme managers/administrators through e.g. surveys 4 systems of targeting:	Comprehensive verification	High administrative costs
	1. Verified means test: rigorous evaluation of income and assets by verification through documents, e.g. payroll, property, taxes	Transparent and credible results	More suited for developed countries where there is a formal and complete documentation on income and consumption, which reduces administrative costs
	2. Simple means test: qualitative observations of programme administrator determine eligibility, usually through home visits	Relatively simple system that does not require independent verification	Sensitive to inclusion errors, as potential beneficiaries may underestimate income
	3. Proxy mean test: multi variate regression to assess income or well-being through easy to observe and hard to manipulate proxies. Eligibility determined by a point system and cut-off point	Good prediction of welfare, easier to collect than income or consumption data	Require advanced information system and high levels of administration Common methodological choices, such as choice of variables, can lead to significant differences in identification of beneficiaries

	4. Community-based targeting: community members evaluate eligibility criteria	Community members have good knowledge about the poor in their community Less expensive, no complicated targeting methods Transparent, includes perception/ participation of community	Very sensitive to manipulation (nepotism, favouritism) Can create conflicts and divide community Less suitable for urban or densely populated areas (no clear community and high mobility)
		Targeting process is owned by community and has potential to give power to the community	
Categorical	Eligibility based on pre-determined characteristics, either demography or geography		
	Geography: focus on area with high percentage of poor. Poverty maps and geographic information used to target	Very efficient with low levels of exclusion errors and administrative costs	Risk of migration into the area of coverage Required information not always available Best utilised in combination with other targeting methods
	Demography: selection of groups (sex, age, household structure) easily defined by a specific characteristic linked with poverty	When characteristic is easy to verify, administrative costs are low	Best utilised in combination with other targeting methods for better overall results
Self-targeting	Eligibility for all; however, nonpoor discouraged from entering programmes, as the process of applying and collecting benefits outweighs the time that needs to be invested	Simple system	Stigma around the programmes, discourage participation of poor Compromising quality of benefits to discourage nonpoor

Combining targeting methods	Combining different targeting systems to enhance performance	Increased chances of reaching extreme poor people	Complex High administrative costs Possible time delays in low capacity environments
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Source: Altaf on the basis of Alviar et al. (2010)

3.5 Development interventions for extreme poor people

This section looks at different development interventions aimed at reaching extreme poor people and tries to draw important lessons. The interventions that are studied are selected on the basis of (also) being researched independently and externally.

When studying poverty reduction interventions for extreme poor people and the associated literature, there is a consensus that the NGO BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities) is perhaps the most important actor in this field. BRAC launched an experimental intervention for extreme poor people in 2002: Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction-Targeting the Ultra-Poor (CFPR-TUP). This intervention was a result of BRAC realising that their programmes rarely reached extreme poor women (Hulme & Moore, 2007). According to BRAC, this inability to reach extreme poor women was partly because women did not engage with the microfinance interventions due to a fear of not being able to pay back their loans (Ibid.). Thus, they conclude, they must be excluding themselves. On the other hand, they were also excluded by BRAC's village organisations, because the members did not want to be associated with extreme poor people (Ibid.). At the same time, BRAC also learned from their collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP)'s Vulnerable Group Feeding scheme³¹ (Ibid.). Together with WFP, BRAC developed what they called a "laddered strategic linkage" (Ibid., p. 3). The idea behind this was that having climbed out of poverty as a result of aid, in the form of food provided by WFP in combination with assistance from BRAC (e.g. social development, saving programmes, income generation trainings and finally microcredit), poor women would be able to graduate to BRAC's microfinance interventions (Ibid.). However, 30%, generally the

³¹ The scheme was intended to provide poor women 31.25kg of wheat per month for a period of two years.

poorest beneficiaries, failed to graduate to these microfinance interventions (Ibid.).

From these experiences, BRAC developed Targeting the Ultra-Poor (TUP) using the 'laddered strategic linkage' system, but included not only economic aspects of poverty, but also health aspects and social aspects (Hossain & Matin, 2007, p. 382). BRAC's approach was thus more holistic, but also more systematic and intensive (Hossain & Matin, 2007). The TUP approach combined different types of aid, which BRAC referred to as promotional aid; for example, skill training and asset grants, and protective aid such as stipends; but the approach also tried to address socio-political aspects at different levels (Hulme & Moore, 2007). Matin (2005) explains that TUP basically has two strategies – pushing down and pushing out. Pushing down means trying to reach extreme poor people by direct targeting and using both participatory methods and simple surveys (Ibid.). Pushing out refers to addressing those dimensions of poverty that are neglected by other interventions (Ibid.).

BRAC has identified extreme poor people as those who: are in the lowest earning half of those below the poverty line; eat below 80% of their energy requirement, despite spending 80% or more of their income on food; live without access to basic services, healthcare and financial services; often lack acceptance and self-confidence in their own community; and have no support systems (BRAC, 2014, p. 4). More specifically, BRAC developed inclusion criteria that include: children of a school-going age who do paid work; people earning a living as beggars; day labourers; domestic aid and so forth; households lacking an adult member; households lacking productive assets; and household with less than 10 decimals of land (BRAC, 2014, p. 5). However, beneficiaries³² are targeted on a community level through participatory spatial maps and wealth ranking exercises. This is step one of BRAC's 24month TUP interventions. After this period, the extreme poor beneficiaries are supposed to 'graduate' out of their extreme poverty. The second step of TUP is asset transfer, whereby beneficiaries receive assets (mostly in the form of livestock) in order to generate an income. Step three involves stipends or cash transfers and sometimes food, in order to provide the beneficiaries time to get their income generation started. In step four, beneficiaries are encouraged to save and their savings are tracked. Step five involves trainings given through weekly home visits. During these visits, beneficiaries are trained to deal with their assets, but also assisted in matters such as literacy, health and hygiene.

32 BRAC prefers to use clients instead of beneficiaries.

The beneficiaries also receive support and counselling. Moreover, in step five, beneficiaries are given healthcare support through access to physicians in the community and medicines. The last step is social integration, whereby the social status of the beneficiaries should increase and they encouraged and helped integrate more into their communities. This process is aided by a village poverty reduction committee tasked with organising regular meetings after the beneficiaries have 'graduated'. This is designed to give them support with any problems that arise after graduation.

BRAC has identified different criteria to evaluate when a beneficiary is deemed to have graduated. These criteria differ per context, but can include e.g. having cash savings; multiple sources of income; using clean drinking water and sanitary latrines; having a home with a solid roof; no self-reported food deficit in the last year; no child marriage; owning livestock or poultry; having a kitchen garden; children attending school.

According to BRAC, this methodology has reached 1.4 million extreme poor people in Bangladesh (BRAC, 2014, p. 16). 95% of the beneficiaries achieved 'graduation' and 92% were able to cross the extreme poverty threshold of 50 cents per day and were able to maintain this level for the next four years (BRAC, 2014, p. 17).

Hulme and Moore (2007) stated that there is much for others aiming to reach extreme poor people to learn from BRAC's TUP process, such as the inclusion of village elites and village committees in assisting extreme poor people. It is noteworthy that, although TUP has participatory elements, it is controlled top-down (Ibid.). On the other hand, BRAC is able to execute an intervention like TUP, due to their strong analytical and management capacity. They were able to monitor and evaluate TUP through their own Research and Evaluation Division (Ibid.). However, TUP is quite costly, BRAC spent \$35.6 million in 2015 on TUP.³³ⁱ This means that not every organisation will be able to carry out an intervention like TUP (Ibid.). A critical note on TUP is that it is not able to reach all categories of extreme poor people and, in particular, 'economically inactive' extreme poor people, such as the elderly, chronically ill, socially excluded, (AIDS) orphans and 'adversely incorporated people' (e.g. refugees, indigenous people living in remote areas and bonded labourers) (Ibid., 2007, p. 12). According to Hulme & Moore (2007), these categories of extreme poor people require conventional forms of social

33 <http://www.brac.net/partnership>.

protection, such as old age provisions, child grants, humanitarian aid, etc. (Ibid.).

In order to test the replicability and universality of TUP, in 2006, CGAP (Consultative Group to Assist the Poor) and the Ford Foundation started ten pilots in eight countries (Haiti, Pakistan, India, Honduras, Peru, Ethiopia, Ghana and Yemen). After a period of 18-36 months, the initial results have been that 75-98% of the beneficiaries graduated according to the criteria set for each pilot and their livelihoods were considered sustainable according to CGAP.³⁴ There are some important lessons that can be drawn from these pilots. Firstly, it seems that well-sequenced and intensively monitored interventions, which combine consumption support, asset transfers, (livelihoods) trainings and access to savings, can contribute to enhanced consumption, asset and income diversification and also to a degree of empowerment of extreme poor people (Hashemi & De Montesquiou, 2011). However, the interventions did not seem to reach all categories of extreme poor people, particularly ‘the economically inactive extreme poor’. Moreover, having a solid partner organisation to implement the intervention is crucial to its success (Ibid.). Hashemi and De Montesquiou identified several (macro) factors that influence the success of the intervention, i.e. macroeconomic shocks, absence of markets, lack of physical infrastructure, availability of good medical/hospital infrastructure and household characteristics, e.g. alcoholism (Ibid., p.11). There are still many questions left unanswered and more research is needed to determine long-term impacts of the intervention and to make the intervention more cost effective³⁵ (Ibid.).

Sulaiman, Goldberg, Karlan and De Montesquiou (2016) divided the different types of interventions for extreme poor people into three categories. The graduation programme is one them, the other two are livelihood development programmes and lump-sum unconditional cash transfers³⁶(Sulaiman *et al.*, 2016). After comparing these types of interventions, it seemed that the lump-

34 <https://www.cgap.org/blog/good-news-ultra-poor>.

35 The costs vary from \$330–\$650 per beneficiary in India to approximately \$1,900 in Haiti. This covers consumption support, asset transfer, all staff costs, monitoring costs, and head office overhead.

http://www.microfinancegateway.org/sites/default/files/graduation_faq_sheet_final_021414.pdf.

36 Graduation programmes are described as holistic approaches that provide the extreme poor a set of services, e.g. access to savings, technical skill training, a grant in the form of a productive asset or seed capital and intensive mentoring, in order to deal with the interrelated challenges of the extreme poor. Livelihood development programmes are explained as approaches that assist the extreme poor to acquire productive assets and to gain the skills to use these assets. Lastly

sum cash transfers showed the highest impact per dollar; however, evidence to show its long-term impact is unavailable (Ibid.). From the evidence that is currently available, it seems that the graduation programme is the most sustainable way to improve extreme poverty; however, much research is still needed in order to truly compare the three types of interventions (Ibid.). Questions regarding the sustainability of the three types of interventions are necessary in order to understand what works best for extreme poor people.

Holistic interventions, such as the graduation programme, are also mentioned as preferable in other literature concerning what works best for extreme poor people (Lawson *et al.* 2010; Lawson *et al.*, 2017). This is because these types of interventions combine different elements, i.e. social protection (e.g. cash transfers) and economic promotion (asset transfers, trainings), while at the same time giving attention to the cognitive dimensions of poverty, e.g. confidence building (Lawson *et al.* 2010, p. 265; Lawson *et al.*, 2017, p. 268).

Browne (2013) suggested that e.g. confidence, social networks and empowerment are important factors contributing to the sustainability of an intervention and its long-term impact. Moreover, the development agency Women for Women International found that extreme poor women included in their 'graduation' intervention (that devoted attention to e.g. confidence and capacity building) attributed the positive impact of the intervention, firstly, to gaining agency and voice, and, secondly, to cash transfers and trainings (McIlvaine, Oser, Lindsey & Blume, 2015).

This is also the case for social protection interventions at a national level. Single social protection instruments are not enough to achieve sustainable results; rather, it requires a combination of instruments that pay attention to the different dimensions of poverty (e.g. Chile's *Solidario* programme) (Barrientos & Hulme, 2008). Again, it is difficult to predict mid- and long-term impact, partly because this depends on whether (national) social protection interventions can be sustained and whether current single social protection interventions can add complementary components (Ibid., p. 328). Moreover, macroeconomic crises, migration, natural hazards (climate change) and social unrest could potentially reverse the current impact achieved through social protection interventions (Ibid.).

lump-sum unconditional cash transfers refer to the transfer of lump-sum money so that the extreme poor may invest this into assets for income generation (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2016, p. 1).

While it is possible and important to learn lessons from successful interventions, it is also important for interventions to be context specific in order to succeed (Lawson *et al.*, 2017). Lawson *et al.* (2017) particularly mention Africa as a “mosaic”, and therefore it is important to adapt an intervention to a national or sub-national level (Ibid., p. 268).

Looking at the literature on (success) interventions for extreme poor people, a few things stand out. First, definitions and inclusion criteria of extreme poor people differ per intervention and depend on the focus/target group of the intervention (e.g. children, disabled people, women) and while some interventions make use of Participatory Wealth Ranking, they tend not to report the difference between what they consider an extreme poor person and a poor person. What the literature does mention is the difference in instruments for poor and extreme poor people. Where poor people seem to benefit from single instruments and may be assisted through purely material aid, extreme poor people seem to require multiple instruments that also include non-material aid. Moreover, extreme poor people do not benefit from opportunity alone, but need targeted support. Interventions that were (relatively) successful in reaching extreme poor people and enhancing their livelihoods sustainability tackled the multiple dimensions of poverty, involved the communities of these people and/or local elites (mostly for the selection of the beneficiaries) and conducted intensive monitoring and evaluation. What is also evident from the literature on interventions for extreme poor people is that more research is required on the scaling up of interventions, cost effectiveness and, crucially, on the long-term impact and sustainability of the interventions.

3.6 Conclusions

Although the definition of ‘the extreme poor’ is ambiguous, there is growing agreement that extreme poverty is multidimensional, longitudinal and certainly not just defined by economic characteristics that are fixed in time. However, in defining and measuring extreme poverty, there is little attention for the relational and cognitive dimensions. The present research proposes to adopt a multi-dimensional approach to extreme poverty, paying particular attention to social-relational and cognitive dimensions. Furthermore, this research takes into account that extreme poor people are a heterogeneous group and therefore differentiates between different categories of ‘the extreme poor’. In particular, a distinction between extreme poor and poor people is important to make, currently this is rare in theory and practice.

More clarity on this distinction could assist development agencies aiming to reach extreme poor people, to better identify and involve their target group in a more inclusive manner (see also Figure 2.1, Chapter 2).

The literature identified different causes of extreme poverty and suggested that more research is required to build a comprehensive understanding of what causes and sustains extreme poverty. This research pays attention to the (structural) causes and strives to contribute to a more in-depth understanding through qualitative data and life histories.



4

Case study 1: Bangladesh, power abuses and environmental vulnerabilities

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter³⁷ is to explore poverty reduction interventions aimed at extreme poor people in Dacope, Khulna and to examine how these interventions have been influenced by the effective approach developed by BRAC (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, the chapter examines the local definition of extreme poor people in the research location and compares this to the local definition of poor people from the perspective of their community using PADev workshops. In addition, the different categories of extreme poor people in the research location are studied. Moreover, the causes of being extreme poor in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing in the research location and how these are reproduced by social and political power relations and institutions are scrutinised based on field research. Lastly, The chapter reflects on the inclusion and exclusion of interventions with regards to extreme poor people.

The remainder of this chapter is organised as follows: the next section sketches the context of the case study. The chapter then discusses the local definitions of extreme poor and poor people, deals with the different categories of extreme poor people and studies the causes of extreme poverty in the research area. This is followed by a reflection on the inclusion and exclusion of poverty reduction interventions concerning extreme poor people. The chapter concludes with an anticipation of the possible implications for the empirical analyses in Chapters 5 through 7.

³⁷ The author published an earlier version of this work as a working paper.

4.2 Sketching the context

This section draws a picture of the research location on the basis of literature, interviews with the municipality of Dacope and the PADev workshops, in particular from the ‘events’ and ‘changes’ exercises.

Bangladesh’s HDI has seen an increase of 50% from 1990–2015, from, respectively, 0.386 to 0.579, ranking 139th out of 188 countries and classifies as a medium human development country (UNDP, 2016a). Despite the rapid improvement of social indicators in Bangladesh, it remains, in the words of Jean Drèze, “no paradise of human development” (Drèze, 2004).

Bangladesh scores below average with its HDI for 2015 when comparing it to the average HDI of the medium human development countries in South Asia, for which the score is 0.631 (UNDP, 2016a). Furthermore, according to Bangladesh’s Household Income and Expenditure survey of 2010, 17.6% of the population belong to the ‘category’ of extreme poor. This means that these people experience chronic hunger and malnutrition, are deprived of education, lack adequate shelter, are highly prone to many diseases and vulnerable to natural disasters (BRAC, 2016).³⁸

The research in Bangladesh was conducted in Dacope (see Map 4.2), which is an Upazila³⁹ of Khulna District (see Map 4.1). Khulna District, in turn, is part of Khulna division. Dacope is situated in the south of Bangladesh and borders the Sundarbans, the largest mangrove forest in the world. Dacope occupies an area of 991.56 square kilometres including 494.69 square kilometres reserve forest area (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015). It consists of nine unions further divided into 97 villages (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015). The population was counted at 152,316 in 2011 and the majority is Hindu (56.5%), followed by Muslims (41.5%) and a small minority of Christians (2%). 30.6% of Dacope’s population get their drinking water from tube wells, 0.7% from a tap and a majority of 68.7% from other sources, e.g. ponds (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015). 67.3% of the households have access to sanitary latrines and 28.2% of the households have access to electricity, even though Dacope is part of the Rural Electrification Program. The majority of people (87.6%) live in a *kutcha*⁴⁰ house and 3.8% live in a *jhupri*.⁴¹ The literacy rate of females

38 <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/37714/ASCworkingpaper126.pdf?sequence=1> xxxviii <https://www.brac.net/tup>.

39 Subdivision..

40 Temporary houses often made of wood, mud, straw and dry leaves.

41 Hut, worst form of housing.

is lower than that of males, which stand at 49.1% and 62.9%, respectively (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

The majority of Dacope's inhabitants rely on natural resources in order to earn a living, either through agriculture or fisheries (e.g. shrimp cultivation). However, the frequency and severity of natural disasters in the area puts livelihoods at a constant risk. Comparing population data of 2001 with 2011 for Dacope, a decline⁴² in population can be observed (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015). This is attributed to out-migration as a result of livelihood stress caused by the cyclone Aila, which occurred in 2009 (Mallick & Vogt, 2014; Saha, 2017). Aila was not the only natural disaster to hit the area. In 2007, the cyclone Sidr hit Dacope, leaving a lot of destruction. Apart from these two major disasters, the area has been a regular target of smaller storms and hurricanes. Dacope has been and still is affected by climate change: rising sea levels, cyclones and storm surges have impacted the area. This is visible, not only in livelihood stresses, but also in the high levels of salinity of drinking water (Khan *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, drinking water in the area is affected by high concentrations of arsenic and iron (Ayers *et al.*, 2016; Benneyworth *et al.*, 2016). Salinity, arsenic and other contaminants in the groundwater negatively affect the quality and quantity of potable water in Dacope (Ibid.).

The area described by the community

During the PADev exercises, several issues were mentioned by the workshop participants that mark the research area. Two of these issues were most impactful in the lives of the workshop participants, i.e. the independence war of 1971 and the natural disasters that occurred (leading to many problems, such as salinity of the soil, decreasing vegetable production). In relation to people's sources of livelihoods, workshop participants mentioned negative impacts of increasing shrimp cultivation/farming. According to the workshop participants, *gher*⁴³ land is being converted into shrimp cultivation areas using river water, which, according to them, is making the land more saline, as the river water is saline. Moreover, they reported that shrimp cultivation is contributing to a growing wealth gap, the rich (owners of shrimp cultivation areas) seem to be getting richer and the poor poorer. Consequently, people

⁴² The population of Dacope was counted at 157,489 in 2001 and 152,316 in 2011.

⁴³ Gher land is land that was previously used as a rice field, but is converted to produce shrimps or prawns (Altaf, 2016a, p. 17).

seem to want to migrate (illegally) to India. Furthermore, the workshop participants mentioned that the diversity of fish has decreased, as the natural flow of the river has been destroyed.⁴⁴ In addition, many people working as net pullers (fishery) ‘throw out’ the species they do not require. According to the workshops participants, this has also contributed to a decrease of diversity of fish. Besides the problems confronting the area, according to the workshop participants, many positive changes have occurred as well, such as improvement of infrastructure (e.g. roads), better accessible technology (e.g. mobile phones), higher enrolment in primary education, fewer early marriages and increased female empowerment.



Photo 4.1
Gher land in Dacope



Photo 4.2
Fisherman in Dacope

Research area

For the purpose of this research, five unions were selected to study extreme poor people, i.e. Laudubi, Banishanta, Bajua, Dacope and Kalaisganj (see Map 4.2). The selection of these unions is based on practicalities, since Dacope is a large area and divided by rivers. Crossing rivers and covering distances would take up too much time, therefore the unions clustered together on one side of the river were selected. Moreover, the NGO being studied in this area is predominantly active in these unions.

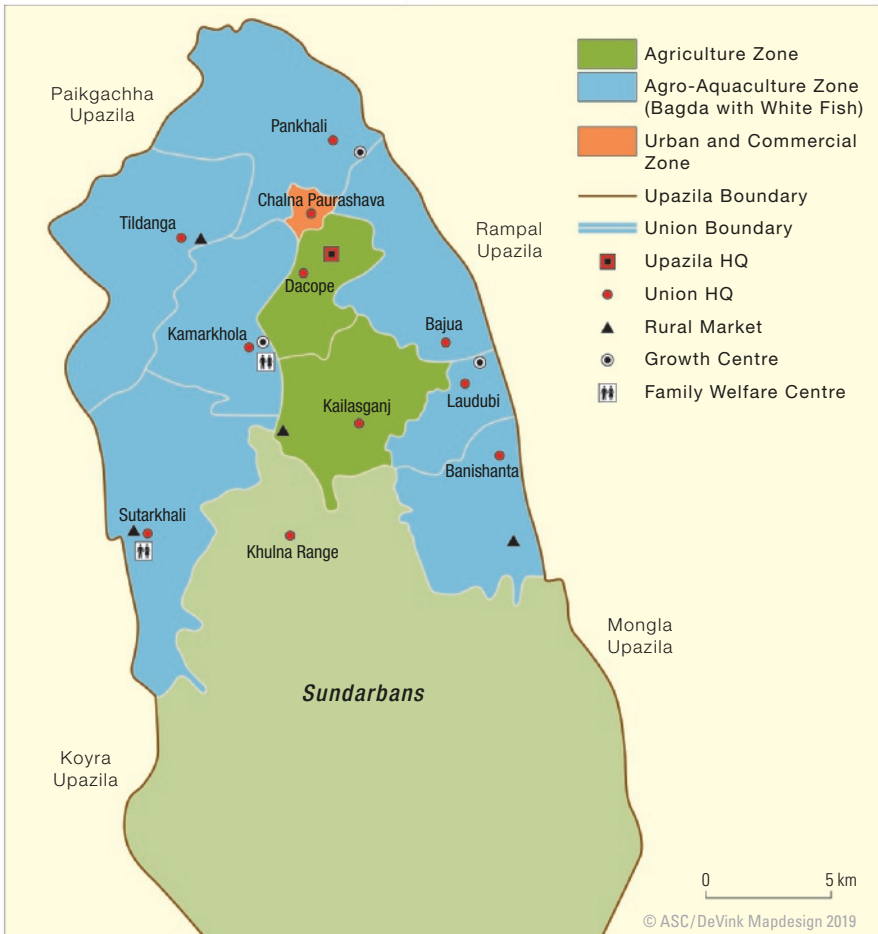
⁴⁴ The participants did not elaborate on the causes of change in the natural flow of the river. However, the author has observed levees, pumping activities and damming in the area. All of this can disturb the natural flow of a river and thus affect the changes in the hydrology (Altaf, 2016a, p. 17).



Map 4.1
Dacope, Bangladesh

4.3 Multi-dimensions of ill-/wellbeing of extreme poor people in Dacope

This section examines the multi-dimensions of wellbeing, as laid out in the conceptual model, on the basis of life histories conducted with extreme poor people of the studied unions in Dacope. In addition, it describes the local definition of extreme poor people and the different categories hereof and compares this to the local definition of poor people. These definitions have been acquired through the PADev workshops, in particular the wealth ranking exercise. The section ends with the causes of deprivations in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing and their (possible) reproduction in the research area.



Map 4.2

Dacope

Source: municipality of Dacope

Defining extreme poor people of Dacope

The local definition of extreme poor people was compiled by community members of the five studied unions. They came up with a definition/characterisation (see Table 4.1) of extreme poor people that shows deprivations in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing. What stands out is that extreme poor people face many uncertainties, whether it is the uncertainty of getting a meal every day, living in fear of being evicted and losing their house, or getting a loan in times of need; their situation is always extremely precarious. They are unable to handle livelihood shocks and stresses. In fact, they cannot cope with shocks without relying on assistance from family or community members. Moreover, they cannot make an appeal to institutional assistance. They are not supported by the law and thus conditions that are vital in ensuring citizenship are largely absent. It seems there is hardly any place, if at all, for extreme poor people in their communities, a struggle that sometimes even extends to matters of death, as there are no burial grounds available to them.

Table 4.1

Definition of extreme poor people in Dacope

EXTREME POOR	Who:
Khub gorib Hoto dorid-dro	<p>Extreme poor people are scattered people, usually migrants. They are people with physical and mental health disabilities. Those who can work are mostly rickshaw pullers, boatmen, and day labourers (seasonal crop fields). Extreme poor people that cannot work or have no work, depend on begging. Extreme poor people are the elderly (mostly those that have been left by their children). They live on the road side and depend on others. They are vagrants.</p> <p>Characteristics:</p> <p><i>Education:</i> Extreme poor people have the same education facilities as other groups until secondary school.</p> <p><i>Farm/land/harvest:</i> They have no land.</p>

Food:

There is no certainty about whether they will have two meals a day. They do not have any schedule for eating; they eat whenever they receive food. Extreme poor people generally only eat rice. They are always in a dilemma about whether to buy rice, salt, oil or vegetables with their money.

Housing:

They stay beside the road on *Khas*⁴⁵ land. When the government gives them a notice to leave the road, they will leave and come back after the construction (of the road) is done. Extreme poor people are regularly evicted. They live in a hut and they use leaves (*Nara*) for the roof. Their houses have no shape or design. Sometimes they will even sell their own house. Some extreme poor people live together with other households.

Social support:

Extreme poor people are dependent on help from others. They are deprived of justice. The law will not help them if anyone commits a crime against them. Moreover, they have to provide 2000 BDT to get an allowance card from the government (for old people and widows), but they are unable to pay this amount.

Other:

Extreme poor people have no or only one source of income. They live hand to mouth and have large families. They usually belong to the Muslim group. Muslims usually have many children and thus more mouths to feed. Extreme poor people have no money and no opportunity to get a loan. They wear dirty clothes and use the same clothes day after day. Their children are engaged in work at an early age. There is no graveyard for them. They bury their dead along the riverside.

Source: Altaf (2016a), definition provided by PADev workshop participants, 2012

Categories of extreme poor people

There are different ‘categories’⁴⁶ of extreme poor people that can be distinguished in Dacope. Some of these ‘categories’ may come as no surprise,

45 Government-owned fallow land, where nobody has property rights.

46 Another ‘category’ of extreme poor people that was identified during the field research, is that of people with intersex conditions. This ‘category’ of extreme poor people is socially excluded and discriminated against. They often do not have access to education and are abandoned by their family. As a result, people with intersex conditions often live together in a shelter/home and traditionally earn a living as ‘entertainers’ at weddings and birth ceremonies. A focus group discussion and one life history was conducted with people with intersex

such as the elderly, widowed and abandoned/cast-off women and men and people with mental health disabilities.⁴⁷ There is, however, a 'category' of extreme poor people particularly noted in Dacope, namely that of (former)sex workers. Materially, these women increasingly belong to the extreme poor 'category' (due to lack of work), though socially they have always been part of this 'category'. As a group, the sex workers are considered to be 'outcasts' and they have formed a community (brothel) together in Bania Shanta. This community was originally formed before 1998, when nearby Mongla was still a busy port. Back then, many foreigners (e.g. Chinese, Americans, Pakistani, Korean, Filipino) would visit the brothel and business was good. Since Mongla is no longer an important port, business has dropped dramatically, especially since 2008. Nowadays, around 140 households reside in this community. The community is built on private land and the households staying here pay rent. They constitute both former sex workers and sex workers that are still working in this community. Some live with their partner and families and others live alone. Those no longer able to work, make a living by catching baby fish or working as servants. Those who work as sex workers mainly have Bangladeshi clients. Most women that are now working as sex workers have come to the brothel to find shelter. They often worked as servants and were abused and raped by their bosses and then expelled from the households they worked for and the community they lived in, sometimes even while pregnant. The women come from different places.

Once someone becomes part of the brothel, they are not welcome to participate in life outside of the brothel community. They are not allowed to work as day labourers, for example. They are not invited to join any social events. If, by luck, anyone from the brothel manages to move outside the brothel and into the village and dies, people from the brothel are not allowed to attend the funeral. Women from the brothel have reported being mistreated (beaten) several times by people from the 'outside'. The women from the brothel have also reported that whenever relief aid was distributed, they did not receive it, as the villagers would block aid to them. Especially

conditions in Khulna. During the life history and focus group discussion, it was reported that they were often discriminated against and denied certain rights, such as education and access to health services. Because these interviews were not conducted in the research area, they are not included in the analysis. More information on this particular 'category' of extreme poor people can be obtained from the author.

47 There is a category of extreme poor that wander around and get by through begging. These people are often referred to as crazy by their community, because they suffer from mental illnesses. Unfortunately, it was not possible to include this category, as it was too difficult to carry out life histories with them and therefore this case study has no information on this category.

during the rainy season, things become difficult. The area where they live is on the outskirts and gets flooded every day. They are forced to stay on the streets inside the village and earning an income becomes extremely difficult during this period.

The women dress modestly when they enter the villages, in order to be accepted and avoid maltreatment. A few years ago, they were granted voting rights, which means a lot to them (in terms of citizenship). However, according to the women, acceptance from the 'outside' is linked to financial security; once the women have money, they will be accepted 'automatically'.

Differences between the category of extreme poor and poor

When comparing the local definitions of poor people (see Table 4.2) with that of extreme poor people, it becomes clear that although poor people also face difficulties in coping with shocks and stresses and their livelihoods are not fully sustainable, they experience fewer uncertainties. Poor people are able to eat every day, some of them have permanent shelter and own at least the piece of land that their house is built on. What they do not own themselves, such as crop land, they can access through others. Furthermore, they receive support from their children and are able to take loans if necessary. Even though there are differences between extreme poor and poor people on a material level, the main difference is on the relational level (e.g. better social networks allow them to rent land), which contributes to a better material level (e.g. access to food and shelter) of wellbeing for poor people. Poor people have much better access to important social networks, which enables them to deal with shocks. If someone in a poor household falls ill and they cannot afford treatment, they are able to lend money in order to recover. Extreme poor people do not have the opportunity to borrow money to pay for treatment, and the 'burden' of a sick person makes their already precarious situation even more difficult.

Table 4.2

Definition of poor people in Dacope

POOR	<p>Who:</p>
Vernacular:	<p>Poor people are day labourers.</p>
Gorib	<p>Characteristics:</p>
Doriddro	<p><i>Education:</i></p>
	<p>The education level of poor children is better than that of rich children. They are eager to learn and improve themselves. Poor children obtain good results. Poor parents invest everything for their children's education. When they earn two Taka, they spend one Taka on their children's education, but there is no certainty that the children can complete their education. It is difficult to provide education for their children. They cannot provide higher education for their children. Poor people can only access education when it is freely available.</p>
	<p><i>Farm/land/harvest:</i></p>
	<p>Some poor people have land to build their shelter on. They live on <i>Khas</i> land. They have a permanent address/shelter, but they rarely own the land. The poor usually do not own crop land; however, they are able to access land by renting it from others (the average and rich). They use the land for share cropping. In some cases, they have access to a little piece of infertile land where they cultivate 'low level' vegetables, e.g. potatoes, spinach and different types of leaves.</p>
	<p><i>Food:</i></p>
	<p>Poor people can eat every day.</p>
	<p><i>Housing:</i></p>
	<p>Poor people live in their own hut. A hut has a roof, pillars and a round cover of bamboo or plastic. However, they are increasingly forced to construct tin roofs, which are more expensive, because the quality of leaves (<i>Nara</i>) used to construct roofs has decreased due to the hybrid paddy⁴⁸ the leaves of the traditional paddy have also decreased.</p>
	<p><i>Livestock:</i></p>
	<p>Some own small amounts of livestock.</p>
	<p><i>Social support</i></p>
	<p>Children of poor people take better care of their parents than the children of extreme poor people, because their parents have some land that can be inherited by them.</p>

Other:

Poor people live hand to mouth. Poor people are able to work. They can earn about 30005000 BDT per month. They have little to no savings. Generally they do not want to take loans, because they cannot repay them. However, during disasters they sometimes have to take a loan. Poor people own no ponds or trees. They do not have enough household products, e.g. plates and glasses. Early marriage is common and there is not much awareness about family planning.

Source: Altaf (2016a), definition provided by PADev workshop participants, 2012

Material dimension of wellbeing

This section takes stock of the aspects of material wellbeing (or illbeing) that are characteristic of extreme poor people in the research location.

Occupation, employment and income

Extreme poor people in Dacope who are able to work earn their living through day labour, van pulling, catching small fish, gleaning, as household servants and by fetching water for other households. The majority are engaged in intense physical labour and those who work have multiple jobs in order to get by. An example of this is of a participant (female, 35 years) who takes care of her neighbour's child, catches baby shrimps, fetches water for people and cooks for people. This is in contrast to the community's perception that extreme poor people have one single source of income (see Table 4.1). Livelihood diversification is necessary for extreme poor people. As Morse and McNamara have stated, the diversification of livelihoods can mean the difference between being destitute or minimally viable for those below the poverty line (Morse & McNamara, 2013). For the extreme poor, it can also be the difference between destitution or death. This is especially evident during the rainy season. This is the most difficult time of the year. Many work activities become difficult or physically and logistically impossible to carry out. One of the participants who is a van puller explains what it is like to balance on the brink of the abyss:

During the rainy season I can hardly work, it is a miserable time. Sometimes we pass two or three days without any food. I cannot pull the van, because

48 Due to the salinity, people started using hybrid paddy more. The traditional paddy is less resistant to the saline soil.

the rain destroys the roads. So I can only work as a shoe repairer, that is if I can reach the bazar (market). (male, 45 years)

As a result of seasonality, the income of the extreme poor fluctuates enormously and is hard to predict. The amount earned in the rainy season during flooding, is sometimes half or even a third of what it is during other seasons. On average, extreme poor people earn between 500 BDT (\$6.25) to 3000 BDT (\$37.48) per month. Besides the fact that these figures are rough estimates based on the information provided by extreme poor people, it is difficult to categorise and define them on the basis of income alone, as extreme poor people do not always receive money for their labour. In some cases, they are given food or even shelter in return. One of the participants works as a household servant for a family and, in return, they allow her to live with them. Some extreme poor people engage in gleaning and thus do not earn any money, but acquire food.

The majority of the participants are able to work, however those who are unable to work, e.g. because of old age or an illness, are fully dependant on others. Those extreme poor people fortunate enough to live in a family can rely predominantly on their partner or children, though they also resort to begging occasionally. Extreme poor people without the safety net of a family are completely at the mercy of others and have to rely entirely on begging and occasional handouts.

Food

Food seems to be the major problem, both for working and non-working extreme poor people. None of the participants is able to eat three meals a day in any season. The majority report taking two meals per day and the minority are able to have one meal per day. However, these are average numbers and food insecurity is pervasive. All participants stated that they often face a day or even multiple days where they go without any food. This becomes even more frequent during the rainy season:

[...] in September and October, I have stayed frequently without food for several days. (female, 60 years)

Food is also a major concern when disasters occur:

During Aila (cyclone), we did not eat for three days. (male, 44 years)

Besides the frequency of meals, the extreme poor participants struggle to have variety in their diet. Rice is their staple food. The majority are able to add *dhal*⁴⁹ or vegetables (e.g. pumpkin and *kalmi shak*⁵⁰) to their diet. Those unable to do so, use green chilli and salt to add some taste to the rice. Meat forms no part of their diet, but fish does as it is widely available in the area. Both the quality of food, but especially the lack of quantity of food is a serious problem. Moreover, there is a differentiation within the household, some members receive more food than others:

I never take breakfast, there is not enough food. The children sometimes take rice with onions and chili if there is any left from the last evening, but usually it is just my youngest that will have something to eat. (male, 45 years)

Malnutrition due to the lack of quantity of food is physically visible. Looking at the participants, it is often immediately evident that they are malnourished and that they are underweight (see photo 4.4). Kabeer suggested that, in the case of Bangladesh, income may not be the best proxy for poverty, she proposed food insecurity instead (Kabeer, 2010). The findings of this case study support this proposal.

Housing, land and livestock

Housing is another major issue for the extreme poor in Dacope. A quarter of the participants have no house and are staying with families as household servants or carers for children. Those who own a house live in fragile constructions with wicker walls or sometimes no walls (see photo 4.5) at all and roofs made of leaves and branches. In a disaster-prone area such as Dacope, these constructions offer little protection and are destroyed easily:

Whenever there is a storm or if it rains, I have to repair the house. When there is heavy rain, we sit together in the middle.⁵¹ (male, 45 years)

Moreover, the land that the extreme poor have built their houses on, is *khas*⁵² land and they live in uncertainty about how long they may stay:

49 Lentils, also called poor man's meat in South Asia.

50 Water spinach.

51 I have witnessed how one of the houses of an extreme poor man who lived along the riverside was severely damaged by a storm

52 Fallow land owned by the government.

I am afraid that I may be evicted any time, as I live on government land.
(male, 45 years)

It is highly unlikely for extreme poor people to own land and generally the extreme poor do not own any livestock. Geographically, the extreme poor build their houses along the riverside and roadsides, but rarely 'inside' the villages. These areas (riverside and roadside) are unpopular, as they are more dangerous when heavy storms or floods hit the area.

Education

None of the participants attended school and the majority of those who have children try to send their children to primary school, but not all succeed. Sometimes, the children have to work in order to contribute to the family income or they are 'sold' because the parents can no longer take care of them:

My oldest daughter was working as a garment worker in Chittagong. The man who offered to take her to Chittagong gave us 300 BDT, but that was all we received. We talk to her about once a month, she is still working there.
(male, 70 years)

Those who can take care of their children are only able to send their children to primary school and, in most cases, the children do not complete their primary education. With regards to sons, the parents hope they find work when they grow up. The parents stimulate their children to learn the same profession as them, because they can transfer their skills and knowledge:

My father taught me to repair shoes when I was seven years old. I think my son should also learn this profession. We cannot provide them with higher education, so we have to teach them our traditional jobs. (male, 45 years)

Extreme poor participants hope their daughters will marry into a good family:

I also dream that my daughters will marry into a good family and that I can witness it. (male, 40 years)

Water, sanitation and health

The majority of extreme poor people in Dacope fetch drinking water from a pond. The water in these ponds is saline and contains iron, algae and arsenic (see photo 4.2 and 4.3). Some of the health issues named by the extreme poor participants could be related to contaminated drinking water, e.g. skin problems, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, vomiting, high blood pressure (Talukder, 2016; WHO, 2018). When the extreme poor fall ill, they usually visit a village doctor, and in cases of serious illnesses, they try to lend money or sell something of value, like a golden nose ring or a cycle van, in order to visit a public health centre.



Photo 4.3
Pond containing algae



Photo 4.4
Pond containing iron

Technology

Generally, extreme poor people do not own a mobile phone or have any access to electronics or technology, such as a radio or TV.

Sub-conclusion

Extreme poor people in Dacope face many difficulties and insecurities in relation to different aspects of material wellbeing, which makes it hard for them to secure and sustain their livelihoods. The fact that they live in a disaster risk area often pushes them further into their poverty and prevents them from building their material asset base. Instead, they are constantly attempting to repair or rebuild their assets that were lost due to disasters, e.g. their house. Moreover, worry and stress about feeding themselves and their

family is an everyday concern. Since the income of extreme poor people can fluctuate greatly and sometimes they are not paid for their labour, but receive food instead, it is difficult to define extreme (material) poverty in this area using monetary indicators. The quality, but more importantly the quantity of food, as proposed by Kabeer (2010), may be more suitable as a proxy for extreme poverty in the research area, ideally in combination with other aspects of material wellbeing, such as access to shelter and the type of shelter.



Photo 4.5

Extreme poor man suffering from malnutrition



Photo 4.6

House of an extreme poor family in Dacop

Relational dimension of wellbeing

This section describes the relational dimension of wellbeing and focuses on the interaction of extreme poor people with their family and community. In particular, this section highlights the often broken relationships of extreme poor people with their (immediate) family and their position in the community. The nature of interactions between extreme poor people on the one hand, and poverty reduction interventions and government agencies on the other hand, will be discussed in the next section.

Family

Family can function as an important safety net for extreme poor people. In most cases, however, there is a lack of family support. This is often because of broken relationships, as a result of a decision made against the will of the parents, e.g. marrying someone not approved by their parents or deciding to stay separately with their own family, instead of in a joint family construction:

My parents and my brothers are in a joint family and I am the only one who is detached. I don't know why they avoid me. My parents forced me to move out, I moved out and never asked for the reason. It is a sorrowful thing for me that sometimes when my wife and I were facing difficulties, for example we did not have food, but my family never helped, they did not even ask, not even the brother who I sort of raised and educated...My wife and I tried so many times to build a good relationship with my parents, but they even refuse to see their grandchildren.⁵³ (male, 40 years)

It is not always later in life that family relations get disturbed. In some cases, the participants explain that they have had to survive without any family support since their childhood and that they were not able to mend the broken ties with their family again. In these cases, it is usually the family who decides to break ties with their child, due to hidden personal or cultural standards:

The cause of my divorce was that my mother in law did not like me, because the age gap between me and my husband was very big. I was little (9 years) and he was much older. I could not help in the household, I was only a small child. My mother in law tried to kill me by poisoning me. The elder brother of my husband said to his brother, please leave her and take her to her parents' house. My brother in law ended up bringing me to my parents...My father asked me who would take care of me now and he told me that I was a burden to the family⁵⁴...I went to Khulna alone and found a hotel named Kali Bari Khulna and started working there as a kitchen assistant...I had broken all ties with my family. (female, 60 years)

In other cases, family decides to abandon their child, because they are not able to take care of the child anymore and see no other alternative than to give the child away or, as in this case, sell the child:

When I was about five or six, my father became sick and one of my neighbours told my father that he could sell me as a child labourer. So my father followed his advice to sell me. It was my neighbour who sold me. There was a woman

53 The participant's daughter explains that her grandparents expected that her father, as the oldest son, would improve their economic situation, but in their eyes, he failed. This is why they no longer want any contact with them. The participant did not want to elaborate too much on this relationship.

54 It is culturally a shameful thing for a woman to be left by her husband and difficult to be accepted again by another man. Thus these women are often seen as a burden upon their families, since they have to take care of them.

who was the owner of the brothel (in Dacope), and she bought me. (female, 35 years)

However, in rare cases, children may be an important source of support for (elderly) extreme poor people. Families that have seen difficult times when the children were small, may see some improvement now that the children are able to support themselves. Receiving some aid from family and having good family relations can also contribute to more social connections within the community. Community members do not immediately associate contact with them as a way of asking something from them:

When my children were small, we did not have food sometimes for three or four days, but now we eat every day, because my sons help me...My children help with food and clothing, but they don't give me money regularly. My husband's health costs are around 500 BDT per month, but we are not socially deprived. Most of the extreme poor are deprived from a social life. But my sons help me and all of the people in the community respect my husband, because he is from this village and he is aging. (female, 55 years)

When family is cooperative, it can substantially contribute to the alleviation of certain burdens of extreme poor people, not in the sense that family may be able to lift them out of their extreme poverty, but it can improve the wellbeing of the extreme poor in the three dimensions. However, the majority of the extreme poor thus have no family support to fall back on when they face difficulties. Moreover, all connections with family are often completely broken and there is no expectation that these relations may be mended again.

Community

The community of residence of extreme poor people in Dacope plays an important role in providing support to them in times of need. This is mostly in the form of food, but also money in order to cope with health costs, construction of a house, or the marriage of a child. Sometimes, extreme poor people may be helped when it is in the interest of the giver, e.g. a valuable labourer:

The community...assisted with materials and money. My boss helped me the most, because I was a reliable employee. (male, 44 years)

However, while community members may help with situations that require a one-time transfer of goods or money, they are hesitant to provide more substantial, longer-term support and prefer not to socially engage with extreme poor people:

I am an expert in making shoes. There is a lot of scope in this business. But the shoe factories are far from here and the transport and living costs are high, so I cannot go there. I hope that someone will support me in this business. I have asked my clients sometimes to help me, but they did not agree. It is difficult for me to get a loan. People are hesitant to give me a loan, because they think I will not repay it... I cannot enter the micro credit groups, because I would have to form a group and I cannot do that, because no one wants to join me. (male, 45 years)

Thus extreme poor people generally have no access to networks that would allow them to access loans for example. Despite the fact that community members may occasionally aid extreme poor people, the relationship between them and extreme poor people is unbalanced, as it remains a relationship based on dependency of extreme poor people on the relatively better off. The majority of the participants have difficulty forming any friendships (if at all) with their community members. They are not invited to join social events (e.g. weddings, funerals), since they are considered 'social outcasts' and are not respected in their communities.

Sub-conclusion

It is striking that extreme poor people are, with few exceptions, abandoned in some form by their (nuclear) family, either already early on in their childhood or later on. Family relations are an important form of leverage for accessing and establishing other social relations. The less family (be it parents or children) an extreme poor person has, the more fragile s/he is and often the more isolated from the rest of the community. However, all participants have been supported by a community member at least once in times of need. The assistance provided, however, is always of the material kind and is sporadic in nature. It cannot uplift the extreme poor, but it can help them survive an emergency. However, being isolated and socially excluded by family and community members not only has negative impacts at a material level (access to food, loans), but also at a wider institutional and cognitive level. The latter will be explored in the section below.

Cognitive dimension of wellbeing

This section looks into the cognitive dimension of wellbeing. Dacope is the first case study of this research and therefore this section is an exploration of the cognitive side of poverty and wellbeing that deals with people's subjective evaluation of their quality of life. This section will also help to draw relevant questions for studying the cognitive aspect of wellbeing in the following case studies.

Depression, hopelessness and feeling tired of life

I now have no hope and future, I just have to pass my life. I never had a family, it is mentally the most difficult thing for me. I am praying to God that I will die soon and that I am free of this burden of life. (female, 60 years)

This quote from one of the participants in Dacope addresses many aspects of the cognitive dimension of wellbeing of the extreme poor in Dacope, such as a loss of hope and chronic depression. Although, the level of depression of this participant is shocking (she no longer wishes to live as a result of her poverty), depression in some form and frequency is experienced by the majority of the participants. Several participants mentioned that they had struggled psychologically several times throughout their lives.

The elderly participants in particular expressed a loss of hope that their situation may become better. In some cases, younger participants also find it difficult to be optimistic about the future, as they have never really experienced 'better times' in their lives:

My father left me and my mother when I was born, because I was a girl... My grandmother sold me to a rich family when I was about two years old. My mother did not know where I was back then. My grandmother thought, that if I did not stay with my mother, she would be able to remarry...She looked for me and she found me after two years, when I was four. The family who bought me, used to torture me. They used me as a servant and if I was not able to do so, I got beaten. First they did not want to give me back and also beat my mother. I had to stay in that home until I was ten. I had miserable life, I was tortured and did not have proper clothing or food...I

never thought my life would be so miserable when I was little. Life is still tough, it is a continuous struggle. (female, 35 years)

Passivism and low self-image

To some extent, the lack of hope and feelings of depression contribute to passive behaviour of some of the extreme poor people. Especially older participants who have lost hope that their lives may ever improve, feel it is fruitless to make any effort to change their situation. Others feel their poverty is a result of their actions, e.g. a sex worker who believes her poverty is the fruit of her 'sin'. She believes she must atone for it and bear her poverty. There are also participants who do not have faith in their own capabilities to climb out of their poverty and are convinced their lives can only become better through aid provided by others:

There is no solution for me, but to receive aid from others. (female, 35 years)

This feeling of not being able to change anything or being undeserving of a better life (because God must not want them to have a better life) contributes to a negative sense of self-worth and low self-esteem.

Self-exclusion

I don't attend most of the social events in the area, because the middle class people and the rich do not like to include the poor people or appreciate to hear our opinion. I do have the power to raise my voice, because the poor people will support me, but I never raised my voice. (male, 44 years)

During the life histories, when participants reported being disrespected or maltreated by family or community members, they would often feel the urge to immediately counter this by adding that they feel '*mentally rich*' or '*have the power to raise my voice*'. It appears to be a coping mechanism to deal with social isolation. However, this coping mechanism does not help participants join in public social events (e.g. town meetings); in fact, they avoid them and tend to self-exclude, assuming that other wealth groups will not welcome them. It seems that the participants avoid (public) social interaction, because

they believe they will not be heard or respected by others and because they feel uncomfortable and out of place in such settings.

Sub-conclusion

Generally, the extreme poor participants have faced many difficulties in their lives, often even traumatic experiences including mental and physical violence, which has a great and sometimes lasting mental impact. Feelings of depression and mental pain are common. Moreover, there is a general feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, especially amongst the elderly. They no longer have hope that they may escape their situation and are sometimes just 'waiting it out.' Those who still have hope that their situation may improve someday, believe this is only possible through the aid of others and that they themselves are not capable of initiating change. However, the participants do not believe that people are eager to help them or eager to listen to them. This feeling prevents them from taking part in social events and they tend to self-exclude. This is an important insight, as it shows that exclusion is a two-way process and this will be examined further in the following case studies.

Causes of extreme poverty in Dacope

This section discusses the multiple causes of extreme poverty in Dacope in order to understand why people fall into extreme poverty, since the majority of the participants were originally not born into this (wealth) category. The section also looks at the factors that keep the extreme poor trapped in their situation. The section pays attention to both micro level (individual and household level) and macro level causes.

Micro/individual household causes

It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine a single cause that pushes people into extreme poverty. There can be a main cause that drives people into poverty, such as a disaster, an illness, old age, being cast out by family or even depression; however, it is generally a combination of multiple factors and events that keeps people trapped in extreme poverty. For one of the

participants it was a natural disaster in the form of a cyclone that destroyed his belongings and he was unable to rebuild his livelihood due to his old age:

During Sidr, we lost everything: the shop, the house, my money and we were forced to move. Everything floated away and I did not have enough money to restart my business. I was running my shop for many years, but I became weaker every day (old age). So after everything was destroyed by Sidr, I could not do any other work. (male, 70 years)

Although becoming extremely poor can be a result of multiple factors, for the majority of the extreme poor participants, the moment they were abandoned or cast out by their family marks the moment that their wellbeing degraded considerably and triggered a fall into extreme poverty. Thus, it appears that on a micro level the absence of family is generally a main cause of extreme poverty. At the same time, an accumulation of other factors such as old age and lacking a social network keep people in the extreme poor 'category'.

Macro/structural causes

At a macro level, there are two main causes in Dacope that push people into extreme poverty and keep them extreme poor. Firstly, Dacope is an area prone to natural disasters, especially cyclones. In particular, cyclones Aila and Sidr left a lot of destruction in the area.

Besides major natural disasters, the research area frequently deals with storms and floods that disrupt people's lives in general, but specifically the lives of the extreme poor who cannot cope with such events. Their houses are poorly constructed and they have no reserves to fall back on. Such natural events often mean that the extreme poor have to start from scratch and are unable to build-up resilience against such events; they are merely coping at the margins of survival. They lack the resources, opportunities, and networks to build a sustainable livelihood.

In addition to natural disasters, people in Dacope complain about the high levels of corruption that distort and control access to resources and public facilities and services. Government institutions and NGOs are reported to be corrupt. Throughout the different interviews and focus group discussions, it was reported that government institutions and their employees serve their own interests and it is difficult for citizens to acquire any form of support

from them; in particular, the extreme poor lack the means to claim their entitlements.

This will be further elaborated upon in the following section.

Sub-conclusion

The vast majority of extreme poor people in Dacope were not born as such, but became extreme poor somewhere during their lives; they are chronically (five years or longer) extreme poor. Once people fall into extreme poverty (e.g. due to abandonment or illness), it becomes difficult to climb out of it. People often remain extreme poor for a long period of time, if not the rest of their lives, as a result of an accumulation of multiple material and relational factors and events that have repercussions on mental wellbeing, both at micro and macro level. Especially at macro level, natural disasters prevent the extreme poor from dealing with natural shocks, as they do not have the assets or entitlements to cope with them. The presence of corruption also negatively influences people's entitlements. This means that extreme poor people only have room to focus on short-term survival and invest little to no resources in establishing a safety net for themselves.

4.4 Poverty reduction interventions in Dacope

This section explores the poverty reduction interventions in Dacope in order to find out whether they manage to target and reach extreme poor people in the area. It looks at the processes of inclusion and exclusion by development intervention agencies in the research location. The section also pays attention to the relational dimension of wellbeing and looks at the interaction between the extreme poor people and institutions (government and NGO).

Development agencies and interventions in Dacope

According to the workshop participants, more than 30 interventions have been implemented in the area over the past ten years. The interventions are carried out in different sectors, such as education, health, sanitation, agriculture and creating awareness on e.g. early child marriage. The interventions have been implemented by government institutes and NGOs of different levels, supranational (e.g. World Vision, BRAC), national (e.g. Prodipan, Proshika,

Shushilan), regional (CSS) and local. Generally, interventions are appreciated by local people with males especially value interventions concerning clean drinking water, infrastructure (roads) and livestock, while females appreciate interventions focused on women empowerment and education.

What is striking, however, is that people in Dacope have very strong negative feelings and thoughts about microcredit interventions. Microcredit interventions are not only unappreciated, but also seen as harmful. All development agencies implementing microcredit interventions are viewed as 'bad' when it comes to their microcredit interventions, however, BRAC and Grameen Bank are considered as most harmful. This because BRAC, according to the local people, imposes loans on people with high interest rates and when they are unable to repay an instalment, they have to deal with mental pressure (e.g. threats of court hearings) or take possession of their livestock or other goods until they are able to pay their instalment. One case is known (by the workshop participants) of a woman whose husband could not repay his loan, was kidnapped and released only after he paid. Grameen, according to the local people, also takes possession of people's belongings when they are unable to pay. Moreover, Grameen also 'punishes' an entire group, if one member is unable to pay, by withholding further loans until the payment is completed. Other intervening agencies implementing microcredit were considered harmful because they ran off with people's savings or because they ask high interest rates and add more interest when people do not manage to pay their instalments. Thus, people are generally scared to get involved in microcredit interventions, irrespective of the intervening agencies.

Targeting strategies (concepts, methods and implementation) of the studied NGO

Conceptualisation of extreme poor people

According to the studied NGO, the definition of an extremely poor person is someone who is unable to meet basic needs. The difference between a poor person and an extreme poor person is that a poor person has land and access to basic needs, such as health facilities and education. An extreme poor person has no land or access to any basic needs facilities or services.

Methods and implementation

According to the NGO, they target extreme poor people by asking community members to identify who needs what type of support, thus they employ the community-based targeting method. They also make use of secondary data to decide what types of interventions need to be implemented. However, during an interview with the head of international affairs, it was mentioned that the NGO does not focus on specific groups, but they aid anyone who is in need. The example of a cyclone was given, when everyone is affected in the area and thus deserves to be helped. Another example given was a need for a hospital, which affects the entire population according to the NGO. The NGO is historically a relief agency and this is reflected in the way they work. They try to help where the emergency is and they “[...] *don't classify people in wealth classes, the door is open for all.*” Moreover, a holistic approach to development is supported, meaning that different aspects of poverty are taken into consideration. When, for example, a woman deals with violence, the NGO tries to educate the family on the matter, but also provides the woman means for income generation in order to empower her. The woman also receives training on reproductive health and, since many diseases in the area are waterborne, sanitation is provided as well.

In terms of M&E,⁵⁵ the studied NGO explained that there is not one single approach, but it is dependent upon each project officer. The project officers generally conduct field visits every month and produce reports⁵⁶ that are then shared with the program managers and directors. The program managers discuss the reports and review bottlenecks and achievements.⁵⁷ In some cases, a donor may commission an evaluation, which is then conducted by external Bangladeshi consultants. Before these evaluations are sent off to a donor, the NGO may ask for a revision if there is any disagreement on content.

The studied NGO reported that they believe they are reaching the most extreme poor people through their interventions in Dacope, when comparing themselves to other NGOs in the area. According to them, they especially reach extreme poor people through their health, education and disaster relief

55 It was difficult obtaining information from this NGO regarding their working method to reach extreme poor people and in particular their M&E approach.

56 Ivi The researcher did not have access to these reports and therefore there is no information about the actual content.

57 Again, no specific information was given on the type of bottlenecks or achievements referred to.

interventions. The NGO explained that they provide health facilities, such as a 'health card' through which treatment and medicines can be obtained at reduced rates. Through these health services (e.g. clinic and 'health card') they believe they are more effective in reaching extreme poor people than the health facilities provided by the government. The NGO added that the only sector where they are currently unable to reach extreme poor people is the economic sector, i.e. microcredit. They are attempting to understand why they are unable to reach extreme poor people in microcredit interventions.

Reaching extreme poor people: people's perceptions

Although the NGO is convinced that they manage to reach the extreme poor, this is not the perception and experience of extreme poor people, the workshop participants and other villagers. According to interviewees, the NGO does not manage to reach extreme poor people, but mostly reaches people who belong to the average wealth group and, to a lesser extent, the poor wealth group. Beneficiaries of the NGO, especially from the poor wealth group, explained that they had received a health card from the NGO to access the organisation's health facilities; however, since government clinics often provide cheaper treatment than the NGO clinic, they no longer use the health card. There were also cases reported of promises made by the NGO to the beneficiaries at the initial stage of an intervention being broken. Beneficiaries gave examples of promises of rehousing, which ultimately did not happen. One extremely poor person reported that his daughter was promised a sewing machine after completing a sewing course; however, the machine never materialised. The NGO encouraged her to participate in the microcredit program in order to take out a loan for a sewing machine, but the family could not afford this. Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries explained that when the NGO initially started, they were able to do valuable work; however, over the years, it seems that the NGO has been '*influenced*':

They first consult with the local leaders before starting a project. The selection process is influenced by political leaders. The NGO is bound to the local leaders. We do not know why. (PADev workshop participants, female beneficiaries)

However, according to the interviewees, the studied NGO is not an exception when it comes to being '*influenced*' by government agencies or employees and they are also no exception in being unable to reach extreme poor people. In fact, this seems to be common practice in Dacope, even if interventions are

intended specifically for extreme poor people. An example presented during the workshops is of a food security intervention by the local government aimed at extreme poor people (defined as those earning less than 500 BDT per month). However, the intervention ended up reaching people belonging to the average (middle-class) wealth category:

The majority of projects target the average, especially the microcredit programs. There are a few non-microcredit programs and they try to target the extreme poor, but are unable to reach them, because there is a great influence from the government. (PADev workshop participants, male beneficiaries⁵⁸)

The interviewees elaborated that what is meant here is that the selection of beneficiaries is done by government representatives, who favour people from their own social network/kinship background. These people are not the extreme poor, but mostly belong to the average wealth group or even the rich wealth group. NGOs thus collaborate with the local authorities in implementing their interventions. Moreover, NGOs often work with community groups, but the process of forming groups is also a socio-political and often corrupted process. Either because local authorities are in charge of forming these groups, or because community members form groups themselves, but only select people in their network. Since extreme poor people do not belong to these networks, they have no access to these interventions. If people protest against these selection processes, they run the risk of becoming socially isolated and therefore people are afraid to raise their voice. One of the extreme poor participants explained the consequences of speaking up against corruption:

I am socially excluded, because I want to lead an honest life...Once I got offered 10kg of rice from the union council, but their member said, that I would have to give him 5kg of rice. I refused the rice. So I am also poor because of the corruption. (male, 45 years)

Moreover, in order to participate in an intervention, be it one by an NGO or by the government, people are often obliged to enrol. The list is controlled by local authorities who may ask for bribe money from those wanting to enrol.

58 Altaf (2016a, p. 33) https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/37714/ASC_workingpaper126.pdf?sequence=1.

This is a threshold for the extreme poor, as they are not able (or, in some cases, willing) to pay bribes and thus cannot join an intervention.

Besides targeting of beneficiaries by local authorities, it seems that intervening agencies lack a clear targeting method for extreme poor people. They either exclude extreme poor people consciously, for example in economic interventions (e.g. microcredit), because the risk is thought to be too high, or unconsciously as a result of 'open access' practices, whereby the idea is that everyone has the right to join an intervention. As the previous section showed, extreme poor people self-exclude and although the idea of an 'open door' sounds good, it prevents extreme poor people from 'stepping inside', as they generally avoid social events, because they feel unwelcome and unheard.

The few interventions that have been able to reach extreme poor people are mostly related to one-time relief activities (e.g. a few kilos of rice and, in one case, a house). Furthermore, one of the extreme poor received baby livestock from an NGO, but is not able to maintain the animals. In the few cases where the extreme poor did receive some form of aid, according to the local population, the NGO worked independently from the local authorities and conducted a survey beforehand to indicate who required aid.

However, according to the workshop participants, in the few cases that intervening agencies do reach the extreme poor, they do not provide comprehensive support. They may provide tin for the construction of a roof, but no nails, for example. On the other hand, the workshop participants reported that the extreme poor were given sewing machines, but they then sold these. For this reason, the extreme poor need to be monitored better when they are given something. According to the workshop participants, the extreme poor have a mentality of holding out their hand and therefore intervening agencies cannot be solely held responsible for not reaching the extreme poor.

Sub-Conclusion

In spite of discourses and the intentions of intervening agencies to include the extreme poor in Dacope, they rarely manage to do so. The main reason for this is believed to be the interference of local authorities in the implementation of interventions. In order to participate in interventions or benefit from them, often some form of bribery is required, which the extreme poor cannot afford and, therefore, they are excluded from participating in interventions. Relations

between the extreme poor and institutions thus seem to be distorted and unequal. On the other hand, the extreme poor are reluctant to try to enter any interventions because they believe they will not be included. The few extreme poor who have received aid, have received material assistance, often a single transfer of e.g. food or livestock, without follow-up or monitoring. These types of interventions do not assist extreme poor people to improve their overall wellbeing and escape extreme poverty. Moreover, interventions in the research area implement relief interventions, but they do not work for disaster risk management. There is one organisation⁵⁹ working on disaster risk management in the area, but they are executing the intervention in other villages and not in the research area.

4.5 Conclusions

From this field research, it can be concluded that extreme poor people in Dacope are locally defined as people who face deprivations in multiple dimensions of wellbeing. Food deprivation and insecurity of shelter (e.g. eviction or destruction by natural disasters) are especially important indicators of extreme poverty in this area and separate extreme poor people from poor people. Socially, extreme poor people are often excluded on multiple levels. In particular, being isolated by family contributes greatly to a lack of a safety net and, in times of need (mostly when facing hunger), extreme poor people therefore have to turn to community members for aid. Although community members may generally aid the extreme poor during emergencies, it creates a relationship of dependency (and not one of friendship, whereby people will invite each other at social events, for example). Moreover, community members do not provide structural assistance that can assist extreme poor people to climb out of their poverty. Here, an important role is laid out for institutions to assist extreme poor people to escape their poverty. The findings from this field research suggest, however, that it is particularly difficult for extreme poor people to get access to institutions, as a result of corruption (e.g. in the form of bribe money). Extreme poor people are thus isolated by family, community and institutions, in contrast to poor people who have much better access to social networks (allowing them to take loans and have access to crop land). Severe deprivations in the material and relational dimension of wellbeing have an impact on the cognitive dimensions as well. Mental stress,

⁵⁹ https://www.preventionweb.net/files/submissions/30537_bangladeshdisasterclimateresilienthabitatss.pdf.

little to no hope for improvement, passiveness and a negative self-image are reported by extreme poor people. Moreover, they have a tendency to exclude themselves, since they believe that their voice and opinion will not be valued by anyone. Thus, by studying the cognitive dimension of wellbeing, it appears that the process of exclusion of the extreme poor people in Dacope is a two-way process, as they also tend to exclude themselves from participation in their community. It is important to explore this in the following case studies, in order to better understand the relation between social exclusion and self-exclusion.

In Dacope, there are several 'categories' of extreme poor people, such as elderly people, widowed people, abandoned men and women and people with (mental health) disabilities. A 'category' that is perhaps less evident than the others is that of (former) sex workers in Dacope. These women are considered 'outcasts' by their community and are materially also deprived (due to lack of work). Apart from the 'categories' that were included in this research, unfortunately it was not possible to include people with mental health disabilities, due to difficulties in communication. It is, however, important to include these people as well, but this may require a different approach, perhaps in collaboration with psychologists.

Besides gaining insights into who extreme poor people are in Dacope, it was also important to understand why people remain extreme poor, as the vast majority of participants have been chronically (five years or longer) extreme poor. The fact that Dacope is a disaster-prone area and that there is a high prevalence of corruption, contributes to the fact that extreme poor people remain fixed in survival mode and cannot think of long-term goals.

The high prevalence of corruption (by local authorities) is also largely responsible for the exclusion of extreme poor people in development interventions. The research has shown that extreme poor people hardly benefit from development interventions and often cannot even get access. The fact that bribes are often required in order to get entry in a development intervention is a major barrier for extreme poor people, who are unable to pay. Moreover, while development agencies show in their discourses that they aim to reach extreme poor people through their interventions, in practice they mostly collaborate with local authorities. The local authorities select beneficiaries according to their own preferences and the people selected are not always those who require aid the most (selected beneficiaries predominantly belong to the 'average wealth category'). Furthermore, interventions implemented in the area are often a single transfer of food or

livestock and do not constitute a holistic approach, as proposed by BRAC, which is necessary to lift extreme poor people out of their poverty. In this sense, the expected influence of BRAC's TUP (Chapter 3.5) is confined to the discourses. Lastly, while development agencies provide relief aid during disasters, they do not consider (preventative) disaster risk reduction interventions. This is important, as people can be pushed (further) into extreme poverty as a result of disasters.



5

Case study 2: Benin, cursed into extreme poverty

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter⁶⁰ is to understand how poverty reduction interventions, reach extreme poor people, in Nikki, Benin. The chapter examines and compares the local definitions of extreme poor and poor using PADev workshops. The research identifies different ‘categories’ of extreme poor people. Moreover, the chapter examines the causes of extreme poverty in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing in the research location and explores how these causes are reproduced by social and political power relations and institutions. Furthermore, the chapter studies the in- and exclusion of extreme poor people in interventions.

The chapter is organised in the following manner: it first sketches the context of the case study. The chapter then discusses the definitions of extreme poor people and poor people and deals with the different ‘categories’ of extreme poor people. The chapter also addresses the multiple dimensions of wellbeing with regards to extreme poor people and examines the causes of extreme poverty in the research location. It looks at the in- and exclusion of extreme poor people in poverty reduction interventions. The chapter ends with conclusions.

5.2 Sketching the context

This section draws a picture of the research location on the basis of literature, interviews with the municipality of Nikki and the PADev workshops, in particular from the ‘events’ and ‘changes’ exercises.

⁶⁰ The author published an earlier version of this work as a working paper.
<https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/37715/ASCworkingpaper127.pdf?sequence=1> .

Compared to other Sub-Sahara African countries (average HDI: 0.523) and other low human development countries (average HDI: 0.497), Benin is one of the poorer countries, despite recent improvements in the Human Development Index. In 2015, the HDI was measured at 0.485, positioning Benin at 167 out of 188 countries (UNDP, 2016b).

Benin is divided into twelve departments, which are subdivided into 77 communes. These communes are again split up into cities (districts) or villages. The research area Nikki is a commune situated in the Borgou department (see Map 5.1). It is also the name of the city and the district. The commune has approximately 137,721 inhabitants and it covers about 3,170 square kilometres.⁶¹ In 2007, Borgou, along with Alibori, were the poorest departments of Benin (International Monetary Fund, 2011). However, in 2009, the department showed improvement and no longer belonged to the poorest departments (see table 5.1) (Ibid., p. 6).

Unlike other parts of Benin, the majority of Nikki's population is Muslim, followed by Christians and animists. However, most of the people who adhere to either Islam or Christianity are also animists. There are many different ethnicities living in Nikki, including Dendi, Otamari, Yoruba, Fon, Adja, Yom and Lokpa, but these groups are minorities. The dominant ethnic groups in the area are the Batonou or Bariba, the Fulani and the Gando. Officially, the Bariba are the largest ethnic group in Nikki (45.4%) followed by the Fulani and Gando together (40.4%).⁶² However, there is tension between the Bariba and the Fulani and Gando.

The Bariba form part of the kingdom of Borgou, which is in the northeast of Benin and northwest Nigeria. The Gando are the discarded children of the Bariba. The Bariba had a variety of beliefs, one of which is that if a mother dies giving birth, the child was either killed by smashing it against a Baobab tree or abandoned. These foundlings were often taken in by the Fulani who used them as slaves. The Gando have thus adopted the culture and language of the Fulani and have a conflictual relationship with the Bariba. The Bariba feel superior to the Gando, because the latter are former slaves, and the Bariba believe they are descendants of the Borgou kingdom.

⁶¹ This is an estimation of the municipality of Nikki. The last census was conducted in 2001.

⁶² Percentages provided by the statistical department of Nikki municipality.

Table 5.1
Incidence of different forms of poverty based on
department

Department	2007 Income Poverty	Non-Income Poverty	2009 Income Poverty	Non-Income Poverty
Alibori	0.43	0.46	0.35	0.33
Atacora	0.33	0.65	0.36	0.69
Atlantique	0.36	0.31	0.37	0.24
Borgou	0.39	0.46	0.28	0.32
Collines	0.31	0.29	0.44	0.17
Couffo	0.35	0.49	0.46	0.42
Donga	0.34	0.39	0.31	0.21
Littoral	0.26	0.17	0.23	0.13
Mono	0.27	0.49	0.46	0.45
Ouémé	0.25	0.28	0.24	0.19
Plateau	0.35	0.44	0.33	0.28
Zou	0.32	0.43	0.41	0.32
National	0.32	0.40	0.35	0.31

Source: INSAE, EMICoV, 2010 from the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Benin 2011

Moreover, there is tension about the question of which ethnicity is poorer. A Bariba will claim that the Bariba are the poorest, as the Gando and Fulani have greater access to large pieces of land. Non-Bariba believe the Gando people are poorer, since they live in the outskirts of the commune, in the bush, and lack access to education, healthcare and clean drinking water. Finally, a noteworthy aspect of this area is the significant presence of fetishism, also referred to as 'black magic'. This becomes evident by studying the PADev events exercise, during which several events related to fetishistic activities are recalled, for example:

The king of Ouenou died, but someone was in need of a head of a dead person. They stole the head of the king and put it in a polythene bag. However, the head started to bounce in the bag and dance around the village. Someone decided to point out the thieves. This person was killed by the perpetrators through magic. (PADev workshop participants, old women⁶³) and:

⁶³ Altaf (2016b) https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/37715/ASC_working_paper127.pdf?sequence=1

In 2008 there was a conflict amongst some people in one of the villages. There were some people, who were each individually involved in sorcery. They killed other villagers through their magic. They would use plants or organs of dead people, that they would dig from the graves to perform spells. (PADev workshop participants, old women)

Besides the presence of fetishism, cotton and sheabutter production mark the area, and since farmland is widely available, the majority of the people earn a living as farmers. Furthermore, the proximity of Nigeria (in particular the city of Chikanda) allows people to get involved in (small) trading activities.



Photo 5.1
Cotton field in Nikki



Photo 5.2
Sheabutter production in Ouenou

For the purpose of this research, three village were selected for the study of extreme poor people: Tapa, Ouenou and Tontarou. These villages are representative of the different types of interventions carried out by the studied NGO. The first village, Tapa, is about eight kilometres north of Nikki city. Tapa is a mixed village in terms of ethnicity, although the majority of the approximately 500 inhabitants is Fulani or Gando. The second village is Ouenou, approximately eight kilometres east southeast of Nikki city. According to the 2001 census for Nikki municipality, Ouenou has 1,430 inhabitants (Nikki municipality, 2001). It is predominantly a Bariba village with some Fulani and Gando living on the outskirts of the village, in the bush. The third village that was selected is Tontarou, which is approximately ten kilometres south-southeast of Nikki city and has 2,549 inhabitants (Ibid.).

Here, too, like Ouenou, the majority Bariba live in the centre of the village and the Fulani and Gando in the surrounding areas (Altaf, 2016b).



Map 5.1
Nikki, Benin

5.3 Multi-dimensions of ill-/wellbeing of extreme poor people in Ouenou, Tega and Tontarou

This section examines the multi-dimensions of wellbeing, as presented in the conceptual model, on the basis of life histories conducted with the extreme poor in the studied villages in Nikki. Furthermore, this section studies the definition of and differences between the different categories of poor and extreme poor in the research locations. This is examined using data from the PADev workshops. Lastly, the section explores the drivers of deprivation in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing and their (possible) reproduction. Different perspectives are taken into account, i.e. community, the extreme poor and development interventions agencies.

Defining extreme poor people in Ouenou, Tega and Tontarou

The local definition of extreme poor people was compiled by community members from the three selected villages through workshops and (informal) interviews. They came up with a definition/characterisation (see Table 5.2) of extreme poor people that shows deprivations in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing.

It is striking that besides the commonly observed (material) characteristics that define extreme poor people, such as serious lack of food (some extreme poor even have to steal food), the general description of extreme poor people in the research areas includes many negative words and phrases. Extreme poor people are thought to be dirty and mad, their absence goes unnoticed, people pity them and people laugh at them. Extreme poor people are excluded from their society and the community generally does not wish to engage with them or be associated with them in any way. However, at the same time, extreme poor people cannot really be held responsible for their situation, because, according to their community members, it is their destiny.

It is important to mention that both the PADev workshop participants, but also other community members explained that, while everyone in the village is aware of who is locally defined as poor, people are hesitant to talk about it. This is because speaking about poverty is considered shameful and taboo in the local culture:

No one will say out loud that they are poor, they are ashamed, but everyone knows in the village who is very poor. But if I would go and say, these people

are very poor, they will be angry and they will say, are you the one who is feeding me? (PADev workshop participants, young men)

Table 5.2
Local definition of poor people in Ouenou, Tapa and Tontarou

<p>EXTREME POOR</p> <p>Vernacular:</p> <p>Bariba: Saaroo, Nyaro</p> <p>Fulani: Talkadjo</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>Extreme poor people can be recognised immediately. They are those who are always suffering. They are always praying for their lives to change. And they are praying for someone to help them. They have nothing. They are beggars and bless those who give something to them. People pity them and people laugh at them. They are not considered a part of the society. It is not their fault, it is their destiny. But some do not have the will to work, which is why they are needy. They do not want to make an effort, but they are born like that, it is destiny. Everything they have is given by others. They have no job, but they can help people with the transportation of their goods. Others will do other chores for people to earn money. The absence of an extreme poor person will go unnoticed.</p> <p>Characteristics:</p> <p><i>Education:</i></p> <p>Extreme poor people cannot send their children to school. Only if they are assisted by relatives or through projects will their children be able to go to school. They go to public schools.</p> <p><i>Farm/land/harvest:</i></p> <p>They often do not go to their farm lands. They can farm, but if they do not want to farm, they are lazy. They have access to farm land, but the production is not sufficient, it is their destiny.</p> <p><i>Food:</i></p> <p>Food is a major problem. Extreme poor people are always thinking about how to get food. They need help from others to get food for themselves and their families. They have to beg for food and go from place to place to get it. If the community does not provide them with food, they cannot eat. If they receive food, they will usually get the leftovers or spoilt (rotten) food. The children will get whatever is left by their parents. They are recognized through their red hair and big bellies, which is a sign of malnutrition. Some will work for a rich person in order to get food. Others will have to steal food.</p>
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	<p><i>Housing:</i></p> <p>Their houses and roofs are covered with straw. But even the straw is sometimes insufficient. Sometimes they may have a tin roof, which was given to them. They cannot build their house on their own, they need help. If the roof has to be repaired, they need help. If no one will help, they cannot repair or replace it. They do not clean their houses and everything is dirty. They sleep on an old torn mattress. Others stay with their family or may be given a small house to stay in. But extreme poor people usually do not stay in one place for long; they may live with someone for one month and go to someone else the next month. Extreme poor people live within the community.</p>
	<p><i>Livestock:</i></p> <p>They do not have animals, if someone has animals they do not belong to the extreme poor wealth category.</p> <p>Some live around the village.</p> <p><i>Social (support):</i></p> <p>Some of them have a wife and children and some do not. It is difficult for their wives to eat and dress themselves. When they are sick, it not easy to have access to a hospital. Even when they give birth, they need assistance to get medical care and clothes for their baby. If extreme poor men get married, they often get divorced, because they cannot take care of their wives. Sometimes, they cannot control their wives, since they are the ones who bring the food for the family. Extreme poor women have more success in marriage, once they are married, they are safe and taken care of. Sometimes, it will be both the husband and the wife who are extreme poor, but, sometimes, it is only one of them.</p>
	<p><i>Other:</i></p> <p>Extreme poor people are given old clothes by the community. They cannot buy them themselves. They only have one cloth and they also cannot buy shoes. They look like a mad man. They have no bike. Their wives, when they cook to sell, nobody will buy it because they are so dirty.</p>

Source: Altaf (2016b), definition provided by PADev workshop participants, 2012

Categories of extreme poor people in Ouenou, Tapa and Tontarou

Several categories of extreme poor people can be identified in the three villages: abandoned women; widowed men and women; alcoholics; elderly; people with illnesses and people with disabilities. A perhaps surprising

category of extreme poor people is that of men abandoned by their wives or widowed men. Men that have no wife are culturally considered to be extreme poor in the studied villages. Once women leave a man, this not only has a relational impact on the wellbeing of a man, but also materially and cognitively. Materially, it often means that there is one person less to farm and contribute to the household earnings. Especially when a woman leaves her children with the man, it becomes difficult to make ends meet. Practical things such as cooking a meal become problematic, as men often do not know how to cook and are generally culturally frowned upon even if they do cook. Cognitively, the fact that, culturally, men who are left by their wives are looked down on, can contribute to feelings of inferiority and negative self-image.

Differences between the wealth category of extreme poor and poor people

When comparing the definition of poor people (see table 5.3), what stands out is the fact that the perception of extreme poor people is much more negative than the perception of poor people. Although there are a number of negative words associated with poor people, i.e. dirty, generally they are perceived as honest and well-behaved. Socially, they have better access to support networks, e.g. community members and development agencies that assist the poor when they are in need. Furthermore, there are differences in the material dimension of wellbeing, particularly in terms of food. Whereas extreme poor people struggle to feed themselves, poor people are, at least, able to feed themselves. It seems that the children of both extreme poor and poor people receive their parents' leftovers (intra-household differences).

Material dimension of wellbeing

This section looks into the material dimension of the wellbeing of extreme poor people in the studied three villages. It examines different aspects of material wellbeing, such as income, access to food, housing, access to land and education and pays attention to the types of occupations of extreme poor people in the research area.

Occupation, employment and income

The majority of extreme poor people are able to work and mostly work as farmers. Other occupations held by extreme poor people include farm tool making, gleaning and collecting firewood. Some extreme poor people have multiple jobs; for example, they farm and make farming tools. However, this is a minority and, generally, extreme poor people have one source of employment. It is hard accurately estimate the average income earned by extreme poor people from labour activities, as their income fluctuates and is dependent on e.g. seasonality, illness, demand for farming tools or firewood. However, a very rough estimate is that, on average, extreme poor people may earn around 5,000 CFA (\$9.1) per month. Those who are unable to work, due to old age or illness, rely on begging or perform small chores for people in return for food or some money.

Table 5.3

Local definition of poor people in Ouenou, Tapa and Tontarou

<p>POOR</p> <p>Vernacular:</p> <p>Bariba: Bwe Bwe</p> <p>Fulani: Talaka</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>Poor people live according to their means. They do not wish to have problems. They are poor and their children always behave properly and they do not lie. They never have enough and are always suffering. They work as farmers, make pots and sell natural herbs (tisane). They can also work for others to earn money.</p> <p>Characteristics:</p> <p><i>Education:</i></p> <p>Their children go to public schools in old uniforms and without school supplies. It is not easy for them to pay the school fees. Their relatives assist them to pay the school fees. They are also assisted by white people and NGOs to pay the school fees and buy school supplies. Their children go to school without money for food.</p> <p>Some poor people cannot send their children to school at all.</p> <p><i>Farm/land/harvest:</i></p> <p>They farm, but the food is not sufficient for the whole year and they need assistance.</p> <p><i>Food:</i></p> <p>They can eat, but they have no surplus of food. They can feed their children, but not like the children of the rich. The children eat <i>tuo zaafi</i> (TZ)⁶⁴ from the previous day.</p>
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The house is covered with straw and is dirty. The roof is sometimes made of old tin. They cannot use cement for their houses. However, they can have good houses, but they often take five years constructing them.

Livestock:

They do not have animals, if someone has animals they do not belong to the extreme poor wealth category.

Social (support):

Poor people cannot solve their own problems, they do not have enough money. They can sell their food to solve their problems. They cannot help others. They do not have enough to give. They may be able to give yams, but they cannot give money. They have to go to the rich to borrow money and they will give it to them, because the rich pity them.

They can have a wife and children, but the children and wife are dirty and pitiful. Their wives can offer sex to the rich to feed their family. They may lie that they got money from a sister. This is how they become powerful in the household.

Poor people cannot attend meetings because they are not listened to and they are not considered.

Other:

They are dirty. They have some clothes, but not enough to change. They can buy new clothes once a year. The clothes they wear are repaired, because they are torn. They usually have one pair of shoes, that are old and repaired. The wives are not well dressed. They can use the same clothes for more than one week. It is not easy to get soap to wash and therefore they are dirty. The clothes of the children are torn.

They are not well dressed and their trousers can be of another colour than their shirt. The shoes are not nice either.

They may have a motor bike, but an old one.

Source: Altaf (2016b), definition provided by PADev workshop participants, 2012

Food

The majority of the participants in this study were able to eat two or three meals a day. However, this does not mean that they are always able to secure two or even one meal a day. The participants indicated that, frequently, they must rely on someone else to provide them food. And although it is a minority,

64 TZ is made from maize, millet and/or cassava.

some participants report not having food for two days or experience periods when, even after begging for it, food is difficult to acquire. Their meals contain fufu or tuo zaafi (TZ)⁶⁵, mostly without any soup or sauce. If there is soup, it is usually (dried) okra soup. There is thus little variety in their diets.

Housing, land and livestock

Just over half of the participants in this study own a house, usually from the period before they had fallen into extreme poverty, sometimes with a (decaying) tin roof, but mostly a small hut covered with straw. Those who do not own a house either stay in someone else house (e.g. neighbour) temporarily, or move into a decaying, vacant house, often left empty because the owners are building a new house elsewhere.

The majority of the participants have access to land, even if they do not own it. For example, they can borrow a piece of land from someone, since farmland is widely available in the area.

The majority of extreme poor participants do not own any livestock. Those that do only own a few chickens.

Education

The majority of the extreme poor participants are uneducated, but those who have children send them to primary school; however, many of these children drop out during their primary education. One extreme poor participant has two children attending college; however, this participant had received a lot of support from his family and the community and is an exception in being able to provide education for his children.

Water, sanitation and health

The extreme poor people in the studied villages have access to clean drinking water, either through a water pump or a well, and the majority can visit a health centre when they are mildly ill. When they are seriously or chronically ill, treatment becomes a problem and it is no longer possible to visit a medical

⁶⁵ Fufu and TZ are staple foods. Fufu is made from cassava, yams or plantain. TZ is made from maize, millet and/or cassava.

facility. Those who are not able to visit a health centre, even in cases of mild illness, may seek a traditional healer or will not seek medical assistance at all

Technology

Just over half of the participants own a radio or a mobile phone. Some reported that they used to own a radio, but since it broke, they no longer own any electronic goods or have access to any technology.

Sub-conclusion

Looking at the material dimension of wellbeing in the three studied villages, what stands out is the fact that being landless or not having any access to land is a major indication of being an extreme poor person, since farm land is widely available in the area. What also becomes clear is that extreme poor people are incapable of satisfying their material needs without frequent assistance (e.g. food or housing) from family and the community. This assistance will be elaborated upon in the next section.



Photo 5.3
House of an extreme poor person



Photo 5.4
Forging farming tools

Relational dimension of wellbeing

This section describes the relational dimension of wellbeing and focuses on the interaction between extreme poor people and their families and community. In particular, this section highlights the difficult relationship that many extreme poor people have with their families and their relationship of dependency with the community. The interaction that extreme poor people have with both poverty reduction interventions and government agencies will be discussed in the next section.

Family

Family can be an important support system (e.g. lending money) for extreme poor people in the studied villages. Especially children that are able to farm or contribute to household chores, are an important asset. When one or both parents are no longer able to provide for their family, children can take over (some of) the work, but this often is at the expense of their education as they can no longer attend school.

I was not able to do anything anymore (due to my illness). My wife and children were the ones to help me, they went to farm. My boy stopped going to school and started farming also. (male, 59 years)

Another participant narrated that when he could no longer take care of his four children, an uncle assisted him by adopting one of the children. However, once a child is given up for adoption, it is not possible to remain in touch. This causes mixed feelings. On the one hand, the participant is relieved that someone is taking care of his child; on the other hand, he is sad and hurt by the fact that he 'lost' a child:

The child left four years ago, since then I did not see her [...] Amongst the Bariba, it is not good to go and see where your child is once you have given it away. If you go, it is as if you want to steal the child. They do not bring the child here, because if she (child) knows this place, she may run away and come back (home). I only pray that wherever the child is, she will be in good health. (male, 30 years)

Unfortunately, the majority of extreme poor people cannot count on support from their family. When immediate family shun an extreme poor relative, it

becomes especially difficult for that person to manage their life, materially, but also, not insignificantly, mentally:

Four years after she (wife) died, the children left the house. I do not know why they left. When the children were still here, they would help me, but since they left, I am really suffering and I am sad [...] My children are not taking care of me, one is living there and one is there⁶⁶ they do not care. Sometimes it may take two or three years before they come. One of them may give me 500 CFA. I do not care for my children, they left me alone. (male, 72 years)

In particular, the elderly extreme poor participants in this study, who have been ignored or refused help by their children, have experienced this as painful and saddening. According to them, they would not be in such a bad position if their children helped them:

My daughters do not come to visit me, if they came, how could I be in need of food? (female, 70 years)

Other extreme poor participants reported that they have not only been ignored by family, but also physically and mentally abused. The following quote is from a woman who was first thrown out by her husband due to her illness. She then returned to her family compound:

[...] my mother told me, it is better for me to die. People told my mother not to talk like that and she finally stopped insulting me. When I used to touch something in the house, my mother would yell at me and beat me with a stick. She was afraid of my illness [...] My mother left two months ago to stay in another village with her sons for the harvest [...] I don't know if my mother will return. My mother stayed in the house next to me, it is empty now. I cannot live there because she is afraid I will contaminate the place. That is why she did not take me with her.⁶⁷ (female, 40 years)

This feeling of abandonment by immediate family, be it children, parents or partners, had a material impact (e.g. lack of food, shelter) on the extreme poor

⁶⁶ He does not know where his children are living, but they do not take care of him. According to some community members, one of his daughters is staying in the village. The other children are staying elsewhere. One of his sons is mentally unstable, but the respondent did not mention this.

⁶⁷ The mother was afraid that her daughter's illness was contagious. The illness described by the respondents is most likely epilepsy. It is common in the area to see such an illness as

participants. However, it is striking that it also has a severe mental impact on the participants. They reported experiencing sadness and depression.

Community

Especially when family is incapable or unwilling to assist the extreme poor people in the studied areas, it appears that the community plays a crucial role in providing assistance. All of the participants have received some form of aid from community members. Generally, this aid is given in the form of food:

Now it is just the two of us,⁶⁸ when we find food we eat, when we do not find food, it is hard. Our neighbour helps to cook if we find food. When we do not find anything to eat, my daughter goes to other people to get something to eat and I will go to my age mates, to get some food. (male, 60 years)

Besides food, the community has also assisted the participants in terms of lending money, giving (natural) medicines, clothing and providing land to farm on. In some cases, community members have provided shelter to an extreme poor participant as well:

When we came here, someone gave us land. Someone gave us the house, since it was empty. They had built the house, but left and so we moved in. However, we are not living there now, since the rain has destroyed it. Our neighbour told us to come and live with him, since no one was staying in the room that we are staying in. (female, 40 years). (Altaf & Pouw, 2017, p. 27)

However, aid is not guaranteed and is of a sporadic nature. Community members may not provide food every time an extreme poor person is in need⁶⁹. Community members mostly assisted the extreme poor participants in times of crises, e.g. providing medication or lending money for the treatment of an illness or organising a funeral. In the case of funerals, extreme poor people can only organise a small ceremony for their deceased if they receive assistance. Without this help, there will be no food and only a few people are likely to attend the ceremony, which will be limited to a day, rather than spread out over several days. In case of marriage, it is common that extreme

something connected with dark spirits and 'black magic'.

68 This male respondent lives with his four-year-old daughter. He cannot cook and therefore his neighbour assists him in cooking food when he has food.

69 While one of the life histories with a female was being conducted, her husband returned from their neighbours. He went to ask for food, but came back empty handed.

poor people do not marry at all, because they cannot arrange a wedding. Therefore, many extreme poor people live together without getting married.

Sub-conclusion

Family is an important asset for a few participants; however, for the majority of the participants, family is a rather painful subject, especially in the cases where participants have been consciously excluded by their family. It is remarkable that more than family, the communities of the studied villages play a vital role in addressing the needs of extreme poor people. The participants are highly dependent on their community members for many types of (material) aid. Nonetheless, this type of assistance can only help extreme poor people to cope with immediate needs and is not a means to climb out of their poverty or improve their wellbeing. Furthermore, the aid that is given is material and, while this is incredibly important, the participants have reported that love, respect and warmth are just as, if not even more important for their wellbeing. The next paragraph will expand on this cognitive dimension of wellbeing.

Cognitive dimension of wellbeing

The previous section has shown that the cognitive dimension of wellbeing plays a significant role in defining the overall wellbeing of extreme poor people in the research location. This section will elaborate on extreme poor people's perceptions of their cognitive wellbeing, especially how they perceive themselves and how they think others perceive them and, how they treated by others. This aspect of cognitive wellbeing plays a crucial part in understanding their self-exclusionary and often passive behaviour.

Self-image

Half of the participants indicated that they perceive themselves as a 'bad' or 'not good' person. They have little confidence in their own abilities and often this feeling is intensified or even compounded by how they believe they are perceived by others:

I cannot do anything. Because I am sick no one wants to be near to me and because no one wants to come close to me, it makes me feel that I am a bad

person. Other people think my life is over. I cannot do anything good for anyone. (female, 40 years) (Altaf & Pouw, 2017, p. 28)

This quote illustrates that this extreme poor person doubts her abilities, to the extent that she believes she is not capable of doing anything. This belief is strongly connected to the fact that she is isolated by the majority of people surrounding her, both family and community members. In other cases, extreme poor people did not attribute internal aspects as being responsible for them being a 'bad' person, but rather believe that external (lack of material) aspects are the reason why they cannot be or are no longer considered a 'good' person:

I would say I am not a good person, because I have nothing now. In the past, I was a good person, because I did not lack anything. Other people will say I have nothing. They will say go away, you are poor, you have no one who takes care of you. I don't reply to them, because it is only God who knows why it is like this. (female, 75 years) (Altaf & Pouw, 2017, p. 28)

It is important to mention that participant' self-image has a severe mental and emotional impact on them. Feelings of depression (sadness, hopelessness) are common:

When other people look at me, they see a poor person. They see that I do not have a wife. That is all they see when they see me. People think I am nothing. They talk bad about me in front of me, even small children. They will talk about my poverty. It makes me feel bad, but I cannot do anything to them. (male, 60 years)

Passivism, fatalism

The previous quote is a good illustration of the powerlessness that extreme poor people in the research area experience. In combination with a negative self-image, it often makes them passive and fatalistic in their thinking, meaning that they do not believe they are capable of improving their situation or having any control over it. They believe that their situation is controlled by God and, therefore, any effort to change it is fruitless. Besides the belief that the current situation cannot be altered, the older the participants become, the more disillusioned they become about having a better life. Often, they

lose any hope at all for a better future. Sometimes, they can find comfort in the thought that perhaps their afterlife will be better:

I know my life is different from other people, but I trust in God. In this life, I have nothing, but I have hope that when I will die, I will have a good life with God. I do not think I am a good person, I work, but I do not find anything good from my suffering. (male, 60 years) (Altaf & Pouw, 2017, p. 29)

The earlier described feeling of incapability, combined with passiveness and fatalism, contribute to a sense of dependency on others. There is a general feeling amongst the participants that they cannot survive on their own, but are highly dependent on others, i.e. family or community members:

I am asking God to give people enough, so they can help me. (male, 45 years)

Self-exclusion

But I think others will also⁷⁰ insult me, that is why I prefer to stay in my room, when I do not farm. (male, 30 years)

Insults, maltreatment from family and community members, passive and fatalistic thinking and a negative self-image contribute significantly to the self-exclusionary behaviour of the extreme poor in the research area. They feel unwelcome and unwanted and try to avoid interaction⁷¹ with those around them in order avoid any insults. Self-exclusion also plays an important role in avoiding community meetings and development interventions. This will be discussed further in the section on the interaction between extreme poor people and poverty reduction agencies.

Sub-conclusion

It is striking that, with a few exceptions, extreme poor people have been verbally abused (e.g. name calling, undermining) by either their family and/or community members. At the same time, the extreme poor believe they

70 The respondent explained earlier on that his neighbours had insulted him, hence the “also”

71 One of the respondents had been so isolated from her environment that she did not know how to interact with the researcher. During the narration of her life history, she completely blacked out and kept repeating that she could not remember anything anymore. It took a long time to collect her story and many visits before she was able to interact ‘normally’.

are less than other people; they feel they must be inferior because they are so poor. More importantly, their negative self-image is compounded by constant reminders from people around them, who explain how and why they are inferior (to others in the community). Such a negative self-image may also hinder the participants' involvement (self-exclusion) in family and community life and often leads to a high level of passivity. They do not believe they are capable of changing their situation, because their destiny is in the hands of God and thus it is pointless to even try. According to the participants, they are at the mercy of God and people around them in order to survive. Feelings of depression, sadness and shame are common amongst the participants and they long for love (being touched again, for example), respect and feeling good about themselves (again).

Causes of extreme poverty in Ouenou, Tapa and Tontarou

This section discusses the multiple causes of extreme poverty in the three studied villages in order to understand why people fall into extreme poverty, since the large majority of the participants were originally not born into extreme poverty as defined in the research location. The section also discusses the factors that keep extreme poor people trapped in their state of illbeing. The section pays attention to both micro level (individual and household level) and macro level causes.

Micro/individual household causes

In this case study, there are two significant causes at individual/household level that push people into extreme poverty: losing a partner (death or abandonment) and an illness (of the person him-/herself or a family member). Both causes have a substantial impact on people's (and sometimes their family's) livelihoods. When a partner leaves or dies, half of the 'manpower/labour' contributing to the household is lost. Illness also affects a household's livelihood, because the breadwinner can no longer provide for him-/herself and/or the family, while at the same time there are extra expenses and medical costs to deal with. Even when it is not the breadwinner, but another family member who is ill, it can take a heavy toll on a family's livelihood:

One of the children of my wife's first husband fell ill and I had to sell everything for the treatment of this child [...] I even had to take a loan. To repay that, I sold a lot of my soya production. (male, 30 years) (Altaf & Pouw, 2017, p. 25)

Once people fall into extreme poverty, it becomes incredibly difficult to climb out again, generally because illness and the loss of a partner are accompanied by other factors or are due to a combination of both. The accumulation of shocks makes it not only more difficult to climb out of extreme poverty, but can also push people even further into it and affect the different dimensions of their wellbeing:

I remember that my husband wanted to spend most of his time with me and he even travelled with me, without the second wife. She got jealous and annoyed, she put something in my food and I ate it. Since I ate that food, I became sick (possibly epilepsy). I went to see a visionary (charlatan) and she told me that it was the second wife who did this to me [...] I was angry, but I could not do anything. My husband asked me to leave the house. He knew that the second wife put something in my food, but he said nothing. I felt angry and I said, it is because of my illness that he wants me to leave now. (female, 40 years) (Altaf & Pouw, 2017, p. 25-26)

This quote from one of the participants illustrates that, in addition to having to deal with an illness, the participant, also lost her home and partner. This affected her material wellbeing (e.g. no income, shelter), her relational wellbeing (rejected by in-laws and own family) and her cognitive wellbeing (anger that turned into sadness/depression).

Macro/structural causes

In the previous quote, the participant blames the second wife of her husband for her illness. According to the participant, the second wife used magic in order to make her ill. The use of such (fetishist) practices are widely reported, not specifically by extreme poor people, but by people from all wealth categories in the research area. Cultural beliefs and traditions such as fetishism and elitism (chiefs and local leaders) are valued greatly. People are hesitant to change their behaviour regarding these traditions and practices due to fear of displeasing their ancestors and risking their wrath. Consequently, people live in constant fear – of their ancestors, but also of each other, since they are constantly wondering who may be thinking of harming them (through ‘black magic’). Combined with the ethnic tensions amongst the different ethnicities, this creates a general feeling of fear and distrust at the root of the studied communities and has an adverse effect on the development of these communities and the collaboration between its people.

For extreme poor people, these cultural beliefs and traditions can have an enormous impact on their personal lives:

I still have this disease. I had it since I was a little girl. My parents suffered a lot because of it, but when they wanted to go to the hospital people said, this disease is not for the hospital, it should be treated traditionally (herbs and fetishists). I was born in the farm and people say maybe I met bad spirits there. (female, 40 years) (Altaf & Pouw, 2017, p. 29)

In this case, the woman is prevented from seeking conventional medical care to treat her disease, due to cultural beliefs. Cultural values and norms not only prevent people from seeking treatment, but can also be responsible for people being shunned, if, for example, a disease is believed to be related to 'bad spirits', 'black magic' or considered contagious.

Thus, extreme poor people become excluded and remain trapped in their situation.

Sub-conclusion

People in the three studied villages generally fall into extreme poverty due to the loss of a partner or due to an illness. They mostly remain trapped in extreme poverty (all participants are chronically extreme poor) as a result of an accumulation of shocks. Once people fall ill or lose a partner, they become fragile (materially, relationally and cognitively) and are no longer capable of dealing with any other shocks that come their way. Furthermore, on a macro level, local cultural norms and value systems (e.g. fetishism and elitism) and ethnic conflicts have created an atmosphere of mutual distrust and fear. In particular, the belief in ancestors and their traditions can become problematic, as people are not allowed to go against these traditions. Adherence (sometimes involuntary) to these traditions can prevent extreme poor people from seeking solutions for the problems they face (e.g. illnesses).

5.4 Poverty reduction interventions in Ouenou, Tapa and Tontarou

This section examines the poverty reduction interventions in Ouenou, Tapa and Tontarou and their effectiveness in targeting and reaching the extreme poor in these villages. It scrutinizes the processes of inclusion and exclusion by development intervention agencies in the studied villages, specifically that

of the studied NGO. Furthermore, the relational dimension of wellbeing, in particular the interaction between the extreme poor and institutions (government and NGO), are discussed.

Development agencies and interventions in Ouenou, Tontarou and Tepa

A wide range of poverty reduction interventions have been implemented in the three villages since the 1950s (e.g. health, education, WASH, microcredit, agribusiness and 'sensibilisation' interventions, i.e. against forced marriages). Almost 70 different interventions have been carried out by different government institutions and NGOs (local, regional (Derana) national (Dedras, LARES, SIAN'SON) and supranational (Helvetas)).

Generally, the interventions implemented in the three villages are highly appreciated. Positive changes that have occurred in the area are often directly linked to specific interventions, e.g. better and safer transportation possibilities due to the construction of roads, potable water as a result of wells and boreholes and increased primary education enrolment, because of accessible primary education. Men reported to particularly benefit from agricultural interventions (soy and cotton seeds and agricultural trainings), loans and literacy interventions. Women seemed to appreciate interventions in the area of water, such as wells and boreholes. They also benefit from sheabutter and *garri*⁷² processing machines and from educational interventions, i.e. the building of a school. Interestingly, during the workshops, the group of young men (from Tontarou) explained that they were extremely satisfied by the many interventions that had been introduced in the area, as the combination of these interventions had led to an overall improved situation and image of their village. As a result of this, people from other villages now wanted to marry their daughters to men in Tontarou.

Although the vast majority of interventions implemented are highly appreciated, there are also a few interventions that were mentioned as unsuccessful. These are interventions whereby certain promises were made at the initial stages of the intervention (e.g. building classrooms), but were never fulfilled. Furthermore, dysfunctional and unfinished interventions were described as 'bad' interventions.

72 Popular food made from cassava.

Targeting strategies (concepts, methods and implementation) of the studied NGO

Conceptualisation of extreme poor people

In defining extreme poor people, the NGO makes a division along the lines of ethnicity, i.e. Bariba (men and women) and Fulani/Gando. These definitions are drawn with the help of an 'expert', i.e. someone who lives in the community and knows the community well. Three to four categories are identified per subgroup (e.g. Bariba males). Table 5.4 shows the definitions of the extreme poor and poor per subgroup. These definitions show that the NGO has defined poverty predominantly materially and paid little attention to relational poverty (marriage) and no attention to the cognitive dimension of wellbeing/poverty, despite the evidence of the role they play in extreme poor people's lives.

Table 5.4
Definitions of extreme poor and poor according to the NGO

	Extreme poor	Poor
Bariba men:	No food, no money, no animals, no children, straw roof, not married, no large farm land, use old farming tools, beggars.	Food, no animals, no money, married with children, corrugated roof.
Bariba women	Less than CFA5000. Do not own enough to make ends meet.	CFA35.000, 8 goats, 5 sheep, some clothing, some bowls available.
Fulani/Gando	No cows, sheep or goats. 5 chicken, insufficient food. Not married, no children, straw roof.	About 70 cows, 30 sheep, 15 goats, 40 guinea fowls, 2 storages (of food).

Source: studied NGO

Methods and implementation of poverty reduction interventions

The NGO applies an open access method. This means that a community meeting is organised to introduce an intervention. Anyone willing to join the intervention can sign up. The thinking behind this is that the NGO is accessible for all in the community, regardless of ethnicity or wealth category. However, since the NGO experienced that extreme poor people did not come

to their meetings, they decided to make use of 'experts' to help them define different wealth categories and use community members to indicate who is extreme poor (community-based targeting). This way, a list was developed comprising the names of poor and extreme poor people to be invited to join interventions. The danger of such a method can be that favouritism and elitism may come into play, this will be elaborated upon below.

In practice, hardly any extreme poor are directly invited and reached by the NGO. Rather, interventions tend to reach the average wealth category. According to the NGO, this can be explained by the fact that some interventions are not intended for the poor and extreme poor. The NGO explained that they are currently targeting two wealth categories: people that are not really poor and are interested in agribusiness, and poor people who are only able to produce for their own families and use old farming tools. Extreme poor people are also unintentionally excluded from the NGO's economic interventions, such as microcredit. One of the conditions for joining the microcredit intervention is to be part of a group. As explained earlier, extreme poor people are often excluded from their community and also tend to self-exclude and therefore cannot form part of a group. This means that both the agribusiness intervention and the microcredit intervention are inaccessible for the extreme poor. However, those interventions that are suitable for extreme poor people are also not reaching them. The NGO has a strong wish to give the community ownership of the interventions that are implemented. In practice, this often means that community leaders and local elites become 'owners' of the interventions and control the selection process, which can lead to elite capture and favouritism.

Such practices can be obviated through thorough monitoring and evaluation (M&E). According to the NGO, they measure success by conducting interviews with extreme poor people and their household members to find out whether they own more land and have more savings now than they had prior to joining an intervention. However, those that are included in interventions mostly do not belong to the extreme poor in the first place leading to skewed M&E results, which are often times more favourable than the reality⁷³.

73 During the fieldwork, field officers from the NGO were conducting M&E. However, they chose to rest under a tree and arranged some community members to go and fill in the M&E forms on behalf of them. lxxiv An example was shared whereby women participating in an intervention of sheabutter processing, explained that the one extreme poor person who joined the intervention left quickly. She was afraid to be held responsible for any malfunction of the processing machine they were all working with or if something got stolen.

Reaching the extreme poor people: people's perceptions

According to the communities of the three villages and the interviewed extreme poor people, hardly any government institutions or NGOs in the area reach extreme poor people. It is predominantly the rich and average wealth groups that are reached. The only interventions reaching extreme poor people, are public interventions, such as streetlights, which everyone benefits from. The main reason for this is believed to be elite capture and political corruption:

There is a lot of corruption preventing the poorer groups from accessing development initiatives. The corruption was brought into the area by the whites though, you whites taught us how to be corrupt. The whites have meetings with the rich people, after which the rich claim ownership of the projects and do not let the poor enter. There is also political corruption, for example, a HIV initiative that was to be carried out in the area, but the poor people who wished to benefit from it, did not belong to the same political party as the mayor and were excluded from the project. We heard that the money was transferred to rich people who were supposed to carry out HIV related activities, but they kept the money for private purposes. (PADev workshop participants, old men) (Altaf & Pouw, 2017, p. 30)

Another reason that obstructs participation of extreme poor people, is that they may not have the means to enter an intervention. This is particularly the case for microcredit interventions, as a financial contribution from the beneficiary is often required in order to participate. Since the extreme poor mostly cannot contribute, they are unable to join. As previously mentioned, the formation of groups to enter microcredit interventions also hinders the extreme poor from joining, as social and self-exclusion prevents them from being part of a group.

According to the community, self-exclusion of extreme poor people is a key factor in explaining why the majority of interventions fail to reach them and if, 'by chance' they are included, it explains why they subsequently drop-out. Community members report that, even if an extreme poor person enters an intervention, they generally withdraw again quickly.

Extreme poor people are afraid that they may be blamed if something goes wrong,⁷⁴ even if they are innocent. Their negative self-image and maltreatment by family and community members may explain this reasoning.

A rare extreme poor participant in an intervention explained his decision to withdraw from the project:

I was in the soya project, but they were always quarreling and so I left. It is like that for many projects. If you are not among the leaders, you do not know what is going on. (male, 41 years)

On the one hand, this participant complains about the fact that local leaders have taken control of an intervention; on the other hand, he also feels out of place, not being part of that elite group.

Sub-conclusion

Despite the intentions and efforts of the studied NGO and other NGOs and government institutions in the three villages, it appears that, generally, extreme poor people are not reached by poverty reduction interventions. This can be explained by a two-way process of exclusion. Extreme poor people are excluded by government institutions and NGOs as result of mistargeting, e.g. open access methods or community-based targeting that is sensitive to favouritism or corruption. The community also plays an important role in excluding extreme poor people in interventions through elite capture, i.e. local leaders take control of interventions and apply practices of favouritism. At the same time, extreme poor people themselves are hesitant to join interventions due to fear of mistreatment and most likely also due to 'feeling out of place' (negative self-image).

5.5 Conclusions

In the Benin case study, extreme poor people are defined as people who face severe deprivation in all three dimensions of wellbeing. Materially, in particular the lack of land or being landless is an indication that someone may

74 An example was shared whereby women participating in an intervention of sheabutter processing, explained that the one extreme poor person who joined the intervention left quickly. She was afraid to be held responsible for any malfunction of the processing machine they were all working with or if something got stolen.

belong to the extreme poor wealth category, as farmland is widely available in the area. Relationally, the majority of extreme poor people cannot count on their family for support and are sometimes even shunned. For extreme poor people, this means that they rely heavily on the community when confronted with shocks. While the material aid given by community members is vital for the survival of extreme poor people, it cannot pull them out of their poverty. Moreover, the majority of family and community socially exclude extreme poor people and perceive them in a very negative manner, e.g. “dirty, mad, pitiful, unnoticeable and laughable”. This negative perception sometimes translates into (verbal) abuse. Extreme poor people also perceive themselves in a negative way and feel inferior to others in their community. Such self-perceptions may contribute to self-exclusionary (avoiding social events), fatalism and passive behaviour (not believing to be capable of changing anything) of extreme poor people.

Extreme poor people in the three studied villages often belong to one of the following ‘categories’: abandoned women; widowed men or women; alcoholics; elderly; and chronically ill or people with disabilities. A category quite specific for the research area, is that of single men. Unmarried men or men left by their wives are culturally seen as extreme poor. Particularly when women leave the children with the men, it becomes difficult for these men to cope. They not only lose ‘labour power’ and therefore income, but are also left in charge of their children, which is culturally considered to be a task of women. The majority of these men do not know how to cook or do other household chores.

While there are differences in the material dimensions of wellbeing between the extreme poor and poor people, the main differences can be seen in the cognitive and relational dimensions. Especially the way extreme poor people are perceived and how they perceive themselves is much more negative than the way poor people are generally perceived of by their community. Poor people are better connected with and can mostly count on their family and community when they are in need. Poor people are considered trustworthy (e.g. their children will not lie and behave properly).

When it comes to poverty reduction interventions, extreme poor people are generally the victims of a two-way process of exclusion. On the one hand, extreme poor people are excluded by poverty reduction agencies because of mistargeting (e.g. open access methods or community-based targeting sensitive to favouritism and/or corruption) and by their community (e.g. elite capture and/or political corruption). On the other hand, the extreme poor

tend to self-exclude and avoid entering interventions out of fear of being maltreated and a lack of sense of belonging.

The studied NGO was selected for (amongst other factors) its variety of interventions, in order to see whether some types of interventions are more suited to reaching the extreme poor than others. While interventions generally do not reach the extreme poor (with the exception of public interventions, e.g. roads and streetlights), there is some evidence that economic interventions, such as microcredit, are designed to exclude the extreme poor (group formation and required contribution).

It thus appears that it is difficult for extreme poor people to change their situation and that aid, when provided, cannot lift people out of their poverty or increase their wellbeing. The extreme poor generally fall into extreme poverty when they lose a partner or become (chronically) ill. They remain extreme poor, because once they fall into extreme poverty, they lack the resilience to deal with shocks that come their way. Moreover, structural societal issues in terms of distorted power relations (e.g. elitism, corruption) and unalterable cultural norms and values (e.g. fetishism, worshipping of ancestors) on a macro level contribute to the fact that the extreme poor are hindered when it comes to seeking solutions to escape their poverty.



6

Case study 3: Ethiopia Jeldu, Escaping isolation

6.1 Introduction

This chapter⁷⁵ examines development interventions aiming to reach extreme poor people and their effectiveness at including them. The chapter explores the local definitions of poor and extreme poor people and the differences among them that emerged in the PADev workshops. Additionally, the different ‘categories’ of extreme poor people in the research area are identified. Lastly, the chapter attempts to provide insights into the causes of being extreme poor in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing in the case study area Jeldu and how these are reproduced by social and political power relations at multiple levels (family, community and institutions) on the basis of field research.

The chapter is organised as follows: first it sketches the context of the case study. The chapter then discusses the definitions of extreme poor people and poor people and deals with the different categories of extreme poor people. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the multiple dimensions of wellbeing with regards to extreme poor people and examines the causes of extreme poverty. The chapter investigates the in- and exclusion of poverty reduction interventions concerning extreme poor people. The chapter ends with conclusions.

6.2 Sketching the context

This section provides contextual information regarding the research location on the basis of literature, the PADev workshops, in particular from the ‘events’ and ‘changes’ exercises and (formal and informal) interviews.

⁷⁵ The author published an earlier version of this work as a working paper. <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/37716/ascworkingpaper128.pdf?sequence=1>.

Ethiopia is classified as a low human development country with an HDI of 0.448 (UNDP, 2016c) for 2015. The country is marked by political unrest arising from demonstrations, protests, bloodshed and approximately 10,000 arrests (Abbink, 2017). Predominantly, rural people protested against what they perceived to be unequal land allocations, dispossession and repression (Ibid., p. 310). Furthermore, the livelihoods of around 5 to 6 million people were severely affected as a result of political-economic (political unrest shaking investors' confidence) and natural (drought, erosion and land and water scarcity) causes (Ibid.). Ethiopia's economy is dependent on external actors such as donor aid, in particular loans from China and Ethiopian remittances (Ibid.). This may explain the high rate of out-migration, which is approximately 100,000 (Ibid.).

Many of the issues that Ethiopia is dealing with country wide, are also at play in the rural case study area in Ethiopia called Jeldu. Jeldu lies in the West Shewa zone of Ethiopia with Gojo as its main town (see Map 6.1). The area is predominantly inhabited by Oromo people, which is the largest of the many ethnic groups in Ethiopia. The area is also marked by its altitude, ranging from 500 up to 2900 metres above sea level. The estimated total population of the District (Woreda) for the year 2017 is 262,764 (Central Statistical Agency, 2013). The population of Jeldu adheres predominantly to Orthodox Christianity, followed by Protestant Christianity. However, many people are both Christians and *Waaqeffannaa*.⁷⁶

The NGO studied in this case study is active in different areas of Jeldu District. In order to select one location for the field study different locations were visited, both highland and lowland areas. After discussing which location would be most suitable for studying extreme poor people and NGO interventions, a village called Taatessa was selected. This village is located approximately 25 kilometres from Gojo town.

Taatessa lies in a valley, which means the village can only be reached by negotiating a descent of 500 metres. Taatessa is the collective term for a few small villages. In consultation with local staff, four of these villages, representative of the NGO's involvement, were selected for the field study: Taatessa, Laafa, Luthu and Nyare⁷⁷ (see Map 6.2). The majority of people here are Orthodox Christians, followed by Protestants and *Waaqeffannaa*. The

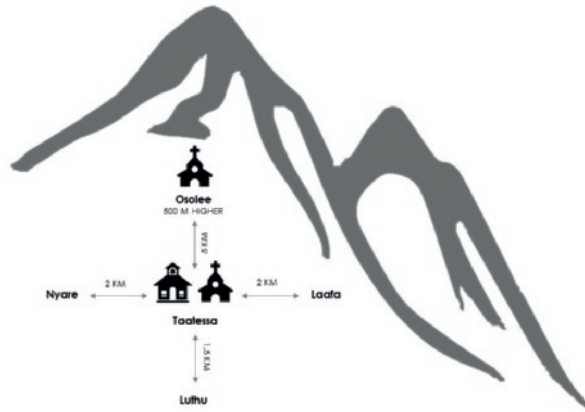
⁷⁶ Animism.

⁷⁷ Because no map was available of this area, a very schematic map was drawn in collaboration with the community members of these four villages.

main village of Taatessa has the only primary school in the area. In total, there are 295 households in the four villages. 'Taatessa' is used in the subsequent sections to indicate the area comprising all four villages.



Map 6.1
Gojo, Jeldu



Map 6.2

Schematic map of Taatessa

Source: Anika Altaf in collaboration with the community of Taatessa, 2012

The area described by the community

According to the PADev workshop participants, Taatessa is best described as an area that has experienced several conflicts. Firstly, the area suffered conflict and violence during the transition of the Derg regime to the Zenawi regime. Some participants reported being forcefully recruited by Derg militants. Secondly, several conflicts are reported over farmland, leading to bloodshed and imprisonment. According to the community, the lack of farmland is a major issue in Taatessa. The population of Taatessa has increased, while land has become less fertile and thus cultivation has become harder. Soil erosion was mentioned as an important factor in this regard. People need wood to produce charcoal, which has led to excessive cutting of trees and deforestation, to the extent that the roots of trees are dug out for the production of charcoal. However, there seems to be no alternative for people to earn a living and therefore the community believes that they cannot be blamed. Attempts to plant new trees have failed, as there is also a shortage of water due to erratic rainfall (either scarce or heavy rainfall). Furthermore, there are no sources of (clean) drinking water, such as water pumps or wells, in Taatessa. Villagers have to walk a long way to fetch water and when they do, the amount they collect leaves much to be desired (see

6.2). When rainfall is heavy, Taatessa becomes vulnerable to flooding (due to the deforestation), causing even more erosion.

In addition, the community reported that many diseases affected both humans and animals and treatment is often troublesome as Taatessa lies in a valley and is geographically isolated. Medical facilities, electricity and phone service/mobile network are not in place. This means that people have to travel far for treatment and not everyone is capable of travelling such distances, both in terms of costs and effort. Health workers sent by the government are expected to leave the area soon, as they cannot cope with the conditions in Taatessa (e.g. lack of water, no electricity). The same applies to teachers.

Taking the above-mentioned issues into consideration, it is little wonder that especially youngsters have a strong desire to leave the area and there is a lot of out-migration. Community members explained that young people have few or no prospects. There is a severe lack of land and water in Taatessa and many other basic facilities such as electricity and healthcare are absent.



Photo 6.1
Taatessa



Photo 6.2
Water source in Taatessa

6.3 Multi-dimensions of ill-/wellbeing of extreme poor people in Taatessa

This section illustrates the multi-dimensions of wellbeing, as presented in the conceptual model, on the basis of life histories conducted with extreme poor people in Taatessa. The section studies the definition of extreme poor people and the different categories hereof and compares the definition with that of poor people in Taatessa. To analyse this, data collected through the PADev workshops is examined, in particular data gathered from the wealth ranking exercise. The section ends with an analysis of the causes of deprivations in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing and their (possible) reproduction.

Defining extreme poor people in Taatessa

Community members developed a local definition/characterisation of extreme poor people in Taatessa, revealing deprivations in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing. It is striking that the general perception of extreme poor people is associated with strongly negative words and phrases (e.g. no respect for extreme poor people, they are considered dirty), even to the extent of “hate”. It is evident from the wealth ranking exercise that extreme poor people are not perceived as equal to and by other wealth groups in the community and are treated differently. People do not wish to engage with them socially. Their assets are minimal and often insufficient to satisfy basic needs. Additionally, access to several assets (in the form of loans, e.g. animals or money) or institutions (healthcare, education) that may enhance their wellbeing is incredibly difficult. This is because community members lack faith that borrowed assets may be returned (unharmed). Moreover, it appears that some community members in Taatessa, in particular in the ‘wealth category poor’ group, cannot afford to assist extreme poor people. Lastly, particularly illustrative of being an extreme poor person in this research area is the fact that the children of this group work for rich households and often live with them as servants.

Table 6.1

Definition of extreme poor people in Taatessal

<p>POOR</p> <p>Vernacular: Badduba'a, iyessa babbadaa, rakkataa</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>Extreme poor people do labouring and make charcoal for the rich for food. However it has become harder to make charcoal because of the lack of trees. They do dirty and difficult work, for example when an ox dies, they will help to remove the skin. So they also work as skin removers. They are not respected in the society, people do not like them, because they are dirty, they never wash; others hate them and ignore them. They are treated differently and not seen as equal to others in the society. For example, they are never given the room to speak at meetings. Everyone says, this beggar has come, why don't they work hard, why do they always come to people, but they have no land to farm and there is no industry, so they have to beg. They will go to people's homes and talk about their problems, hoping to get something. They ask for food or work. There are also extreme poor people who find something and sell it to drink. The children of extreme poor people work for the rich; older children will look after the cows and oxen, younger ones tend the goats and sheep.</p> <p>Characteristics:</p> <p><i>Education:</i></p> <p>Most children do not go to school because they work at other people's houses. They cannot buy uniforms and it is difficult for them to buy books. When extreme poor people have two or three children, they send one to school and the others work for the rich. They go to school barefoot and with old clothes. During their break, they go to help the rich and get food in return. Many children drop out because they cannot afford the uniform and the school supplies. So they sometimes work for one year and then join school again. Some quit completely, others may continue after a break.</p> <p><i>Farm/land/harvest:</i></p> <p>They do not have any land, just enough to build their house on. They work on rich people's farms and they often have to go far to find farmland to work on, because they do not own any oxen. They work with their hands.</p> <p><i>Food:</i></p> <p>It is difficult for extreme poor people to have one meal per day. They normally do not prepare food at their own house and get food from the person for whom they are working. They may get cabbage or pumpkin. They will bring some of the food that they receive back home to feed the family. They may also beg for some crops from the richs.</p>
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Housing:

The house is very small and there is no garden. It may even be built on the land of a relative. The roof is made of cheap grass or sugarcane leaves. The walls are made from the stems of maize and need to be repaired every year. Everyone can see if they are in the house, because you can see through the walls. They do not have many things in their house.

Livestock:

Extreme poor people have no cattle. They do not have any space for animals and therefore people may not give them their sheep or goats. They fear that the animals may be eaten by a hyena or some other wild animal.

Social (support):

Extreme poor people do not receive charity, they only receive food for work.

Most people cannot afford to help others, they can just feel sorry for extreme poor people. Some poor people may be helped by the rich, because they serve them well. Moreover, if an extreme poor person dies, people contribute to buying their coffin.

Health :

When extreme poor people are ill, they cannot go to the clinic. Since they cannot borrow money (they cannot repay it), they just wait till they get better. They sleep and wait for the disease to pass.

They use natural leaves and traditional healing methods.

Other:

Extreme poor people wear very old clothes given to them by the people they work for. Because their clothes are very old and torn, they have to sew them.

Source: Altaf (2016c), definition provided by PADev workshop participants, 2013

Categories of extreme poor people in Taatessa

Different 'categories' of extreme poor people can be identified in Taatessa, specifically women that have been abandoned or are abused by their drunk partner, people abandoned by their parent(s) or whose parents died during their childhood, people who spent their childhood working as servants and chronically ill people. A 'category' of extreme poor people that stands out in Taatessa, is that of (landless) young men. Almost half of the participants were young men and all the elderly participants were female. While drivers

of being extreme poor are often multiple and accumulative, being landless in an area where farming is the primary means of survival puts these men in a difficult situation and is often a major cause for them being driven into extreme poverty. Many of these young men try their luck elsewhere when they are unable to find farmland. They try to escape the area and find employment in the gold digging business (e.g. in Gambella or Sidamo). The vast majority, however, return disillusioned within a year and are often pushed further into their already vulnerable situation.

Differences between the category of extreme poor and poor

When comparing the general description of poor people with that of extreme poor people, the difference in perception between the two wealth groups is undeniable. None of the negative words associated with extreme poor people (e.g. dirty, hate) can be found in the description of poor people. Poor people are described as unhappy, but this is an observation rather than a judgement, as is the case for many characteristics that are attributed to extreme poor people. This more favourable perception of poor people is reflected in the social relations that they have, i.e. people of other 'wealth categories' trust poor people with their assets. Poor people are able to borrow money, for example for medication, and are trusted with the animals of rich people for breeding purposes. Rich people allow poor people to work on their land and share crops. Furthermore, poor people go to 'greet' richer people in order to get something (e.g. food), this is not perceived as begging, it is a more respectable way of receiving goods. This is in contrast to extreme poor people who are perceived as beggars. Since the poor have better access to social networks, they are provided with assets to improve their material wellbeing and are therefore better off compared to extreme poor people.

Table 6.2

Definition of poor people in Taatessa

<p>POOR</p> <p>Vernacular: Iyessa</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>They are farmers, they make charcoal and do labour work, like harvesting for the rich. They help the rich by collecting firewood and water for food. Their children have to help the rich by looking after their cattle after school. Even the faces of people who are poor are different. You can see they are not happy.</p> <p>Characteristics:</p> <p><i>Education:</i></p> <p>Their children go to school in the morning or afternoon and they work the other half of the day at a rich person's house. They buy books from the money they earn. They wear old uniforms. They cannot always complete their education.</p> <p><i>Farm/land/harvest:</i></p> <p>The poor only have enough land to build a house. They have a small garden. They farm on rich people's land and share the crops.</p> <p><i>Food:</i></p> <p>They eat once a day. They have coffee and roasted crops. It is difficult for them to have <i>shiro</i>⁷⁶ or <i>wat</i>⁷⁷. They usually have their <i>injera</i>⁷⁸ with salt and in the rainy season with cabbage. They also eat potato, because it is cheaper. The rich may sometimes help them by giving them cabbage, pumpkin or a meal, when the poor go to 'greet'⁷⁹ them.</p> <p><i>Housing:</i></p> <p>Their houses are small and covered with strong grass and if they have a kitchen it is inside the house. Their house is not as beautifully made as that of an average person. All activities take place in one room: cooking, sleeping, and if they have animals, they also stay in the house. They make a 'bed' from earth. They do not have a blanket.</p> <p><i>Livestock:</i></p> <p>They do not have oxen or cows. They can borrow sheep and goats from the rich. When the animals breed, they give back the sheep or goat that they borrowed.</p>
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78 This male respondent lives with his four-year-old daughter. He cannot cook and therefore his neighbour assists him in cooking food when he has food.

79 While one of the life histories with a female was being conducted, her husband returned from their neighbours. He went to ask for food, but came back empty handed.

80 The respondent explained earlier on that his neighbours had insulted him, hence the "also"

81 Popular food made from cassava.

Social (support):

They are not supported by anyone, but they can help the rich to get money or food as compensation.

Health:

They are not usually able to go to a clinic, but if they do, then they can only go to Osole.⁸⁰ The poor use natural herbs and heat up leaves. They smell these or use them as an ointment. They go to traditional healers. They can borrow money to buy medicine and have it injected by people around them.

Other:

They have one cloth, but it is old and torn. They buy used clothes from the market and wear them for two or three years. If they have a traditional cloth (Gabi), it is made of cotton and the quality is poor. It is also less white.

Source: Altaf (2016c), definition provided by PADev workshop participants, 2013

Material dimension of wellbeing

This section examines the material dimension of wellbeing. The section pays attention to aspects of material e.g. access to food, housing, access to land, education and the occupations of extreme poor people in Jeldu. It is evident that, in particular, land and food are determining aspects of material extreme poverty in the area.

Occupation, employment and income

Farming is the main source of income for the vast majority of people (regardless of their wealth class) in Jeldu. There are few alternatives to farming when it comes to earning a living. This is a major constraint for extreme poor people who mostly do not own land and have difficulties accessing land:

I am trying to find some farmland or crop sharing land but there is almost nothing available. I found a small mountainous piece of land. (male, 35 years)

Finding land to farm on or finding work farming for other people in return for some food is also affected by the season. During the dry season, it is even harder to find work. There is little scope for alternative jobs, and besides farming work is limited to being a servant (taking care of cattle, farming

for rich people, household chores). Some extreme poor men may work as skin removers (of dead animals) and extreme poor women may make small products from grass (e.g. bowls, baskets), cotton and charcoal. It has become increasingly challenging to earn anything from making charcoal due to deforestation:

I continued making charcoal for 10 years, but every year it became more difficult to find wood and each year became more difficult for us to survive.
(female, 40 years)

Employment opportunities for extreme poor people in Jeldu are therefore limited. No land or no access to land, commonplace for extreme poor people in Jeldu, is a severe threat to people's ability to survive. Those who are unable to work rely solely on begging.

It is difficult for participants to provide an estimate of their income, often because they are paid in kind for their services (e.g. working on people's farmlands), rather than receiving money. Moreover, seasonality and possible 'earnings' from begging contribute to fluctuations in income, making it hard to give an estimate. On average, however, the amount earned by extreme poor people in Taatessa is less than a dollar a day.

Food

Generally, participants reported having one meal per day that consists of either *injera* made of barley, sometimes with *shiro* or *wat* (of tomatoes) or roasted crops (e.g. potatoes). Nevertheless, this one meal is neither self-evident, nor guaranteed. There have been several occasions in the lives of the participants when they were unable to feed themselves and their children even once a day:

I had no more milk in my breast and I didn't have enough milk for the baby. I had to carry the baby the whole day and she cried of hunger. During the night she would sleep, because she was tired of crying and screaming all day. (female, 35 years)

It can be incredibly painful for parents when they are not able to provide food for their children:

In the evening when my kids ask for more food (because they are hungry) and I can't give it, I feel like killing myself. (female, 30 years)

Apart from mental stress, the lack of food also contributes to physical constraints:

Not having enough makes me ill often and weak. (male, 50 years)

Being ill and weak further complicates the difficulty of finding farmland, as it is strenuous to walk long distances in search of land. Those able to work at least have a chance of finding food in return for work. Those who are unable to provide any services are fully dependent on their community's willingness and ability to provide them with some food.

Housing, land and livestock

The houses of extreme poor people are fragile constructions. Roofs are constructed with grass and walls are made of maize stems (see photo 6.3). Participants experience little privacy, as in most cases it is possible to peek through the walls and look inside their house. The impact of fragile and unstable housing of extreme poor people extends beyond the invasion of privacy, however; there are also consequences in terms of health and safety:

In the night it is so cold, I can't sleep [...] The house is leaking and when it is raining, I become cold and wet. (female, 70 years)

[...] the house is falling apart, especially when it rains, it is difficult. (female, 55 years)

[...] wild animals may come and attack us. (female, 60 years)

As mentioned before, the majority of extreme poor people do not own land and have difficulty accessing land to farm. This heavily constrains their ability to earn a living and acquire food. Moreover, not owning livestock (especially oxen) complicates the search for farmland. Villagers are reluctant to lend their farmland to people without draught animal power (oxen).

To farm on other people's land I needed an ox, but I had none. (male, 40 years)



Photo 6.3
House of an extreme poor person



Photo 6.4
Rocky farmland

Often when extreme poor people do find farmland, it is land that is difficult to farm. It is full of rocks (see photo 6.4) or it is on a steep slope.

Education

Only one of the participants attended primary school, but dropped out after a few years. Those who have children try to send them to primary school, however future prospects in terms of education are not promising. The majority of children are sent to other people's homes to work as servants. The children that are not sent away, are only able to finish primary school in Taatessa and are not able to continue their education. One of the reasons for this is that there are no secondary schools near to Taatessa. Moreover, costs of secondary education (e.g. fees, books) are much higher than those for primary education.

They (children) are learning now, but I can't send them to Osole or elsewhere to learn. I can't pay for their uniforms and the rent of a room. It is impossible for them to finish their education. They have to farm at other people's houses to survive. (female, 40 years)

Water, sanitation and health

The availability of potable water is a major problem in Taatessa. This is not exclusively a problem of extreme poor people, but, as mentioned before, affects everyone.

There are hardly any sanitary facilities in Taatessa; again, this is not confined to extreme poor people. The majority of people in Taatessa relieve themselves in the open. There are no health facilities in Taatessa. Therefore, when people become ill, they have to visit health clinics outside Taatessa, for example in Osole (the nearest by town). Since the vast majority of participants cannot afford to travel to these clinics and pay the fees, they see traditional healers when they are ill. People can only visit the health clinic in Osole in cases of severe illness and when assisted by family or community. These cases are, however, exceptional.

Participants are mostly left to their own devices and unable to afford treatment:

My wife became ill, especially during her pregnancies. She became weaker and weaker. She could hardly walk, she was just sleeping the whole day. I wasn't able to take her to a clinic or buy food for her. (male, 40 years)

Being unable to afford treatment can have severe consequences, even leading to death:

In the meanwhile my daughter became ill. She was ill for about one month. She had diarrhoea and her body was swollen. She died. (female, 37 years)

Technology

None of the participants own any technology, such as mobile phones or a radio.

Sub-conclusion

The lack of access to farm land is the most important material indicator in defining extreme poverty in Taatessa. Farming is the primary source of making a living. The few alternatives besides farming are not sufficient to provide extreme poor people with enough income to sustain themselves. This has a severe impact on other aspects of their material wellbeing, such as housing, health, education of children and food. The lack of food and therefore lack of energy complicates participants' search for farmland. It affects their ability to walk long distances and find land to work on. The participants become trapped in a vicious circle.

Relational dimension of wellbeing

This section explores the relational dimension of wellbeing and focuses on the interaction of extreme poor people with their family and community. In particular, this section highlights the complex relationship of many of the extreme poor people with their families and their community. The nature of interaction between extreme poor people with both poverty reduction interventions and government agencies will be discussed in the next section.

Family

A third of the participants spent their childhood separated from their family. They worked as servants for other people as their parents were unable to provide for them. Female participants mostly did household chores, while male participants farmed and looked after cattle. The vast majority were sent away by their parents. In a few cases, the participant left the house due to maltreatment by a step-parent. Working for at other people's houses affected the participants on many levels. They reported experiencing hunger and fatigue at these times. Some were confronted with abusive behaviour and referred to it as a traumatic experience. This will be further elaborated upon in the section on the cognitive dimension of wellbeing. Moreover, the participants felt homesick, abandoned and were sometimes angry at their parents for sending them away from home.

Our parents could not take care of us and I was sent to someone else's house to work there [...] I felt very sad to leave the house [...] I didn't like it, I had to get up really early in the morning and fetch water in the cold, gather firewood in the sun, bake Injera and make alcohol. I also had to roast maize, grind it and make bread. It was very difficult. I had to work day and night without rest. (female, 36 years)

Particularly the men, changed 'bosses' many times:

I had to work day and night; in the sun, the rain, whether it was hot or cold. I looked after the animals and I was farming. I was not happy at all. I switched houses many times. Within 10 years, I worked in 4 different houses. With some I had quarrels and sometimes I just searched for a better place to improve my situation. (male, 40 years)

Staying away from home for many years and holding resentment, especially towards parents, contributes substantially to a complicated and often troubled family relationship. These troubled relationships are often beyond mending. This means that the participants cannot rely on their family for any type of support.

Another interesting issue that emerged during the life histories is the gender aspect when it comes to receiving aid from family. It appears that the female participants are often supported in some way by their family, especially by their mothers. This can be in the form of food, providing a cup of coffee in the evening, assisting in raising a child and in one case even being given some land to build a house on:

[...] my mother gave me some land from her share of the land to build a house on [...] My mother sometimes gives me something (food) to roast for my children, or salt, or something else if she can. (female, 42 years)

This is in stark contrast to the (young) male participants, who are mostly refused aid by their family and sometimes ill-treated. Especially the scarcity of land creates conflicts between young male participants and their family. Some participants indicated that their parents refused to give them a share of farm land:

When I asked my father for some land of my own to farm, he refused. Even when I asked elders to mediate, my step mom did not agree. (male, 38 years)

Others explained that while they were allowed to farm on their parents' land, they were denied their share of the harvest:

I also asked my father for a piece of land like my friends and I got a small piece, but when the crops were ready to be sold, my father didn't allow me to buy animals. He kept the crops for himself. This continued for about 5 years. Then I became angry with my father and decided to move out of the area. (male, 30 years)

The participants, both those who spend their childhood away from family and those who were together with their family, face difficulties in raising their own children. Many of them sent one or more of their children to other people's houses to work there:

Last year I sent 2 of my boys to Tullu to work at people's houses. I would have been happy to stay together with my children, but I had no choice. Sometimes I cry because if I was not so poor and if my husband was still here, I could be with my children. (female, 37 years)

Lastly, a small number of participants mentioned that they themselves or their partner were part of an *Iddir*.⁸² However, these are exceptional cases and the impact of their participation is still unclear, as they have only joined recently. Generally, extreme poor people in Taatessa do not participate in *Iddirs*.

Community

Like the relationship with their family, the relationship of the participants with their community is a complicated one. On the one hand, participants recalled several instances of receiving aid from community members in the form of e.g. food, money, medical treatment and clothes for children. On the other hand, the same participants also mentioned being ill-treated by the community. Consequently, the participants who are aided by the community have mixed feelings about receiving assistance. Participants report finding it particularly painful when community members point out that they have assisted them and implicitly or explicitly express that the participants therefore owe them:

If my neighbour's children and my children quarrel, they (neighbours) will say we helped you with milk and crops when your wife was pregnant, so why do your children behave like this. When I hear this, I want to disappear from this village. (male, 36 years)

While participants are grateful for the assistance they receive from community members, they are very aware that this assistance creates an unequal relationship – a relationship in which they are considered inferior to the community members who assisted them. Moreover, participants reported being treated differently from other (richer) community members:

⁸² An *Iddir* is an informal arrangement whereby people save money and use it predominantly as a funeral insurance (in Taatessa).

I managed that period because people brought me food and I am alive because of the help of the people...I am greeted differently from the rich, sometimes I feel angry about that. (female, 35 years old)

While this participant was helped through an emergency, she also expressed that, because she belongs to the 'category' of extreme poor in her community, she is not considered equal to others. For many participants who had similar experiences, this has quite an impact on their mental state. This will be further explained next .

Some participants explained that aid is given because community members believe they are obliged to help or are doing 'the right thing' by assisting:

Everyone helped us by giving sugar and other things...They said because I am not normal (physically handicapped) it is difficult for me to have one child, but God gave me two and we are all alive, so they should help me. (female, 33 years)

Those less fortunate when it comes to receiving aid explained that aid or attention is only provided when community members believe that an extreme poor person will be able to pay back the favour some day:

Even my neighbours stopped visiting me because I am poor. I can't do anything for them, so why should they visit me. (female, 70 years)

Sub-conclusion

Family relationships among extreme poor participants are complex. A third of the participants were separated from and sent away by family during childhood. They worked as servants at people's homes. Being away from home affected participants negatively in several ways. They were not able to follow any education or build a relationship of trust with their family; indeed, it contributed to drifting apart from their family. Moreover, participants harbour feelings of sadness, anger and abandonment. They feel they have no one to rely on and cannot turn to family in times of need. This is especially the case for male participants, including those who spent their childhood with their family. It appears that family is less willing to assist extreme poor men than women when they require aid. This is probably due to the type of aid that is requested or needed. While women participants are assisted with food or clothing for example, men tend to request (their share of) farmland

from their parents. The latter is scarce in Taatessa, making parents more reluctant to share it with their son. This reluctance and often complete refusal to share any land makes young extreme poor men frustrated and desperate. The majority therefore (temporarily) migrated in an attempt to find a better life elsewhere.

It is striking that the majority of extreme poor participants who have children send one or more of them away to work for other people as they are not able to take care of them. They expressed the pain of sending their children away and made clear that they are aware that this affects their children's future, as they too will receive no education. Only time will tell what the effects of this will be on their relationship with their children once they return.

Like their relationship with family, the relationship with the community is also complicated. The majority of participants is aided by their community members. This assistance, however, leaves them with mixed feelings. They feel gratitude towards those who have assisted them and recognise the importance of the aid they receive; indeed, in some cases it is a question of survival. At the same time, it leaves them with an unpleasant feeling. They realise that receiving aid creates an unequal relationship, one of dependency and of being indebted to those providing aid. This inequality or feeling inferior to other 'wealth categories' is experienced in the interactions with community members, especially those who have come to their aid. This inequality, both in perception, but also in behaviour towards extreme poor people was also confirmed by the community members during the PADev workshops). This finding is in contrast with Devereux's (2003) research in Wollo, Ethiopia. According to him, extreme poor people were not perceived as separate or different from other 'wealth categories' (Ibid., p. 23). It shows that definitions, perceptions and inclusion of extreme poor people can vary greatly according to context. This advocates for drawing context specific understandings of extreme poor people.

Cognitive dimension of wellbeing

In the previous section, cognitive elements of wellbeing were briefly touched upon. These issues will be further elaborated in this section. For example, the impact of being sent away from home, feeling abandoned by family and feeling pain of having to place their own children in the same position and sending them away from home to work. Moreover, the mental impact,

specifically for their self-image, of not being considered equal to others in their community will be discussed.

Depression, hopelessness and feeling tired of life

The days are very long for me and so are the nights. God kept me alive, so I can't kill myself but life is very difficult. I just want to have a house, not to live in but to take my dead body from and burry it so that I can die respectfully.
(female, 60 years)

Participants frequently mentioned the wish to die and end the suffering of extreme poverty during the recording of life histories. In particular, elderly participants expressed a desire to leave this world in order to find peace. They no longer cherished any hope that the future would bring an improvement to their situation and that they would ever climb out of poverty. This lack of hope is also reported by young(er). However, they often added that while they no longer believe they will be able to improve their own situation, they hope that assistance from their children or others may alleviate their situation in future:

Now I don't believe I can become anything anymore, but hopefully one day my children can help me. (female, 33 years)

This means that they have not completely lost hope for a better future. Part of why they may feel unable to change anything themselves and have become rather passive may be attributed to how they perceive themselves. This will be discussed next.

Self-image

Naturally we are the same, but You (God) made us different, even though we all have eyes, arms etcetera. We look the same but You made me struggle more than others and I am still living in a house that my neighbours would use for their donkeys, but I am living in it. So please give me a good house too, so I can be equal. (male, 50 years)

The vast majority of participants perceive themselves in a negative way as a result of their poverty, i.e. they do not consider themselves equal to others in their community, they describe themselves as "weak" and of no importance to

others. It seems that the participants feel and act as though they are inferior to their community members and their lives are of less value. One participant stated that there is a proverb saying that even mothers do not like the poor and therefore no one will be inclined to show affection or respect to extreme poor people. Negative encounters and interactions with community members play a large role in creating and sustaining this negative self-perception:

Because I am poor they (community) hate me. They don't respect poor people like me. That is why even after my son's death, Christian people whom I prayed with for 6 years didn't come to my house and didn't pray to strengthen me. (female, 60 years)

In some cases participants are completely ignored:

The community people don't look at me. They don't even want to greet me, so I don't think they will even mention me. They just pass by. (female, 70 years)

And denied the right to voice their opinions or concerns:

I am not respected by the society. They don't want to listen or hear what I say. When I seek justice no one listens. (female, 55 years)

It is striking that this feeling of not being respected and heard or seen impacts participants to the extent that some of them could not view themselves as human beings and explicitly stated that:

I can't say I am a human being, because I am old, poor and weak. (female, 55 years) Moreover, this sense of not feeling human is also reflected in the comparisons that some participants made of themselves with animals (e.g. wild animals, donkeys, dogs):

I have made my back the back of a donkey and my stomach the one of a dog. (male, 30 years)

Self-exclusion

Not feeling human, having a negative self-perception and previous unpleasant interactions with community members affect the willingness/ability of participants to interact and mingle with their community members.

They tend to avoid contact because they believe that they are not ‘good’ enough:

I don’t want to involve with my peers, they are better than me. (male, 36 years)

And in extreme cases, they do not feel ‘human enough’:

I can’t say I am a human⁸³ who can interact with other humans. (female, 60 years)

They also fear being treated badly by the community or believe that they are hated by community members, even though not all participants have actually experienced this. On the whole, they would rather stay isolated to avoid any insults or maltreatment.

Being sent away from home and sending away a child

As stated earlier, a third of the participants spent their childhood away from home and their family. This period in the lives of the participants was often experienced as traumatic and had severe impact on their physical and their mental wellbeing. Many participants attempted to run away from being a servant. They experienced the job as very harsh, in some cases to the extent that they contemplated suicide:

I was still very little and it was hard for me to get up so early. Whenever I could not wake up on time, the owners used to beat me to wake me up. Once during the rainy season, I was sleeping on a small bed and they tied me up and put me in the rain. I woke up in the rain and I couldn’t get up. I shouted: “Please free me.” They said it was my punishment for not waking up on time and this should be a lesson to me [...] I was so angry and sad that I wanted to jump in the river, but I was also afraid to jump. (male, 36 years)

It is especially difficult for those who spent their childhood away from home and are now struggling to raise their own children, to put their children in the same position and send them to other people’s houses to work. Both those

⁸³ This participant does not feel human, but compared herself to a wild animal because she lives in a poorly constructed hut. To her it feels as if she lives out in the open like a wild animal, hence the comparison.

who were sent away themselves and those who remained with their family during their childhood, experience great pain at sending their children away. However, they see no other option and explain that it is better to be away from home than to starve to death. While this thought gives some comfort, it does not completely take away feelings of guilt and powerlessness.

Forced marriage

Forced marriage is common practice in Taatessa. It is culturally acceptable for men to force a girl or woman he likes into marrying him or to live with him. The majority of female participants have experienced marriage against their will and sometimes even without (prior) family consent:

Because I was a pretty woman, my husband took me with him by force without asking permission from anyone. I was not happy at all. (female, 60 years)

In other cases, family may give their consent, but against the will of their daughter:

Then one day a boy sent a letter to my parents asking for my hand. I knew that boy and I didn't like him, because he was already a drunk. My parents forced me to marry him. They said if I like him and if he's good to me, I should stay with him, if not I could come back home. I really didn't like him, I shouted and cried not to get married, but my parents didn't listen to me. I eventually got married. After marriage, I still didn't like him. I even didn't like sleeping or living with him, but I became pregnant [...] I was really angry at my family, because of them I was in this situation. I went to my family many times, but every time my husband would follow me and my parents would agree to send me back with him. (female, 42 years)

One female participant explained that according to a cultural tradition called *irra dhaaba*, the wedding can be completed without any ceremony. Relatives of the groom arrive, unannounced, to take the bride away. It is culturally forbidden for the family to refuse such a request. The 'wedding' itself is thus not a joyous event for many female participants, however marriage continues to be a loveless confinement. For many female participants, marriage is associated with negative emotions such as sadness, fear, anger and frustration.

They reported not enjoying living and sleeping with their partners.

Sub-conclusion

The majority of the participants expressed being confronted with many negative emotions during their lives, primarily as a result of being extreme poor. Life is a struggle and for at least a third of the participants it has been this way since their childhood (e.g. working as servants). This continuous struggle makes especially elderly participants tired of life. They no longer have the will and energy to try and improve their situation, or any faith that it can be improved. This passiveness and fatalism is also evident among younger participants. They have little faith in their own capabilities to change their situation. Many of the younger participants however still believe a better future is possible if their children or other people assist them. The lack of confidence demonstrated by participants in their own abilities is reflected in the way they perceive themselves. Participants describe themselves as weak and inferior to their community members. Some even consider themselves inhuman and compare themselves and their lives to those of animals. This belief of being less than others and being convinced that others perceive extreme poor people negatively, affects the interactions with community members. Participants prefer to stay on their own and avoid interactions with their community members.

Causes of extreme poverty in Taatessa

This section discusses the multiple causes of extreme poverty in Taatessa and attempts to demonstrate why people fall into extreme poverty, since the vast majority of the participants were not born into (extreme) poor families. However, all participants are now chronically extreme poor. This section therefore also pays attention to the factors keeping participants extreme poor. Both micro level (individual and household level) and macro level causes of extreme poverty in Taatessa are discussed.

Micro/individual household causes

The majority of especially male participants fell into extreme poverty during their childhood due to the loss of one or both parents. People often fall into extreme poverty when the father dies or abandons the family. Since the father

owns the family's farmland, it becomes difficult for the family to survive, either because he keeps the land for himself or, when he dies, his family may claim the land.

Once people (born into poverty and those who fell into poverty during childhood) become extreme poor, it is hard for them to climb out of poverty as they start their lives with a serious disadvantage. They have received no schooling, have great difficulty accessing land to farm and have limited access to other basic needs such as healthcare.

For (young) men in Taatessa there seems to be only one way to escape poverty and that is to literally escape. The majority of young extreme poor men have left Taatessa in order to find work elsewhere, usually to Gambella or Sidamo to dig gold. While they leave the area with high hopes and in good faith, they return disillusioned, (if they return at all, some men die in the gold mines) often ill and with a broken spirit because they did not succeed:

I left to Gambella [...] My brother also went and we were digging gold there. But my brother became ill [...] I went out to get medicines for him, when I came back he was already dead [...] I was very sad, because he was my younger brother. I wished to be dead instead of him [...] I became mad, I wanted to die. I didn't want to return, but people told me to go and tell the news. And so I did. My mother was very sad and cried for a long time. I also became very depressed to see her like that and of course because of my brother's death. I shouted a lot asking God why many people returned with a lot of money and I returned like this. (male, 30 years)

While the men tried to change their situation by migrating, the women participants were completely dependent on their partner. When a partner dies, becomes ill, abandons a woman or is a drunkard, women can no longer sustain themselves and their children. They remain extreme poor or fall into extreme poverty as a result:

[...] my husband stopped farming and started drinking again. He used to drink before, but after we had more children, his job became drinking and he used to come and be drunk and disturb the whole family. Sometimes I had to close the door and leave him outside, because he used to beat me with sticks, stones or even an axe, whatever he could find. (female, 60 years)

Although one main cause can be identified that pushes people into poverty in Taatessa (for men lack of farm land and for women lack of support of a

partner), people remain extreme poor as a result of an accumulation of other factors, such as illnesses and/or having many children.

My wife became ill especially during her pregnancies. She became weaker and weaker. She could hardly walk, she was just sleeping the whole day. I wasn't able to take her to a clinic or buy food for her. She became more ill during her last pregnancies and especially during the very last one, the ninth. It was a very harsh period for her. At that time I thought of hanging myself, because I wasn't able to take care of her and the children. (male, 40 years)

Macro/structural causes

Taatessa is a geographically disadvantaged area due to its isolated location. People and especially extreme poor people are geographically trapped. They have no access to education (especially secondary education) and medical treatment, as these facilities require travelling outside of Taatessa. They cannot afford to pay the travel costs and then, on top of that, fees for medical treatment. Education beyond primary school means staying away from home and this requires financial means, which, again, extreme poor people cannot afford and thus they remain 'trapped' in Taatessa. Due to the lack of land and limited opportunities for employment beyond farming, it becomes incredibly difficult for extreme poor people to work their way out of poverty.

Sub-conclusion

The majority of the participants became extreme poor during their childhood due to the loss of one or both parents, or, in the case of women, as a result of partnering with a 'poor' partner, both in terms of wealth and/or behaviour. Once people become extreme poor, it is almost impossible to climb out of poverty again because of lack of economic opportunity in the area. Taatessa offers little opportunity in terms of employment besides farming and since extreme poor people experience difficulties in accessing land, they remain trapped in their situation. Furthermore, once people have fallen into extreme poverty, they have less resilience to cope with other shocks (e.g. illnesses) that come their way and thus they become even more vulnerable.

6.4 Poverty reduction interventions

This section examines the poverty reduction interventions in Taatessa and their effectiveness in targeting and reaching extreme poor people. Furthermore, processes of inclusion and exclusion by development intervention agencies in the Taatessa are explored, in particular those of the studied NGO. Finally, the section investigates the relational dimension of wellbeing, specifically the interaction between extreme poor people and institutions (government and NGO).

Development agencies and interventions in Taatessa

There have been remarkably few interventions implemented in Taatessa in the past 30 years and only one NGO has been active in the area, namely the NGO included in this research. Besides this NGO, the government is the only other actor that has intervened in Taatessa. In total, five different interventions were mentioned by the PADev workshop participants, i.e. several churches (built by or in collaboration with the community), a primary school, a well, a health clinic and a savings group intervention. One other intervention was mentioned outside of Taatessa, a road from Gojo to Osole constructed by the government in collaboration with an NGO. The community members value the church, primary school and savings groups interventions highly. According to the community, the primary school has made education for children more accessible, as they no longer have to walk far and can therefore start schooling at an earlier age. Moreover, the primary school is also used for adult education purposes (e.g. literacy programmes and awareness on HIV and forced marriage). The church helped to “*free people from evil spirits*” and offers a place for people to gather. And the saving groups made it possible for people to borrow money, albeit at high interest rates. Moreover, during the saving groups meetings, trainings on beekeeping and chicken rearing are given. Lastly, the road from Osole to Gojo was mentioned as it made transportation to health facilities easier than before. There is, therefore, great appreciation for the relatively few interventions that have been implemented in the area. Two interventions were highly criticised, however, as these interventions were supposed to address the most important needs of people in Taatessa, i.e. clean water and healthcare. The well stopped functioning two years after its construction and the health clinic never became operational, only the building was constructed.

Targeting strategies (concepts, methods and implementation) of the studied NGO

Conceptualisation of extreme poor people

The NGO had difficulty providing a definition of extreme poor people and the distinction between an extreme poor and poor person. According to the NGO, this differs per community and even from household to household. However, they try to incorporate multiple (but mainly material) dimensions of poverty when trying to define poor people such as health, farm land, water, livestock and education. They also include mental issues, which they define in terms of equality of men and women and family planning for example.

Methods and implementation of poverty reduction interventions

The NGO does not specifically target extreme poor people. Their education intervention is open to anyone willing to join and there are no specific targeting methods in place to include extreme poor people. The inclusion criteria and targeting methods for the saving groups intervention are that people should have similar livelihoods and be of similar socio-economic backgrounds, otherwise, according to the NGO it becomes difficult for the group to save. The NGO initially works with people who are interested in joining these groups, however they will not refuse anyone. Even if someone does not match the socio-economic background of the other participants, they are still included. The saving amount is then lowered and adjusted to an amount that the poorest person can afford. When (extreme) poor people cannot save despite the lowering of the amount, they are tempted to leave the group. According to the NGO, their group facilitators will try and persuade these people to stay and continue to try and save. Moreover, they use other members of the saving group to convince the person.

According to the NGO, their M&E process consists of comparing the poverty level of extreme poor people with that of other community members. This is measured through primary education enrolment of the children of extreme poor people and through assessment of the community and parent-teacher associations. Since the community knows best who is extreme poor, they are capable of assessing whether an extreme poor person has made progress (in

terms of health, land, education, etc.) through the interventions offered by the NGO.

Reaching the extreme poor people: people's perceptions

While the NGO is under the impression that they reach extreme poor people through their interventions, the perception of the community members and the extreme poor participants is quite the opposite. According to the community, extreme poor people are generally not included in the few interventions implemented in Taatessa. Especially the saving groups are not suitable for extreme poor people. Some of them may enter a group, but then leave quickly. They are unable to save 2 Birr per week and there are no special saving groups for them. Moreover, they do not have time (they work all day) or good clothes to attend the meetings and they are generally not respected. Community members doubt whether extreme poor people benefit from the primary school, because they are unaware whether the children of extreme poor people are sent to school. Those who are Protestant may benefit from the (Protestant) church in Taatessa; however, according to the community, this is only when they are in great need.

The majority of extreme poor participants reported not benefiting from the interventions in Taatessa. In particular, the saving groups are not adapted to their needs. They cannot pay the weekly amount required to be part of the groups. Moreover, some participants were unaware of the existence of such groups. The few exceptions that did enter the saving groups explained that they had to withdraw or wish to withdraw, because they could/can no longer pay the required amount. One participant explained that she never wanted to join a saving group and, in fact, did not join voluntarily. She felt socially pressured and believed joining a group might provide her with a chance to be a part of the community:

My name was registered by others, I didn't ask for it. It was not with my consent, but I joined not to be excluded by others. If I had a choice, I would probably leave. There is indirect pressure to stay. I have been saving for 3 years, so if I leave I lose this money. I asked to leave, but they said I would lose my money. (female, 37 years)

This quote illustrates inclusion against someone's will. The social pressure apparently left this participant no room to opt out. As such, the freedom to opt out was jeopardized.

As for the primary school, the majority of the children of the participants do not attend school. A handful of participants stated that the church in Taatessa assisted them when they were facing difficulties. However, other participants explained that only those that join the church and accept the Protestant faith are helped. Local church leaders not only decide who receives aid from the church, but also interfere in other interventions (primary school and saving groups), determining the selection of beneficiaries. Both community members and extreme poor participants reported that elite capture and favouritism are practiced by the local (church) leaders. The community expressed that these practices exist because the NGO does not monitor interventions as regularly as needed. Community members see international donors more often (a few times a year) than the local staff.

While interventions in Taatessa have little or no significance in the lives of extreme poor people, the annual distribution of food by the government (during the summer period) is appreciated. The majority of the participants receives between 5-20kg of food (e.g. maize, wheat, oil) every year. Nonetheless, the participants stated that the distribution of food does not always run smoothly. Some reported that bribe money is required to be listed as a beneficiary:

Sometimes I get maize or barley, but not always because I can't buy them (the committee who puts together the list of beneficiaries) drinks. Therefore sometimes my name is erased from the list and the committee uses the oil and maize for themselves. (male, 30 years)

Other participants explained that aid is not distributed fairly, *Kebele* (ward) officers and rich people give a small amount to extreme poor people and keep most of the food themselves.

Sub-Conclusion

The few interventions implemented and still operational in Taatessa do not appear to reach extreme poor people. The studied NGO is the only NGO active in Taatessa and appears to lack an effective targeting strategy to include extreme poor people. The NGO has no clear conceptualisation of extreme

poor people in Taatessa and no specific targeting methods in place in order to reach extreme poor people. Furthermore, according to the community, elite capture and favouritism are practiced by local church leaders who select beneficiaries. Since there is no intensive monitoring by the NGO, this practice of favouritism and elite capture continues. For extreme poor people, this means that they only receive aid or have access to aid if they belong to this particular (Protestant) church. While government (food) aid reaches extreme poor people, here, too, elite capture was mentioned by the extreme poor participants. They explained that food is not always distributed on the basis of who is most needy. Moreover, sometimes some form of bribery is required in order to receive aid. Thus, extreme poor people in Taatessa are hardly aided by development agencies and government institutions in terms of improving their overall wellbeing. At the same time, community members in Taatessa reported that extreme poor people avoid social gatherings and are reluctant to be part of a group, because they are disrespected and do not own 'good' clothing. As explained earlier, extreme poor people also tend to self-exclude and may indeed be reluctant to join interventions and avoid interaction with their community members. Nevertheless, this reluctance to join an intervention was not directly mentioned by the participants themselves.⁸⁴

6.5 Conclusions

Extreme poor people in Taatessa (e.g. abandoned and/or abused women, orphaned, abandoned or working as servants during childhood, chronically ill people, landless young men, men returning from goldmines) are defined as people severely deprived in all three dimensions of wellbeing. They are in a state of illbeing, predominantly due to the loss of one or both parents (especially the father). Female participants fell into extreme illbeing as a result of marriage (with a poor, drunk, abusive man) or when their partner fell ill, abandoned them or died.

Participants remain in a chronic state of illbeing as there are few employment opportunities besides from farming, Taatessa is an isolated area lying in a valley. Access to, for example health facilities, (secondary) education, electricity and phone service requires travelling to other areas, which the extreme poor participants cannot afford. This has repercussions on the future of the participants' children (often working as child servants), who are at risk

⁸⁴ Apart from the participant who was included in the saving groups intervention without her consent.

of remaining extreme poor. Further research on the life trajectories of these children would show whether and how they were able to climb out of their state of illbeing.

In further defining the extreme poor participants, a comparison between them and poor people in Taatessa was made. What became clear from this comparison is that poor people were better off in the relational (e.g. access to social networks) and cognitive dimension (e.g. perceived in a positive manner) of ill-/wellbeing than the extreme poor participants. This advantage on the relational and cognitive level allowed poor people to gain access to resources necessary to improve their material wellbeing.

Development interventions, rarely present in Taatessa, did not contribute towards improving the wellbeing of the extreme poor participants. The participants reported that the aid given was not as optimal as it could have been, due to the fact that bribery was sometimes required in order to receive assistance. Furthermore, elite capture was reported. The NGO working in the area hardly managed to include extreme poor people due to the absence of an effective targeting strategy. They did not specifically target extreme poor people, which is necessary as extreme poor people are reluctant to join development interventions (selfexclusion). Moreover, favouritism and elite capture by local church leaders occurred. Since extreme poor people were generally not part of the network of these leaders, they were not included in or considered for interventions. Additionally, in one case of an extreme poor participant being included in an intervention, it turned out to be an involuntary inclusion. This jeopardised the freedom to opt out of an development intervention. This means that extreme poor people can be forced by organizational power/social pressure to participate in an intervention against their free will.



7

Case study 4: Ethiopia Addis Ababa, island of illbeing

7.1 Introduction

Urban poverty manifests itself in a different social, economic, political and natural environment than rural poverty. This changes the dynamics of in- and exclusion of extreme poor people. The present chapter⁸⁵ therefore explores development interventions aiming to include extreme poor people and their effectiveness at including them in an urban context, based on the case study conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

This chapter is organised as follows: the chapter first sketches the context of this case study, then examines the definitions of extreme poor people and poor people and explores the different categories of extreme poor people in Addis Ababa. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the multiple dimensions of wellbeing with regards to extreme poor people and investigates the causes of extreme poverty. The chapter scrutinises the in- and exclusion of poverty reduction interventions concerning extreme poor people. The chapter ends with conclusions.

7.2 Sketching the context

This section provides contextual information about the research location⁸⁶ on the basis of literature and the PADev workshops, in particular from the ‘events’ and ‘changes’ exercises and (formal and informal) interviews.

85 The author published an earlier version of this work as a working paper.
<https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/37717/ASCworkingpaper129.pdf?sequence=1>

86 Relevant information on poverty in Ethiopia in general is included in Chapter 6 and will therefore not be repeated in this chapter.

The second case study in Ethiopia was conducted in Kolfe Keraniyo, one of Addis Ababa's ten sub cities (see Map 7.1). According to the 2007 population census, Addis Ababa has 2,739,551 inhabitants (Central Statistical Agency, 2010). However, this number does not include unregistered residents. If this group is added, then the population of Addis Ababa is estimated at approximately five million inhabitants. The city's central geographic location and political and socio-economic position make it attractive for people seeking employment (UNHabitat, 2008, p. 7). People from all over Ethiopia come to Addis Ababa to look for work, making it a melting pot of the many (over 80) different ethnicities in Ethiopia (UN-Habitat, 2008). However, not every migrant is successful at finding work; in fact, the official unemployment rate is 31% (UN-Habitat, 2008). Moreover, Franssen & Van Dijk (2008, p. 7) state that 69% of all employment in Addis Ababa is considered informal employment, 87% of which is undertaken by women (UN-Habitat, 2008). Furthermore, the city is characterised by poor infrastructure, sanitation, housing conditions and slums (Ibid.). Housing is especially problematic, both in terms of quantity and quality. There is a considerable shortage of formal housing and no less than 70-80% of settlements in Addis Ababa are informal (Ibid.). The lack of formal housing (and access to legal land) affects all levels of society, including richer wealth categories (Ibid.). As a result, people from richer wealth categories also build houses without a permit (Ibid.). In terms of quality, half of the *kebele* houses are in need of replacement and informal houses are usually insecure constructions.

These poor living conditions are especially visible in the research location, Kolfe Keraniyo and specifically in Zenebework. The latter houses an open landfill,⁸⁷ locally known as Koshe⁸⁸ ('dirty'), surrounded by slums where many of the scavengers working at the landfill live (see photo 7.1 and 7.2).

The population of Kolfe Keraniyo was counted at 428,895 in 2007, of which 216,405 are migrants (Central Statistical Agency, 2010). The largest ethnicity is that of the Amhara, followed by Guragie and Oromo (Ibid.). The vast majority of people adhere to Orthodox Christianity, followed by Islam and Protestantism (Ibid.). The living conditions of most people in the area are fragile. 76% of the houses are built with mud and wood, almost 99% of the roofs are constructed with corrugated iron sheets and ceilings are mostly made of fabric, polythene sheets or houses have no ceiling at all (Ibid.). With regards to sanitation, 39.5% of people make use of shared latrine pits, 17.4%

87 A site used to dispose waste materials.

88 A major landslide struck the area in March 2017 and caused more than 100 casualties.

own a private pit and 15% have no toilet facilities. The vast majority have access to water from a tap (Ibid.). However, as stated earlier, the population census does not take into consideration unregistered residents.

The area described by the community itself

The composition of the PADev workshops conducted in this case study was different than that of the other (rural) case studies. In the rural case studies, different wealth categories participated in the workshops, however extreme poor people did not attend. The participants in this case study belonged to the poor and extreme poor (locally defined) wealth categories.⁸⁹ The participants resided predominantly in the slum area surrounding the landfill.

The participants had difficulties recalling important events that occurred in the area over the past 30 years and the list of recollected events was therefore not very elaborate. This can be explained by the fact that many of the participants are not originally from Addis Ababa and therefore had trouble recalling events in the area as far back as 30 years. The civil war, local conflicts, diseases, a famine, a flood and some events related to the poor living circumstances (e.g. poor hygiene) in the area were mentioned and considered impactful. With regard to changes in the area, the participants reported that there are many important negative changes that severely influence(d) their lives. Firstly, inflation, especially in the form of increased rents and food prices, has affected the participants. They mentioned that as a result of this, many people in the area are forced to build 'plastic houses' around the landfill. Besides the poor condition of their housing, they lack security, meaning that they are at high risk of being evicted and having their houses destroyed by the government. Apart from housing insecurity, water scarcity and migration are mentioned as negative changes. Especially the latter appears to be a significant change in the eyes of the participants as migration of rural people into the area causes job competition. The participants mentioned that migration combined with the population growth means that there are fewer job opportunities.

⁸⁹ The research area is generally considered to be an unsafe area (e.g. violence, thieves) both by outsiders and by residents. Moreover, residents are reluctant to open up to outsiders and can even be hostile towards them. The PADev workshops therefore also functioned as an "icebreaker", a way to get introduced into the community by the participants and to create acceptance for both the research and researcher.

Things have not just changed for the worse, positive changes were mentioned as well. Some of the changes considered very significant were attributed to the work of NGOs active in the area. According to the participants, NGOs have contributed to better access to (primary) education, created awareness on HIV and are providing medication for HIV.



Photo 7.1
Landfill area Addis Ababa



Photo 7.2
Women scavengers returning from Koshe



Map 7.1
Addis Ababa, sub-city Kolfe Keranio

7.3 Multi-dimensions of ill-/wellbeing of extreme poor people in Zenebework

This section examines the multi-dimensions of ill-/wellbeing, following the conceptual model, on the basis of life histories that were conducted with extreme poor people in Zenebework. The section describes the definition of extreme poor people and the different categories thereof, and compares the definition of extreme poor people with that of the generally poor in Zenebework. The analysis is conducted through data collected from the PADev workshops, specifically from the wealth ranking exercise. Finally, the section analyses the different causes leading to deprivations in the three dimensions of wellbeing and examines the (possible) reproduction of these causes.

Defining extreme poor people in Zenebework

Contrary to the local definitions of extreme poor people that were constructed in the rural areas, the local definition of extreme poor people in Zenebework (see table 7.1) shows a strong relational component. Participants expressed that they feel a sense of belonging and solidarity. This means that they feel part of a community/group, namely that of poor and extreme poor people. Words such as “love” and “share” are used to describe the relationship that extreme poor people have with each other and they assist each other in times of need. The relationship between poor and extreme poor people is also described in a positive way. There is cooperation and mutual support where possible, especially as poor people believe that the line between being poor and extreme poor is thin and fluid. They are also at risk of crossing that line and slipping (back) into extreme poverty, thus they sympathise with extreme poor people. While poor and extreme poor people live in harmony and poor people try to assist extreme poor people and respect them, richer wealth groups ignore poor people in general and extreme poor people in particular. Richer wealth groups have no respect for poor people and even less for extreme poor people. Rich people seem to ignore extreme poor people and do not provide any assistance. Thus, with the exception of their ‘social group’, extreme poor people are rather isolated in society. On a material level, it appears that extreme poor people in Zenebework are especially defined by the lack of food and housing. Food is such a problem that extreme poor people eat waste food from the landfill. With regards to housing, extreme poor people may live on the streets or try to rent a small house together with a group of other extreme poor people and live crammed in like sardines. They

may also stay in 'plastic' houses made of polythene sheets, especially around the landfill.

Table 7.1
Definition of extreme poor people in Zenebework

<p>EXTREME POOR</p> <p>Vernacular: Mullichi, yale deha yenebite</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>Most of them are old, are street children or unhealthy people. They are beggars and servants. They work at the landfill, carry things for people, bake Injera and they make alcohol (while carrying their children on the back). Those who are ill (TB, HIV-AIDS) are in great difficulty. Their partners or other people who can move and beg will share some of their food with those who cannot. Extreme poor people have nothing, they live on the street. They are isolated and sometimes live around the church. They love each other and share what they have. They usually live in a group and eat in that group, especially the street children. They are respected even less than the poor. Maybe 1% of the community respects them, but the rich in particular do not respect them.</p> <p>Characteristics:</p> <p><i>Education:</i></p> <p>Extreme poor people want to provide their children education with an education, but they can only do so if they are assisted. To receive government aid, extreme poor people must first apply to the Kebele. The Kebele cannot include all the children and thus a lottery system is used. Those who cannot be assisted by the Kebele seek assistance from NGOs. Those who can afford to buy a uniform can send their children to a government school. Not all the children can go to school and, in fact, many do not attend school. Moreover, many extreme poor people do not have any information about the application processes of NGOs. Around 50% goes to school. The other half work at the landfill, beg with their parents or steal.</p> <p><i>Food:</i></p> <p>They eat whatever they find at the landfill, they beg for food or buy leftovers from hotels or organisations. If they get a lot, they may sell some of it to other extreme poor people.</p>
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Housing:

Some live on the streets or around the church. They sleep in the sun and in the rain. The rainy season is very harsh for them, especially during the night. Their houses are made of plastic and wood. Some live in a group of 10-15 people and rent a very small house together. They sleep on the floor next to each other.

Social (support):

Rich people do not greet poor people. Poor and extreme poor people try to cooperate with each other, because the poor think they could slip into extreme poverty too. Extreme poor people receive no support from rich people. Poor people do assist extreme poor people. Rich people only help rich people.

Health:

When extreme poor people are sick they can get free treatment at a clinic if they have a letter from the Kebele. They do not receive free medicine, because most of the time there are no medicines at the clinic. In that case, they have to buy it at the pharmacy, which they cannot afford. Therefore some of them will die from illnesses. Some extreme poor people go to churches to get holy water for use as a medicine. Some also give birth on the streets and give up their child to the church or even leave them behind at the landfill. Sometimes neighbours contribute money to get extreme poor people to the hospital. Unless someone assists them, they cannot visit a hospital.

Other:

They get their clothes and shoes from the landfill, which they use after they have washed them. Some of the homeless people are without clothes or have very old clothes. Someone was even killed by a bus. The cause of the bus did not see the man, because he had covered himself with a sack. The cause thought he was a pile of garbage. Other extreme poor people wear old clothes they get from people or from the church. They sometimes buy used clothes or beg for clothes. Sometimes the rich give them clothes. Some sew old clothes together. Generally, their clothes are old and torn.

Source: Altaf (2016d), definition provided by PADev workshop participants, 2013

Categories of extreme poor people in Zenebework

The vast majority of participants have escaped their rural homes in order to find either a cure for their illness in Addis Ababa (e.g. at ALERT hospital) or to seek better living prospects. The latter can be as a result of the death of a parent or an attempt (in the case of girls) to run away from forced early marriage. Thus, the majority of extreme poor participants in Zenebework are migrants. Within this group of migrants a further distinction and subcategorisation can be made:

- those living on the streets
- those living in plastic houses
- people affected by leprosy
- HIV positive people

Often the extreme poor participants fit multiple sub-categories. They may, for example, be living in a plastic house and be affected by leprosy.

Differences between the category of extreme poor and poor

Poor and extreme poor people live in harmony with each other. In fact, poor people believe there is not much that differentiates them from extreme poor people and vice versa. Poor people fear falling into the same position as extreme poor people and are therefore considerate towards them. It is their way of anticipating bad times and ensuring assistance in case they fall into extreme poverty.

Despite the belief of poor and extreme poor people that they are similar, there are considerable differences between them (see tables 7.1 and 7.2). These differences are especially visible on a material level and more specifically in terms of housing and food. Poor people do not face the difficulties that extreme poor people face when it comes to finding food. Poor people generally eat twice a day and some are even able to share food with extreme poor people. This is a clear contrast with extreme poor people who usually try to find food from the landfill. Moreover, poor people differ from extreme poor people in that they have jobs (e.g. labour work, taxi cause, gardener, guard, etc.), whereas extreme poor people are limited to working at the landfill and as servants or resort to begging. What is interesting is that relationally extreme poor people and poor people are very similar. Like extreme poor people, it was reported that poor people are not respected in and neglected

by wealthier social groups in the society. This may also explain why poor people and extreme poor people tend to stick together.

Table 7.2
Definition of poor people in Zenebework

<p>POOR</p> <p>Vernacular: Deha</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>They do labour work (carpenters, painters). They buy and sell things on the street, change coins for taxis, gardener, guard and work at people's houses without living there. They live day to day. They struggle. They are at the bottom of the society. They are those who do not have enough money, clothes and food. They don't think about tomorrow. When they get a decent amount to eat, they finish it; when they do not, they go without. The poor leave everything to God, He knows about tomorrow. The poor say only God knows what will happen. The poor are not respected, the rich do not even want to see them.</p> <p>Characteristics:</p> <p><i>Education:</i></p> <p>Their children go to government schools. Some can still afford the uniforms for their children, others need assistance to buy uniforms and other school supplies and books. If they pass the exam, they can still go to the university. Some poor children get into university, because they realize it is their only chance at a better life, but most don't make it.</p> <p><i>Farm/land/harvest:</i></p> <p>They have no land.</p> <p><i>Food:</i></p> <p>They eat twice a day, they take lunch from their homes to work, usually black injera with sauce and cabbage (also called poor man's food). They do not always have food in the house, sometimes there is nothing to eat. They eat when they have food and when there is no food, they do not eat at all.</p> <p><i>Housing:</i></p> <p>They do not own a house, they rent a cheap and old one or live in a house built by an NGO. Some may have a TV, others have nothing in their houses. Some poor have a small house of mud.</p>
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Social (support):

Those poor people who can help extreme poor people by, for example, giving them some of their food, they do this because they see themselves as similar to extreme poor people. Those who cannot help anyone at least live in a cooperative way, e.g. they make coffee and drink it with their neighbours.

Health:

When they are ill, they go to a government clinic, but since those clinics do not have medicines, they try to buy medicines at the pharmacy. Sometimes they get free treatment through the Kebele. They also use cultural medicines, e.g. leaves for stomach aches. They eat red pepper and garlic to heal quickly.

Other:

The poor have no savings. They buy used clothes and shoes from Congo (which are cheap). They wash their clothes with cheap soap.

Source: Altaf (2016d), definition provided by PADev workshop participants, 2013

Material dimension of wellbeing

This section looks into the material dimension of wellbeing. It explores different aspects of material wellbeing. The section pays attention to aspects such as access to food, education and occupation and income of the extreme poor in the research locations and pays specific attention to housing issues facing extreme poor people in Zenebework. Since extreme poor people were included in development interventions in Zenebework, life histories were conducted with beneficiaries of the studied NGO (half of the participants), beneficiaries of other NGOs active in the research area (a quarter of the participants) and with non-beneficiaries (a quarter of the participants). Where relevant, differences between these different categories will be highlighted and analysed both in this section and the following sections.

Occupation, employment and income

A third of the beneficiaries of the studied NGO are beggars. The other beneficiaries work as vendors (e.g. candles, offering weighing-scale service), scavengers at the landfill, embroiderers, day labourers, household servants and some both beg and work at the landfill. Almost half of the participants

that are either assisted by other NGOs or do not receive any assistance work as scavengers at the landfill. The other half clean streets, make cotton, wash clothes, make embroidery, have two jobs (e.g. embroidery and scavenging) or are jobless and rely on alms.⁹⁰ The vast majority of the participants are employed in the informal sector.

Many of the participants thus work at the landfill and while they reported that working at the landfill is extremely difficult and dehumanising, it often is their last resort to secure some means of income. Many participants reported that it takes a while to adapt to working in the landfill and it is not an easy process. It requires building certain skills, such as knowing what is considered valuable and adapting to the harsh conditions:

But the smell was very difficult, I even vomited the first time I started there. I also held my nose, but the youngsters who were working there and eating food from the garbage wanted to beat me. They became mad at me, saying we are eating food from this area and you are vomiting and acting like this. But the neighbours who took me there said, she is very poor like you, but because it is her first time, she acts like this. So the youngsters told me either to adapt to the smell or leave. (female, 45 years)

During the rainy season it is difficult to work at the landfill. The area gets muddy and hard to navigate. Scavenging is not the only job that is difficult during the rainy season, labour work and begging for example are also experienced as hard:

That's (rainy season) very difficult. I wear a plastic sheet and sit in the rain. I earn very very little in the rainy season. On holidays if it is raining very much, less people come and they also do not want to get something out of their pockets, they run quickly. So usually I earn less than 1 birr per day. My wife also doesn't go to the garbage area. We are in hunger during that time. (male, 60 years)

During the rainy season the extreme poor participants earn significantly less. On average (during the dry season), the beneficiaries of the studied NGO earn 11 birr⁹¹ per day, ranging from 4 birr to 36 birr. The majority earns around 7 to 8 birr per day. Furthermore, they receive a small cash amount of 40 birr

⁹⁰ This is not the same as begging, as these people do not actively beg, but accept what is given to them by people who know they are in need.

⁹¹ 0,58 US\$, 2013 equivalent rate.

per month (to buy small items such as soap). The average income (during the dry season) of the other participants is 10 birr⁹² per day, ranging from 5 birr to 21 birr per day. However, these are rough estimates and the income of the participants is sensitive to fluctuations, in particular as a result of illness. Whenever a participant or their partner falls ill, there is no or significantly less income. This has severe consequences for them in terms of e.g. buying food or paying the rent.

Food

Almost half of the beneficiaries of the studied NGO is able to have two meals per day, a third eats three times per day and the remaining beneficiaries eat once a day. The meals consist of *injera* with *shiro* or potatoes. However, the participants reported that there are times when they have no meal at all:

Food is the most important thing. For the time being we have a house and clothes are also managed, but food is still very difficult. Sometimes there is still no food in the house. (male, 19 years)

Moreover, the quality of food is an issue. Participants reported begging for leftover food at restaurants, but as a result of eating this food (that had gone bad) they became ill (e.g. typhoid).

Nevertheless, in terms of food, beneficiaries of the studied NGO seem to be better off than the other participants. Almost half of the latter reported eating one meal per day. Less than a third of the group manage to have two meals per day and very few participants take three meals per day. And then there are some that eat whenever they find food. The meals of these participants also consist of *injera* with *shiro*, potatoes or cabbage.

Thus, in general, both in terms of quantity and quality (variation in diet and in terms of expiry dates) a serious lack of food was reported and this leads to, for example, weakness, illness and concentration problems.

The beneficiaries of the studied NGO are different from the other participants in two ways; firstly, on average they manage to have more meals per day than the other participants. This may be explained by the fact that amongst the beneficiaries of the studied NGO there are more beggars than amongst the

⁹² 0,53 US\$, 2013 equivalent rate.

other participants. Those begging often go from restaurant to restaurant to gather food. Secondly, their children are fed at the school run by the studied NGO. This means less worries and stress for at least those of their children that are attending school.

Housing

Although securing housing is a major concern for all participants, the majority of beneficiaries of the studied NGO manage to rent a house, while the vast majority of the other participants reside in 'plastic houses'. While some participants spent a period in their lives living on the streets, none of them resided on the streets during the night anymore and they are all able to find shelter somewhere. The difficulties and sometimes traumas of having to live on the streets will be elaborated upon in section on the cognitive dimension of wellbeing.

Beneficiaries of the studied NGO on average spent 280 birr⁹³ per month on rent with a maximum of 400 birr and a minimum of 100 birr. A few participants reported living in a house subsidised by the *kebele*⁹⁴ and therefore they hardly pay any rent (30 birr per year).

Beneficiaries of the studied NGO renting their house through regular channels explained that rent prices continue to rise. The high cost of rent degrades their quality of life, as a large proportion of their means must be reserved for the rent that could otherwise be utilised for, for instance, food or medical treatment:

When the time of the payment comes, I almost faint, because I don't have the money. I become angry and mad. I go to someone to borrow money and then work the whole month to pay her back. I struggle a lot. I can't even feed my kids well because of this. This is very difficult for me. (female, 40)

Many participants reported that if their landlord decides to raise the rent, they may no longer be able to stay in their house. This would entail them becoming homeless or building a plastic house. Other participants have already been confronted with this situation and have built a plastic house:

93 Almost 15 US\$, 2013 equivalent rate

94 The smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia.

Two years ago I moved to a plastic house, because the house rent became very expensive, instead of paying 300, it became 500 or 600 birr. (female, 40 years)

Resorting to building a plastic house is, however, not an easy task. Often participants required help from others in the form of a loan or materials to build such a house:

[...] people advised us to make a plastic house near that house. They cooperated with us and gave us wood and some money to buy nails. We cleaned a small area and made the house. (female, 45 years)

While building a plastic house is difficult, that is the lesser part of the challenge. The actual challenge is living in a plastic house. According to the participants, there are many difficulties that one must face when residing in a plastic house:

It is very difficult to live in the plastic house, sometimes there are even hyenas in the night. It is cold and when it rains it is also difficult. We worry about the kebele, because they warn us every year that they will deconstruct the house. But because we have no choice, we are living in the house. (female, 40 years)

Besides the weather and wild animals posing a threat to the fragile plastic constructions, there is also a constant fear of eviction hanging over the heads of the participants. These multiple insecurities make life in a plastic house extremely difficult and insecure.



Photo 7.3
View' from an extreme poor person's home



Photo 7.4
Plastic house of an extreme poor participant

Education

Through assistance from the studied NGO and other organisations, many participants manage to educate (at least one of) their children. With this assistance they try to provide primary and secondary education. It is notable that the beneficiaries of the studied NGO are generally very hopeful when it comes to the future of their children. They believe that education will be the tool for their children to improve life:

My son is very beautiful, I usually bring him to school carrying him on my back, telling him he will be a pilot. And he also says, yes I want to be a pilot.
(female, 35 years)

Children of beneficiaries of the studied NGO rarely drop out of school. However, most of these children attend primary school or are at the start of their secondary education and therefore the longer term impact or drop-out rate during secondary education is yet unclear. Moreover, one of the participants who is enrolled in a technical training programme of the studied NGO said the following:

When I was in grade 6, my mother died [...] I decided to continue my education, but I also had to help my sister to buy and sell corn [...] So, I helped my sister after school to sell the corn till now. So I didn't have enough time to study and because I couldn't fully focus on my education, I didn't pass grade 10 [...] I decided to continue the TVET (technical and vocational educational training) programme and I started studying general metal and assimilation. (male, 19 years)

Another participant who, with assistance, managed to enter a prestigious university in Ethiopia explained that she had dropped out in the first year due to psychosocial issues. She could not develop a sense of belonging and felt out of place as her roommates were all from rich socio-economic backgrounds:

The majority of the students were rich and the students were wearing nice and fashionable clothes and that was heavy for me. I got my dorm, there were 6 students in that room and I was the only poor student. (female, 20 years)

Children of other participants (not affiliated with the studied NGO) are also in education and are enrolled in government schools. Approximately half of them receive assistance in the form of uniforms and books from other

NGOs in the area. However, it is difficult for the participants to support their children through secondary or higher education, because they cannot pay for the fees and books. As a result, there is a higher drop-out rate for secondary education. Once the children drop out, they usually start working to contribute something to the family:

I became very weak because of HIV [...] My oldest son stopped his education because of this. He was taking care of me and his little brother. He also started doing labour work, because we couldn't pay the rent anymore. He carried cement and sand for road construction. (female, 35 years)

Water, sanitation and health

The majority of the beneficiaries of the studied NGO visit or have visited ALERT hospital⁹⁵ when they are/were ill. Especially participants suffering from leprosy and HIV go to ALERT for treatment. The hospital is known for its knowledge and expertise when it comes to treating people with leprosy. The participants spoke very highly of the services provided by the hospital:

I came to Alert and got medicines. Some of my fingers and toes had already disappeared due to the disease, but I got cured finally. For 8 months I stayed in Alert and got free treatment and medicines and food. (female, 35 years)

This participant was provided with medicines as well. However, most participants explained that while they can be treated free of charge, medicines are at their own expense, which can be problematic for them.

Almost half of the other participants visit ALERT when ill. Here, too, participants complained that while treatment is free, medicines are at their own expense and they cannot always afford this. It is mostly those who suffer from leprosy or HIV who visit ALERT. Others visit government clinics and one participant mentioned visiting traditional healers⁹⁶ alongside government clinics.

95 ALERT, originally All Africa Leprosy Rehabilitation and Training Center, later it became All Africa Leprosy, Tuberculosis and Rehabilitation Training Centre. The hospital falls under the ministry of health.

96 It is likely that more participants visited traditional healers, but did not mention this, as it was not specifically asked during the life histories.

diseases such as leprosy and HIV, participants living close to and working at the landfill complained of nausea and headaches, particularly in the beginning. They reported eventually getting used to the landfill and the nausea and headaches gradually disappearing. However, these are short-term health issues and while participants did not report (and were unaware of) any long-term health problems related to living and working in the proximity of the landfill, there is some evidence to support a relationship between increased chances of health risks and living close to a landfill (e.g. respiratory diseases, birth deficits, low birth weight and some types of cancer) (Vrijheid, 2000; Mataloni et al., 2016). However, more research is required to determine the more detailed impact of working or living close to a landfill on people's health.

Contrary to the rural case studies, the participants drink tap water. They pay between 0,30 birr to 1 birr per 20 litres of water. The majority pays approximately 0,50⁹⁷ birr per 20 litres. Those who are unable to buy water beg for it.

Technology

Again contrary to the rural case studies, the participants in Addis Ababa have greater access to technology. The majority own a mobile phone or have access to one through a family member. Approximately half of the participants own a radio and a few participants own a TV, or have access to a TV through family and neighbours. The mobile phone is predominantly used to stay in touch with family members (both inside and outside of Addis Ababa), while the radio and TV function as a source of information and entertainment.

Sub-conclusion

The material illbeing of the extreme poor participants in Zenebework is marked by (housing and job) insecurity, illegality, informality, fluctuation (specifically in terms of income) and lack of citizenship and ownership, especially in terms of housing. The lack of formal and secure housing and insecurity of livelihood options found in this study resonates with the findings of UN-Habitat (2008, 2017). Furthermore, this research shows that the lives and living conditions of extreme poor participants in Zenebework

⁹⁷ 0,03 US\$, 2013 equivalent rate.

are continuously subject to a high level of slum dynamics (e.g. the fear of evictions, population influx, urban development). This high level of dynamics of slum life has also been stressed in the research by Kuffer, Persello, Pfeffer & Sliuzas (2017) as a distinguishing feature of informal settlements in an urban context.

Relational dimension of wellbeing

This section describes the relational dimension of wellbeing and analyses, on the one hand, the troublesome, and on the other hand, supportive relationships between extreme poor people (in Zenebework) and their family and (wider) community. Interactions between extreme poor people and development agencies will be discussed in the section on the interaction between extreme poor people and poverty reduction agencies.

Family

Since the vast majority of the participants migrated to Addis Ababa, their relatives often live far away and are mostly visited when necessary (e.g. funerals or illness of a family member). This means that there is generally little interaction between the participants and their family. While most thus rarely see their relatives, some participants have broken all ties with family, predominantly as a result of ill treatment by their parents during childhood. This includes maltreatment by a step-parent or being forced into early marriage:

When the baby was 2 months old, my father came to visit us. I was very angry at him because I realized that he married me in such early age and I felt as if he killed me. Till now I don't like him for marrying me so early. I know he's alive and that he's blind, people told me that, but I replied saying that even if he dies, I don't care. I am never going to visit him. (female, 43 years)

Whether it is the participant's choice or the family's choice (e.g. step-parents who do not accept their stepchild) to end a relationship, in both cases it means that there is no family to rely on in times of need.

Broken and troublesome relationships also occur within the nuclear family and in particular female participants experienced serious harm as a result of this. Several women participants expressed that they were negatively affected

on all three levels of wellbeing due to their drunkard (sometimes cheating) husband – materially as the husband spent a large amount of the household income on alcohol, and relationally and cognitively because of mentally and physically abusive behaviour. Moreover, some women participants felt trapped as they had no other place to go. This has a severe negative impact on their mental state:

I started doing embroidery to raise our child because my husband's behaviour changed more and more. Especially when I stopped working, he used his money to drink. He also told me I have to work because he can't feed me. He said I am sitting in the house the whole day and he is struggling. He doesn't understand my problem (kidney problems). He insults me and sometimes beats me and my daughter when he's drunk. He even takes a knife sometimes to threaten me. So my daughter and I sometimes stay in someone's house during the night and come back when he leaves for work. It is very difficult to live with him, but because I have nowhere to go, I have to stay. (female, 36 years)

Although assistance from family is rare, a few participants were able to rely on their families during difficult periods in their lives:

I stayed in my uncle's house during my pregnancy. He told everyone in his family to take care of me until I gave birth." (female, 26 years)

And

My father and mother came many times to visit me and gave me money to buy food and rent a house. They even brought my friends to convince me to come back, but I refused. I decided to stay here. I was afraid I would become ill (leprosy) again. (male, 60 years)

(Wider) community

The majority of the participants (of both groups) can recall a moment or multiple moments in their lives when they have been assisted by their community members. The form of assistance varies and ranges from getting a cup of coffee to receiving aid (in the form of labour power, a loan or materials) to build a (plastic) house. Food, a loan, assistance after birth or during an illness and help to build a plastic house are the most common forms of aid provided by friends, neighbours and other community members. Assistance

is usually material, but it also includes moral support. The neighbours of this participant not only provided her material assistance, but also encouraged her to take rest and regain her strength:

After giving birth my belly ached and I had surgery. My neighbours helped me very much. All the neighbours took turns to bring me food. They told me to stay in bed and become strong. They helped me for a long time. (female, 35 years)

Contrary to extreme poor people in the rural areas who tend to be isolated, the extreme poor participants in Zenebework show much more social interaction with each other. This is the result of both their physical proximity to each other and the relatively high concentration of extreme poor people compared to the rural case studies. They generally mingle with their neighbours and feel a sense of community:

We invite each other for coffee and live in harmony. (female, 25 years)

Nevertheless, this sense of belonging is limited to people that are similar to them and belong to the local wealth categories of poor and extreme poor. According to the participants, their friends and neighbours are similar to them and therefore treat them well, contrary to people from other wealth categories who isolate and alienate them:

People isolate me. When there are ceremonies I am not invited. Even if an organisation asks for me, they say, we don't know her. Those who are living in normal houses isolate me, the ones in the plastic houses are kind to me. (female, 45 years)

Many participants reported being ill-treated and disrespected by people from richer wealth categories and expressed feelings of inferiority and powerlessness as a result of this behaviour. Some participants expressed that insults and disrespectful behaviour were not only verbal, but they also encountered physical acts to denigrate them:

People mistreat me because I am living in a plastic house in this area (Koshe). They say why do you live in that dirty area? What kind of people are you? Why don't you free yourself from this area and rent a house? They consider us garbage too. Some bring dirty things and throw them in front of our house. I can't say anything. If I say anything, they may go to the kebele

and that is another problem. So I keep quiet and leave it to God. (female, 36 years)

This sense of powerlessness to act against mistreatment or a sense of being unable to defend themselves is also common among the participants. Especially when they are dealing with rich people, they find it difficult if not impossible to speak up against or respond to insults:

There are many people who treat me very badly, they say whatever they want to say. They say, you are poor, you have nothing, people who don't even know me. But I never argue with the rich. Arguing with the rich is very difficult. Accept what they say and keep quiet. (female, 40 years)

Participants dealing with or having dealt with this type of verbal violence avoid social interaction with other wealth groups apart from the poor and extreme poor wealth category. It also feeds the process of self-exclusion of participants from the broader society. Other participants indicated that there is no interaction at all between them and richer people. In fact, it is almost as if rich and poor people live on their own islands and the ocean between them is too difficult to cross.

Sub-conclusion

Since the vast majority of participants migrated to Addis Ababa, their families live far away and there is generally little contact with or support provided by their families. The importance of family, especially a partner, became very clear from the many cases whereby in particular female participants reported that their partner had left or showed abusive behaviour, which contributed substantially to decreased material and cognitive wellbeing.

This lack of family is often balanced by supportive neighbours and friends. They offer assistance in many ways (e.g. loans, materials to build a house) and on several levels, not only material support, but also moral support. According to the participants, this sense of community and brother/sisterhood amongst poor and extreme poor people in Zenebework is due to the fact that they are similar and understand each other's difficulties. Outside of their communities, interactions with other people are generally unpleasant or non-existent. The participants do not feel accepted by people who belong to richer wealth categories. Moreover, there is a sense of powerlessness when it comes to

standing up to misbehaviour towards them due to fear of repercussions. This lack of power and voice contributes to self-exclusion of the extreme poor participants from the broader society. There is an interrelation between the material dimension of ill-/wellbeing and the relational dimension (see also Pouw & McGregor, 2014 and the livelihoods approach, Chapter 2.4). Poor relations or a lack of relations (whether with family, community members or the broader society) contribute to a state of material illbeing of the extreme poor participants. At the same time, being in a state of extreme illbeing prevented participants from building relationships and networks with people who were not considered poor and extreme poor.

Cognitive dimension of wellbeing

This section examines the cognitive dimension of wellbeing. The impact of traumatic events, and misbehaviour against participants, their self-image and their outlook on the future are central.

Hardships and traumas

Many participants recalled events that were either traumatic for them or caused them great pain and difficulties. Especially female participants mentioned the death of a child, abandonment, abuse and rape as traumatic. The traumas sometimes affected participants both mentally and physically as explained by this participant:

I started living on the street. Everything became very bad for me after that time. I don't really remember a lot from this period, only that it was very bad. I remember many men raped me. For some period, I was even raped by many men in the night. Until today, I have nightmares about that, even last night, I felt that same thing again which happened during those nights. I don't care for myself anymore, I just want to keep my children safe and prevent them from happening what happened to me. I have vaginal fistula as a result of all the rapes, I can't control my pee. I started a relationship with one of the men on the street, because if the other men knew I was with him, they would stop raping me. To protect myself from more bad I started seeing him. (female, 43 years)

These types of traumas can severely impact the mental and physical health leading to depression and a lack of will to fight for a better life. Those who

have children live for their children, but no longer care about their own wellbeing. They are counting their days.

Sometimes, a trauma can be so painful that it metaphorically paralyses a person and they can no longer function and contribute to their family:

We got a second daughter, but she died when she was 1,5 years [...] My wife became very sad and angry and she became depressed. She didn't help me with the work anymore. (male, 45 years)

The hardships and traumas experienced by the participants often result in depression and hopelessness. This will be discussed next.

Depression and hopelessness

From being a small child up to this time, I did not have any happiness in my life, struggling, struggling, sadness, unhappiness and in the end I became a HIV patient who cannot work and feed herself. I am waiting for people to help me. (female, 36 years)

Enduring difficulties, especially on a long term, contributes to a sense of hopelessness. Participants reported that they had lost the spirit to try and improve their own situation. The dreams and hopes they used to work towards are no longer vivid. They often mention that God must not want them to be better off, otherwise they would not still be in this position:

I have no wish for myself, I finished my life. I hoped, I wished, but I couldn't get it. I am waiting for my death. (female, 36 years)

While the vast majority of participants have lost faith and hope that their lives may become better, they are still hopeful when it comes to the future of their children. They believe their children may avoid the same faith and be salvaged through education:

My future is completed. I don't think my life will improve, but I believe if my children will finish their education they can live a better life. (female, 36 years)

The "if" part in this quote is the big question for many participants; they strongly hope and pray that their children will be educated, however they

have some reservations about whether they will be able to provide this education for their children, even those who are assisted by NGOs:

My hope was that he will finish his education and get a good job and he will be my hope for bad days, but in this situation I'm praying for him to be patient and survive his problems and finish his education. But I don't think in this situation he can finish his education. (female, 38 years)

Self-image

Generally, the participants perceive themselves in a positive manner. They describe themselves using words such as good, nice, cooperative, happy, positive, having beautiful behaviour and being equal to others:

God created me equally with all people in the world. I have a brain that works very well. But my hands and legs don't function, but we don't stay in the world forever. So I'm happy and never think I am not equal to others. (male, 51 years)

Considering themselves as being equal to others and having a positive self-image is remarkable when comparing the findings from the other case studies, whereby participants predominantly referred to themselves in a negative manner and regarded themselves as unequal to others in their society. This positive self-image can be attributed to the fact that the participants in this case study interact predominantly with people that are similar to them. The participants reported that their friends and neighbours speak kindly of them, which feeds their self-image. Since the people they interact with are similar to them and also belong to the poor and extreme poor wealth category, these people do not speak negatively about the participants. It makes no sense to insult the participants; this would be like insulting themselves. They too are poor or extreme poor people, often facing similar difficulties (e.g. illness).

Nevertheless, this positive self-image is only experienced in relation to people similar to the participants. Whenever there is interaction with other (more affluent) members of their community and society, their self-image and confidence level are tarnished. This explains their tendency to avoid interaction (self-exclude) with people who do not belong to the poor and extreme poor local wealth category.

Sub-conclusion

Many participants have endured hardships and traumas leading to depression and hopelessness concerning their future. The only hope that they cherish is for the future of their children. In spite of a lack of hope about improving their wellbeing, their self-image is remarkably positive compared to participants in the rural case studies. This can be explained by the fact that the participants mostly interact with people that are similar to them and who treat them respectfully. This changes when participants interact with people belonging to richer wealth categories; then, their self-image is affected negatively due to e.g. (verbal) insults. This case study (and the previous case studies, Chapters 4-6) thus shows an important interrelation between the three dimensions of ill-/wellbeing. It should be noted, however, that this interrelation is relatively underexposed in the literature.

Causes of extreme poverty in Zenebework

This section analyses the multiple causes of extreme poverty in Zenebework and attempts to understand why the participants, the majority of whom was not born into extreme poverty, became extreme poor and remain chronically extreme poor.

Micro/individual household causes

The majority of the participants in Zenebework have migrated to Addis Ababa and come predominantly from average or rich backgrounds. There are several different causes that pushed them into poverty, including: the death of a parent often followed by ill-treatment by a step-parent, escaping forced early marriage, teen pregnancy due to early marriage and abandonment by or death of a partner. The most common cause mentioned by the participants is an illness, in particular leprosy. Many of the participants migrated to Addis Ababa in order to seek treatment of their leprosy. After being cured they remained in Addis Ababa, mostly out of fear of becoming ill again and the idea of having ALERT hospital close felt comforting to them:

Our family situation was very nice, we were regarded as rich. We had many animals, land and excess crops. Our life was nice. I stayed with my family until I was 15 years old. But because my skin problems (pigment problem) and leprosy, I came to Addis for treatment [...] I stayed in Alert for 4 months.

After this period I rent a house and started begging. I was afraid to get sick if I went back, so I didn't go. (female, 40 years)

While most participants started living in Addis Ababa voluntarily, some were asked to stay there by their family (due to fear of the disease). Others got married and started a family after being treated/cured. Once the participants started living in Addis Ababa, their wellbeing was rather dynamic. This means that they fell into and climbed out of poverty several times.

They may have, for example, found a job, started a family and lived happily for a while, but suddenly became ill again or lost their partner and slipped into poverty (again). Thus, once people became extreme poor, they may have climbed up socially to become poor; however, they lacked the assets and reserves to cope with shocks (e.g. illness or loss of a partner) and thus were pushed back into extreme poverty. It becomes especially difficult to climb out when causes start to accumulate. One participant explained that her husband died and, as a result, her income decreased substantially. Soon after her husband died, she became ill and could no longer work. On top of this, the rent increased, which made it impossible for her to continue living in her house and eventually she moved into a plastic house.

Macro/structural causes

Extreme poor people in Zenebework are vulnerable and in a state of illbeing as a result of limited citizenship and lack of rights, voice, power and the ability to claim it. They are and remain in this state of chronic illbeing due to inadequate urban governance and public services. Urban residences are in the (physical) proximity of formal political and economic institutions. Despite this, there is large disconnect between extreme poor people and these institutions, keeping them trapped in their informal status. This is especially visible in the absence of proper and affordable housing, forcing extreme poor people to live in informal and illegal settlements and in constant fear of eviction.

7.4 Poverty reduction interventions

This section examines the poverty reduction interventions in Zenebework and their effectiveness with regard to targeting and reaching extreme poor people. Furthermore, the processes of inclusion and exclusion by development

intervention agencies in Zenebework are investigated, in particular that of the studied NGO. Finally, the section explores the relational dimension of ill/wellbeing, in particular the interaction between extreme poor people and institutions (government and NGO).

Development agencies and interventions in Zenebework

The participants recalled several poverty reduction interventions implemented in the area, dating as far back as 1936. They mentioned the following agencies responsible for carrying out these interventions: Medhin Social Centre, Hope Enterprises, Children's Heaven, SSF, Hiwot Ethiopia, World Vision, government agencies (including ALERT hospital) and mosques and churches.

The majority of development agencies and their implemented interventions are related to education. The agencies either provide education or assist children with school materials and uniforms for example. As described in previous sections, children's education is a high priority for the participants. These, therefore, are the type of interventions that are most valued by the participants alongside free medical treatment. Besides education and health interventions, cash transfers, food aid and provision of clothing are mentioned. One agency provided housing, but is (to the great regret of the participants) no longer active in the area. Nevertheless, their provided assistance was highly appreciated. Interventions that are critiqued or considered 'bad', are regarded as such due to corruption, mistargeting, broken/false promises and the requirement to convert.

Targeting strategies (concepts, methods and implementation) of the studied NGO

Conceptualisation of extreme poor people

The studied NGO identifies a few categories of extreme poor people. Historically, the studied NGO defined extreme poor people as orphans and this has not changed over time. In the perception of the studied NGO, orphans, half-orphans and other vulnerable children (e.g. HIV positive parent(s), HIV positive children, parents affected by leprosy, street children) belong to the local category of extreme poor people. The children belonging

to the aforementioned categories are included in the education interventions of the studied NGO.

Apart from vulnerable children, vulnerable adults are also classified as extreme poor. These are people that are of old age, people with disabilities, people living on the streets or people that are HIV positive. A category of extreme poor people that was added to this definition is that of displaced people. These are people that escaped their rural homes due to land scarcity.

While the definition remained predominantly the same over the years, the term used to indicate extreme poor people has changed from 'needy' to 'poorest of the poor'. According to the NGO, everyone is 'needy' and since their focus is specifically those at the bottom of the society, they decided to use the term 'poorest of the poor'.

The studied NGO differentiates between poor and extreme poor people, however there is no clear definition clarifying this distinction, it is based on the NGO's judgement. For example, two families may be similar, but one of them may have eight children, while the other one has 11. Preference is then given to the family with the most children.

Methods and implementation of poverty reduction interventions

The studied NGO reaches extreme poor people through their interventions. In order to secure this, they have established a thorough method of targeting, a combination of community-based targeting and simple means test targeting (see table 3.1 for explanation of these methods). This method has been refined over time and was the outcome of a process of trial and error. One important lesson learnt is the inclusion of the community in the decision-making process for selecting beneficiaries. In the past, NGO employees conducted home visits in order to select beneficiaries for the interventions (particularly for the education interventions). However, this method was very sensitive to fraud. People would make adjustments to their houses in order to appear poorer and be included in an intervention. To prevent this type of fraud, the NGO decided to conduct unannounced home visits and to include the community in the decision making process. Once the NGO selects beneficiaries, they make the list of beneficiaries public and this list is opened up for critique. Community members and social workers are encouraged to evaluate the list. If there is critique, it is taken into consideration and if necessary the list is

altered. The list thus becomes final after scrutiny both of the community and the NGO.

The M&E process is conducted through home visits and by monitoring household progress (e.g. measured in terms of savings and education drop-outs). Alongside home visits, participants are encouraged to visit the NGO social worker when necessary.

The method describe above is specifically for those extreme poor people who are residing in a house. Those living on the streets are approached by employees of the NGO and invited to their soup kitchen.

There are also categories of the extreme poor that appeared to be beyond the scope of the NGO, such as teen sex workers. The NGO attempted to include these girls in their education intervention. However, these girls returned to the streets to continue their jobs as sex workers. According to the NGO, the girls became used to a certain lifestyle, which they could not afford with a 'normal' job (e.g. seamstress). The intervention was therefore cancelled. In this case, the girls reserved the right to opt-out and this was respected by the NGO.

The studied NGO is not the only NGO that is successful in targeting and reaching extreme poor people in Zenebework. Participants that were included in interventions of other NGOs confirmed this. These NGO work similarly as the studied NGO when it comes targeting methods. They too include the community and kebele to ensure proper selection of beneficiaries. Generally, the definition of extreme poor people used by these NGOs is also along the same lines as that of the studied NGO. Nevertheless, some NGOs focus on specific sub-categories within the category of extreme poor people. One NGO indicated that they are starting to shift their focus to children with mental health disabilities. According to them, these children are currently undermined and fall through the cracks.

It is also striking that many NGOs have included some element of the cognitive dimension of wellbeing in their interventions. The studied NGO claims to work on building awareness of issues such as self-worth in order to move away from feeling victimised. The studied NGO and other NGOs active in the area speak of holistic interventions. This means that they attempt to incorporate social and psychological (confidence building, empowerment trainings, mental support for parents) elements alongside basic needs elements in their interventions. The impact and effectiveness

of this, specifically for the studied NGO, is discussed next. Some of the NGOs collaborate with the kebele, either in making the selection process of beneficiaries transparent (e.g. by showing the list of beneficiaries at the *kebele* office) or through distribution of goods via the *kebele*.

Reaching the extreme poor people: people's perceptions

The perception of the NGOs that they are successful in reaching extreme poor people through their interventions is confirmed by the majority of the participants of the life histories and the participants of the workshops. The participants are generally very positive about the different development agencies active in the research area. Critique is mostly expressed at the *kebele* with regards to their demolishing practices of plastic housing. While assistance is mainly provided in the education sector (enrolment, books, uniforms etcetera), other forms of aid mentioned by the participants are food aid, clothing, money/stipends and medical aid.

Since interventions in the research area are predominantly focused on (primary) education, the participants that are not reached by any NGOs are mostly participants without children, participants with children that have not reached an age to attend primary school or with older children that dropped out from secondary education.

As mentioned before, many NGOs attempt to take a holistic approach and assist on multiple levels. One of the participants included in an intervention of the studied NGO expressed the impact of this type of assistance on her life:

It is very different now, I never have to think about food, education or clothes for my son. Even with the 40 birr, I buy soap, macaroni, pasta and other things. (female, 35 years)

While the studied NGO and other NGOs working in Zenebework claim to pay attention to the cognitive dimension of wellbeing alongside the material dimension, the studied NGO and the other NGOs appear to be lacking this from the perspective of the participants. Especially participants who are attending secondary or tertiary education or of whom the children are ready to step into society face issues regarding their self-image and self-confidence. As was demonstrated earlier, extreme poor people predominantly interact with people similar to them. When interaction with people outside of their comfort zone is required, they feel out of place and sometimes give up good

opportunities (e.g. dropping out of a prestigious university) in order to ‘feel safe.’

Sub-conclusion

Interventions aimed at extreme poor people are generally successful in reaching them. This can be attributed to the sound targeting methods that are both inclusive (involvement of community members) and transparent (open to critique). Interventions are therefore evaluated positively in general. However, interventions still lack sufficient attention to the relational and cognitive dimension of ill-/wellbeing. Furthermore, little to no attention is paid to the complex interrelations between material, relational and cognitive dimensions of ill-/wellbeing. By neglecting the relational and cognitive dimensions of ill-/wellbeing and the interrelations between the three dimensions, development agencies run the risk of having (very) limited long-term impact.

7.5 Conclusions

This urban case study has shown that extreme poor people in Addis Ababa (who are predominantly migrants from rural areas) and in particular Zenebework can be defined as people facing severe difficulties in all three dimensions of wellbeing, mostly as a result of illness and death or abandonment of a family member. The participants in this case study remain chronically extreme poor due to lack of citizenship and rights (e.g. ownership, voice, power), which forces them to seek salvation in informality and illegality (particularly concerning employment and housing).

In an attempt to further define extreme poor people, a comparison was made with poor people. It is striking that there is mostly a difference in the material dimension (food and housing) and not so much on a relational and cognitive level. Both wealth groups interact intensively with each other and face similar difficulties. They feel related to each other and try to support each other both materially and mentally. This plays an important role in understanding the positive self-image of the extreme poor participants in Zenebework, contrary to the rural case studies whereby extreme poor people generally reported a negative self-image. Nevertheless, interaction with people from other wealth categories are either non-existent or unpleasant, resulting in self-exclusion.

This case study also differs from the rural case studies, as development agencies active in Zenebework included extreme poor people in their interventions (primarily education). There are a few reasons to explain this. Firstly, development agencies active in the area have well established targeting methods that are inclusive (involvement of community) and transparent (open to feedback). Furthermore, extreme poor people are clustered together in the area and it is therefore not difficult to find them. This is one less hurdle when compared to the case studies in the rural areas where extreme poor people are often 'hidden.' Combined with people's strong belief in the power of education, it explains the success behind the inclusion of extreme poor people.

Nevertheless, there are some important remarks and questions to be placed concerning the sustainable impact of these interventions. Attention to the relational and cognitive dimension of extreme illbeing appear to be missing in interventions carried out in the research area. Furthermore, development agencies seem to undermine the importance of the complexity of interrelations concerning the three dimensions of ill-/wellbeing. Without proper attention to this complexity development agencies run the risk of having (very) limited long-term impact. Further research is required to determine and better comprehend the influence of the complex interrelation of the material, relational and cognitive dimension of ill-/wellbeing on the long(er)-term impact of development interventions. For now, it appears that without any consideration for this complex interrelation and the relational and cognitive dimensions of ill/wellbeing, extreme poor people in Zenebework may remain physically, socially and mentally stuck on an island⁹⁸ of extreme illbeing.

98 While not all extreme poor people are located in Zenebework or Kolfe Keraniyo and are scattered in the city (e.g. homeless people), there is a high concentration of extreme poor people in Kolfe Keraniyo and Zenebework. Extreme poor participants who lived on the streets mostly grouped together with other homeless people, however the entry point was a relational one, not a physical one as is the case for Zenebework.



8 Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

The growing inequality and increasing gap between poor and rich people (despite development intervention efforts to counter this), combined with the fact that extreme poor people seem to be predominantly excluded from development interventions, were the main reason that this book came into being. A global promise was made with the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals to “leave no one behind” and to include the most marginalized. This book has made an attempt to contribute towards achieving the goal of including all and has focussed on extreme poor people, in particular in Bangladesh, Benin and Ethiopia. It did so by answering the following questions: (1) How are extreme poor people included or excluded by development interventions? (2) What are the lessons learnt from discourses and practices that development agencies apply in the case studies in Bangladesh, Benin and Ethiopia? The research was carried out through a wellbeing approach that pays attention to material, relational and cognitive dimensions of poverty and a relational or social-political approach. Furthermore, substantial use of an inductive and participatory approach and corresponding research methods was made.

8.2 Answering the main research questions

Extreme poor people do not belong to a homogenous group, amongst them are e.g. migrants, victims of natural disasters, vagrants, people with disabilities, chronically ill, orphans, elderly, addicts, sex workers and people with intersex conditions. Broadly, however, they can be divided into (i) those that require permanent or long term assistance or support (e.g. people with severe (mental health) disabilities), and (ii) those that require temporary assistance or support and can eventually sustain themselves again. Apart from the studied NGO in Addis Ababa, the vast majority of development interventions in the case study areas were unsuccessful in including anyone from these two categories in their poverty reduction interventions. This can be explained by the lack of targeting, the lack of transparency in the targeting

process, as well as the lack of (consistent) monitoring and evaluation from the side of NGOs and government institutions. The inability to include extreme poor people can be attributed to both the social exclusion of extreme poor people by their community members and the self-exclusion of extreme poor people. These processes of exclusion will be discussed in more detail. First, this section will zoom in on the exclusion of extreme poor people by poverty reduction agencies. The section ends with the Addis Ababa case study and discusses the approach behind the relative success of including extreme poor people in poverty reduction interventions.

Discourses and practices of development agencies

The first step towards including extreme poor people is to find out who they are, and to be able to describe them in people's own terms and culture. This step was not an evident one for the studied NGOs. In their attempts to conceptualize extreme poor people, the NGOs in the rural case study areas defined extreme poor people predominantly through the material dimension of wellbeing. The relational dimension and, in particular, the cognitive dimension received little or no attention. Furthermore, with the exception of the Benin case study, the distinction between poor people and extreme poor people did not come naturally to the studied NGOs, but was somewhat invented on the spot and was therefore neither elaborate, nor very specific.

This lack of clarity in relation to the conceptualization of extreme poor people and the difference between poor and extreme poor people perhaps explains why the studied NGOs lack a solid targeting approach and methods specifically for the extreme poor. They have little knowledge of and interaction with extreme poor people in their working areas and thus they do not understand how to target them or even where to find them. The studied NGOs in Bangladesh and Ethiopia mentioned community-based targeting as their method to include extreme poor people. Nevertheless, they contradicted this by expressing that they do not target a specific wealth group, but are open to anyone willing to join their interventions. However, extreme poor people appeared to be socially excluded by their communities and tended to self-exclude and therefore did not join any interventions.

While the studied NGO in Benin did define extreme poor people and differentiated between poor people and extreme poor people, they too were unable to include extreme poor people in their interventions. The NGO both consciously and subconsciously excluded extreme poor people

from their interventions. Consciously, as they deemed some interventions unsuitable for extreme poor people, such as agribusiness interventions (these interventions were aimed at people belonging to the average wealth group). Sub-consciously, they excluded extreme poor people through the set-up of their interventions and, in particular, their participation criteria. In order to participate in their microcredit intervention it was necessary to be part of a group. Since extreme poor people, especially in the case study area in Benin, are social exiles, they were unable to be part of a group in their communities and thus were excluded from joining the microcredit intervention. Furthermore, the NGO made use of community-based targeting and while this method has many advantages (e.g. participation of community members who know their community and the extreme poor living in it best), in this case study the disadvantage of this method prevailed, i.e. its susceptibility to nepotism. This finding confirms the scepticism of Mansuri & Rao (2004), who questioned whether associations of poor people can be formed without unequal power relations prevailing. Furthermore, it can be linked to Mosse's work (2007), who stated that powerful and affluent members in a community tend to dominate and act as a controlling force against the extreme poor people.

Nepotism/favouritism, predominantly through elite capture, also occurred in the interventions of the studied NGOs in Bangladesh and Ethiopia (Jeldu) who used 'open access' targeting methods. The studied NGOs closely collaborated with local elites (including government officials) to implement their interventions as these people are (politically and economically) influential. In Bangladesh, extreme poor participants stated that they feared being critical of the methods of selecting beneficiaries, as they might run the risk of becoming (even more) socially isolated. The studied NGOs lacked the (intensive) monitoring and evaluation (M&E) needed to prevent local elites from controlling interventions and taking charge of the selection of beneficiaries (often through bribes). Furthermore, evaluations were often conducted by field officers or external parties without little or no input from beneficiaries and the community. Consequently, there seemed to be a mismatch between the (assumed) impact of interventions by the studied NGOs and their perceived impact by beneficiaries and their community members. Moreover, due to the lack of intensive and genuine M&E, the NGOs were unable to prevent drop-out of the very few extreme poor people who were part of an intervention.

Two-way process of exclusion

This research found a complex interrelation between social exclusion and self-exclusion. While all the case studies showcased that extreme poor people were either consciously, or subconsciously excluded from their community and wider society, they also reveal that this marginalized group has a tendency to shun social life (e.g. mingling with neighbours or attending community meetings) and interaction with development agencies, both nongovernmental and governmental. The two processes appear to reinforce each other, leaving extreme poor people trapped in a state of ill-being.

Extreme poor people in the case study areas are excluded and/or adversely incorporated on two levels, i.e. institutionally and on a family/community level. Looking at exclusion from an institutional perspective, extreme poor people were consciously excluded through practices of nepotism/favouritism, whereby local elites were in charge of the selection of beneficiaries for development interventions and distribution of goods (e.g. seeds). Furthermore, corruption, often in the form of bribe money, paid in a bid to be enlisted for or to enter a development intervention, was reported as an important form of exclusion, as extreme poor people were unable to provide the requested bribes. Some cases (especially in Bangladesh) were reported whereby extreme poor people were confronted with a dilemma. They were forced to choose to either benefit from aid (e.g. relief aid in the form of food), but to cede part of this aid (and give it to those distributing the aid), or to refuse to participate in a corrupt system and therefore receive nothing. This is an example of adverse incorporation, whereby distributors of aid abuse their power to enrich themselves at the cost of extreme poor people (who were in desperate need of it) and rob them from an opportunity to (temporarily) improve their well-being. Not only were the extreme poor participants affected negatively in the material dimension of wellbeing, but also in the cognitive dimension. Those who refused aid were left with a sense of powerlessness and those who decided to accept the conditions of receiving aid struggled with a guilty conscience and also felt powerless. Moreover, regardless of whether aid was taken or not, the extreme poor participants felt wronged and that an injustice had occurred.

Besides institutional exclusion on a socio-political level, institutional exclusion on a cultural level played an important role, especially in Benin where shame about poverty gave people the grounds to persistently avoid and neglect extreme poor people. In Bangladesh, the exclusion of sex workers, who are considered outcasts from social life, was also based on cultural

values. In Ethiopia (Jeldu), cultural practices, particularly early (and forced) marriage did not necessarily exclude extreme poor women, but affected them in highly negative and sometimes traumatic ways. Their inclusion in social life had a severe adverse impact on all three dimensions of wellbeing.

Alongside institutional exclusion, extreme poor people were excluded by their family and community as well. They often experienced mistreatment and were verbally and sometimes physically abused, made fun of or simply ignored, as if they did not exist. These forms of illtreatment often left extreme poor participants feeling dehumanized. Exclusion by family (parents, partner, children) was considered particularly painful, psychologically damaging and difficult. The lack of family affected the extreme poor participants materially (e.g. food or shelter), relationally (exclusion from family often meant lack of access to other social relations as well) and cognitively (sadness, hopelessness and depression). This very much resonates with the idea of harms and needs of the wellbeing framework, whereby relationships are described as potentially being (intentionally and unintentionally) harmful and lead to active denial of access to resources and need satisfaction (e.g. autonomy, competence and relatedness) (Bevan, 2007; Gough *et al.*, 2006b). While exclusion and misbehaviour towards extreme poor people by community members was reported by the extreme poor participants and the workshop participants, the relationship between extreme poor people and their community is not so straightforward. The majority of extreme poor participants were aided in some form by their community members, but on an ad hoc basis. These were people in their proximity who pitied them and assisted them in cases of emergency, mostly by giving food. In some cases, the extreme poor participants reciprocated this aid by doing chores for those who assisted them. While the extreme poor participants expressed feelings of gratitude towards those who assisted them, they also felt a sense of inferiority and felt indebted, particularly when those assisting them reminded them of this. This type of assistance can be viewed as a subtle type of adverse incorporation, whereby assistance is provided, but under unfavourable conditions (being indebted, creating unequal relations and creating a sense of inferiority) (Hickey & Du Toit, 2007). Thus, while assistance was provided, it was always of the material kind and sporadic in nature. It did not lift the extreme poor participants out of their ill-being, but it helped them survive an emergency.

De Haan (2000) stated that people can be excluded by different types of groups simultaneously, e.g. unions may exclude non-members from getting jobs or priests may exclude outcasts from a temple. De Haan (2000) argues that group formation is an essential characteristic of human society

and exclusion of people is a part of that group formation process. As such, inclusion simultaneously implies exclusion. In the case studies, there seemed to be an accumulation of exclusion, whereby different types of groups excluded extreme poor people. An extreme poor person may be excluded by family, community members/local elites, government officials and development agency officers. Moreover, extreme poor people did not seem to be part of any group formation, not even – with the exception of urban extreme poor people – amongst themselves. They are characterized by a lack of self-organization.

These multiple ways of exclusion had an adverse impact on the self-image and confidence level of the extreme poor participants. It seemed that these negative encounters, whereby their inferiority was implicit, were internalized, which, in turn, led to them feeling inferior. In all rural case studies, the extreme poor participants described themselves predominantly in a negative manner. Their negative self-image and low levels of confidence may explain their often passive and fatalistic behaviour. They reported having little hope for improvement of their wellbeing. They felt unwanted and unwelcome in their community and wider society and consequently they tended to self-exclude. The case studies showed that extreme poor people did not attend community meetings, as they were convinced that they would not be included in any decision-making process by the average and rich wealth categories in their communities. Moreover, they felt ashamed of their wealth status, clothing and their inability to give a gift or make a contribution, and therefore rather avoided any social events.

In the few cases where an extreme poor person was included in a development intervention and was part of a group (e.g. savings group), they dropped out quickly, because they felt out of place and uncomfortable, and the conditions were working against them.

While the extreme poor participants in the rural case studies reported negative self-images, the urban extreme poor participants described themselves in a positive manner. This is most likely attributed to the fact that they predominantly interact with people in a similar situation to them (i.e. poor or other extreme poor people). Moreover, the urban extreme poor participants did not tend to self-exclude, but sought interaction with their neighbours and other community members. Furthermore, the majority were included in a development intervention. However, voluntary interaction with people outside of their own wealth/social group was non-existent. In fact, interaction with these people was reported as unpleasant and often insulting

by urban extreme poor participants. These negative interactions may explain why it appears difficult for the urban extreme poor participants to function outside of their 'comfortable communities' and become part of society, instead of living on their own island.

Inclusion of extreme poor people

In the case study conducted in the urban area, several poverty reduction interventions did manage to include extreme poor people, often in cooperation with the municipality. The reason behind this success is twofold: firstly, extreme poor people were more visible as they are predominantly clustered in one area, making it easier to identify extreme poor households. Moreover, since it was predominantly poor and extreme poor people living in the area, who were equal to each other socio-economically, they generally felt more confident and had higher levels of self-esteem and a more positive self-image than extreme poor people in rural areas. Furthermore, they shared networks and valuable information with each other, such as job opportunities or chances of receiving assistance. Secondly, the development agencies (in particular the studied NGO) active in the area had thorough and transparent targeting systems in place that were open to revision and critique if necessary. Although most organizations paid attention to multiple dimensions of poverty, there was little to no attention to the psychosocial aspect of poverty. This research has shown that there is a likelihood that this may influence the sustainability of an intervention in the long run. Many beneficiaries were afraid to interact with people from different socio-economic backgrounds and avoided contact. They preferred to stay in their 'secure' environments. Moreover, when beneficiaries left the 'secure' environment, be it their living area or certain education programmes intended for the extreme poor, and they were thus forced to interact with people from other socio-economic backgrounds, their self-esteem and confidence suffered. This had an impact on their ability to become 'successful' or improve their wellbeing (e.g. dropping out (self-exclusion) of a prestigious university programme due to a lack of sense of belonging). Thus, on the basis of the case studies, it occurred that the urban extreme poor participants were socially more and better organized than the rural extreme poor participants. Furthermore, the urban extreme poor participants lived in much more concentrated circumstances. On the one hand, these 'pockets of extreme poor people' perhaps made it easier for development agencies to identify and target them, but, on the other hand, the lack of integration with other socio-economic groups in their society may

have made it harder for them to sustainably climb out of poverty and instilled or reinforced self-exclusionary behaviour.

Causes and sustainers of extreme poverty

It is not only important to develop a good understanding of extreme poverty in a concerned context in order to include extreme poor people in development interventions, it is also important to understand why people fall into extreme poverty. After all, prevention is better than cure. Therefore, in this research much attention was given to the causes of extreme poverty at multiple levels. Moreover, not only the causes, but also sustainers of extreme poverty were uncovered.

Firstly, at the micro or individual/household level, the findings of this research have shown that multiple causes (such as illness, abandonment, old age) were often at play and the accumulation of these causes pushed people into extreme poverty. However, comparing the case studies, a pattern and commonality of individual causes can be found. The majority of extreme poor participants reported that they became extreme poor after either abandonment or absence of a family member (mostly parents or a partner), or due to illness (either the participant themselves or a family member) and thus sometimes both abandonment and illness.

While the causes pushing people into extreme poverty are mostly at an individual or household level, the sustainers of extreme poverty are structural. Contrary to the individual causes, these structural sustainers are context specific and can be broken down into the five main causes of extreme poverty identified by CPRC (Addison et al., 2008) and Lawson et al. (2010). These are: poor work opportunities (Ethiopia rural), denial of or limited citizenship (Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia urban), insecurities (Bangladesh), (social) discrimination (Benin and Bangladesh), and spatial disadvantage (Jeldu). These structural causes and sustainers kept the participants in survival mode and prevented them from establishing a safety net and being able to invest in long-term wellbeing measures (e.g. education, health care, social networks, mental wellbeing).

The present research showed that development agencies currently pay little to no attention to both individual causes that trigger extreme poverty and structural causes that keep people extreme poor.

8.3 Theoretical reflection

This section reflects on the main theories and concepts used in this research and aims to address the knowledge gaps and contribute to further building on the existing body of knowledge.

Defining extreme poverty

The definition of extreme poverty is theoretically contested and conceptually blurred, which makes the discourse on extreme poverty unclear. This research proposes the following definition:

The extreme poor are those facing severe and chronic deprivations in the multiple dimensions of wellbeing: material, i.e. they cannot meet subsistence needs; relational, they are socially, politically and legally excluded and invisible (at family, community and institutional level); and cognitive, they experience severe mental stress, self-exclusion, negative self-image, low confidence levels, and are often fatalistic and passive. They have little hope and opportunity to climb out of their poverty and frequently depend on charity, predominantly in the form of food.

As explained in Chapter 2, this definition is in line with and combines the work of Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher, & Koch-Schulte (1999), the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (Hulme *et al.*, 2001), Drèze (2002), Harriss-White (2002), Devereux (2003), Lawson *et al.* (2010) and Lawson *et al.* (2017). Narayan *et al.* (1999) defined (extreme) poverty as a multidimensional and dynamic condition, the outcomes of this research concur with this as most of the studied extreme poor were *not* born into extreme poverty and periods of relative wealth and poverty have alternated in their lives. Poverty is thus dynamic (Narayan, Pritchett & Kapoor, 2009). However, all of them were facing chronic extreme poverty, meaning that they had belonged to the extreme poor category for five years or longer. Here, there seems to be a slight difference with the findings of Narayan *et al.* (1999), who discovered much downward, but also upward mobility, although her respondents were reflecting on a period ten years back in time. This research showed that once people have fallen

into extreme poverty, it becomes incredibly difficult for them to climb out of that situation. Thus, there was little upward mobility. This resonates with the findings of the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, which defines extreme poverty in terms of long duration, multidimensionality and severity (Hulme *et al.*, 2001). CPRC found that people in extreme poverty often remain extreme poor their entire lives and commonly pass it onto their children (Bird, 2007). Although this research did not include intergenerational life histories, it can draw the conclusion that the majority of the studied extreme poor's parents did not belong to the extreme poor category, but rather poor or average and, in some rare cases, rich. The research also found that the children of extreme poor people were often severely disadvantaged and had very limited access to e.g. food and education (often at best primary education) and limited or no access to other assets that could assist them in securing a livelihood in the future. The children of extreme poor people may therefore be limited in their development, both in the present and in the future, as a result of their parent's wealth status. Zooming in on the definitions of extreme poverty as stated by Drèze (2002) and Harris-White (2002), it can be concluded that these are in accordance with the findings of this research. Drèze (2002) characterized the extreme poor as socially invisible and keeping a low profile, this matches the findings of self-exclusion and social exclusion of extreme poor people in this research. Harris-White (2002) referred to the extreme poor as being 'non-people' and not having and being anything. Both the perceptions that extreme poor people have of themselves as well as the perceptions that their community have of them have proven to be predominantly negative. The extreme poor viewed themselves as being 'bad' or 'undeserving' and their community often perceived them as 'dirty', 'mad', 'hated', 'lazy' and not being capable of doing anything to improve their situation or becoming someone other than an extreme poor person. The inability to change their situation and, specifically, the dependence on others can be seen in Devereux's definition of extreme poverty, i.e. the "inability to meet subsistence needs, assetlessness and dependence on transfers" (2003, pp. 11-12). The difference with the definition proposed in this thesis is that Devereux's definition pays attention to social exclusion through the lack of social assets, but lacks attention to self-exclusion. Lastly, Lawson *et al.* (2010) state that defining extreme poor people is difficult, as they are a heterogeneous group; however, they defined extreme poor people through the spatial and social-relational dimension. Firstly, this thesis agrees with the statement that extreme poor people are a heterogeneous group and that it is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to draw up a clear-cut definition of an extreme poor person. This thesis is also in agreement with the idea that extreme poor people often belong to specific social groups (e.g. sex workers, migrants). Spatially, the urban case study in

particular has shown that extreme poor people were concentrated in certain areas.

The definition proposed in this research differs from other definitions of extreme poverty in that it combines different aspects of definitions of the aforementioned authors and, most importantly, pays specific attention to the cognitive dimension and, in particular, the psychosocial aspects of self-exclusionary behaviour of extreme poor people. Furthermore, this definition is a plea to define extreme poverty beyond the material dimension, often measured through monetary metric measures. The case studies have shown that monetary income is difficult to estimate for extreme poor people, due to seasonal fluctuation or due to its absence.

While it is generally safe to say that extreme poor people face deprivations in the three dimensions of wellbeing used in this research, definitions and measurements of extreme poor people are best defined and understood locally to capture important context-specific accents and details (e.g. lack of citizenship and rights in Bangladesh and Ethiopia (Addis Ababa), being a social exile and fetishist traditions in Benin and in Ethiopia (Jeldu) being socially isolated and having no or little (access) to land. This research has shown that making use of participatory methods can be helpful in achieving this.

This research also differentiated between poor people and extreme poor people and states that while there are apparent differences in the material dimension of wellbeing, this is not the decisive factor. The biggest difference is seen in the social-relational and cognitive dimension (see annex 6 and annex 7). Poor people were generally not excluded from their societies and took part in community groups and meetings and had access to important networks (family, community, institutions). Moreover, they were perceived much less negatively than extreme poor people. Furthermore, deprivations in the relational and cognitive dimensions often led (directly or indirectly) to deprivations in the material dimension. This is an important insight, since the (few) differentiations that were made in the literature between poor and extreme poor people (e.g. Lipton, 1983 and the CPRC (Hulme *et al.*, 2001)) were focused on the material dimension of wellbeing.

Reflecting on the wellbeing approach and its added value

This research has drawn predominantly on the wellbeing approach in order to place extreme poor people and their perceptions at the heart of the analysis, while being able to study multiple dimensions of wellbeing in relation to family, community and institutions. By doing so, it was possible to reveal several major findings that may not have come to light otherwise. First, by using the three dimensions of wellbeing, it was possible to draw a broad and holistic definition/description of extreme poverty in the research areas. A definition/description that went beyond material aspects of well-/illbeing and gave attention to relational and cognitive aspects, uncovering a complex relationship between social exclusion and self-exclusion, as explained earlier.

Furthermore, the wellbeing approach proved useful in discovering several important findings on a cognitive level. For example, being treated with respect and love was sometimes considered more important by participants than material aspects of wellbeing (e.g. food), which are often the focus of poverty research. Some participants expressed the need to feel human (again) and be regarded as such by their environment. This is in line with and confirms the need of the centrality of the human being (and their humanity) and to not solely focus on their poverty (Gough et al., 2006a). Moreover, it provided the extreme poor participants with an opportunity to express and share their perceptions (prompted and unprompted), which is something they highly valued and longed for.

While the wellbeing framework/theory has many advantages and strengths, as confirmed by this research, there are also some points that require attention and perhaps adaptation. Firstly, the fifth key idea of the wellbeing framework (resourcefulness, resilience and adaptation) is about the ability of even the poorest people to adopt strategies in order to survive sometimes life-threatening situations, not only through material assets, but also through the relationships they have. According to the outcomes of this research, this is partly true. Indeed, more often than not, extreme poor people manage to survive difficult situations and are able to do so due to the relationships they have. Nonetheless, the extreme poor participants generally did not show signs of resilience. Once they were hit by a factor pushing them into a state of illbeing, it became extremely hard for them to return to a state of wellbeing. Moreover, extreme poor participants demonstrated great difficulty in adapting to their situation and life satisfaction levels were low. This is in stark contrast with the findings of Biswas-Diener and Diener (2001) who showed that poor people (in a slum in Calcutta) were, overall, only slightly

less satisfied than middle-class people and in some areas life satisfaction was even positive, especially in the area of relationships. It may therefore be more helpful to focus on the conditions leading to homeostatic defeat (of extreme poor people) as reported by Cummins (2009), instead of adaptability. These findings are also further confirmation that poor people and extreme poor people differ and that the relational and cognitive dimensions are important for explaining this differentiation.

Secondly, while the three broad questions that were drawn to operationalize the three dimensions of wellbeing, i.e. What do people have? What can they do with what they have? How do they think of what they have and can do? (McGregor, 2004, p. 346; Gough et al., 2006b, p. 4), provided clear guidance, this research proposes to include another question, namely: what do people think of themselves/how do people perceive themselves? This has proven to be an important question with profound impact for the answers of the three questions proposed in the wellbeing framework. Often, how people thought of what they could do and what they had depended on and was linked to how they perceived themselves.

Passivism and fatalism, for example, generally went hand in hand with a negative selfimage.

Towards a more comprehensive approach of extreme illbeing

Besides the wellbeing approach, this research has relied greatly upon the relational or sociopolitical approach to poverty. In particular, this approach has proven to be useful in uncovering causes and ‘sustainers’ of extreme poor and unravelling power relations that are difficult to change. Where the wellbeing approach functioned more as a way to place people, their humanity and their desires to achieve wellbeing and record their (dis)satisfactions at the centre of analysis and uncovered individual/household level causes of extreme poverty, the relational approach served the purpose of focusing on broader (societal) structures that pushed people into and kept people locked in extreme poverty.

The findings of this research confirm the principal studies that adopt a relational approach to poverty (Ferguson, 1994; O’Connor, 2001; Beall and Piron, 2005; Harriss-White, 2005a; Harriss, 2007; Hickey & Du Toit, 2007; Mosse, 2007; 2010). One of the major findings of the present research has been the importance of structural inequalities in the form of unequal

power relations (e.g. elitism, corruption) and (social) institutions (e.g. social discrimination due to cultural values) being major causes of people remaining stuck in extreme poverty and lacking access to development interventions. What culminates from the present research, therefore, is an approach that takes the wider political, economic, social and environmental structures and institutions into account whilst studying extreme poverty and implementing interventions aimed at extreme poor people, rather than focusing solely on extreme poor individuals. For a more complete view on the underlying power structures and mediating institutions, I would also recommend future research on the rich and better-off, since they tend to keep these power inequalities in place. Harriss (2007) states that effects of extreme poverty are sometimes presented as causes. Amongst other things, this can be seen in the cognitive dimension of wellbeing or in the case of the illbeing of extreme poor people. At first glance, self-exclusion and negative self-image may be seen as exclusively individual, however interrelations and (social) structures are responsible for the production of this behaviour of extreme poor people. The present research therefore does not consider illbeing to be the result of individual failure (O'Connor, 2001), but views individual illbeing predominantly as a consequence of political, socio-cultural and economic structures, excluding extreme poor people from opportunities to climb out of poverty.

Even when extreme poor people are included, the conditions of inclusion may be unfavourable (e.g. paying bribe money to enter an intervention). Hickey & Du Toit (2007) refer to this as adverse incorporation and propose using the concept alongside social exclusion. The concept of adverse incorporation has been useful to further specify and break down the different ways in which people are negatively affected by their social environment and relations. When conducting research on extreme poverty, it is useful therefore to adopt the concept of adverse incorporation and (lack of) freedom to opt out, alongside the concepts of social exclusion and self-exclusion, in order to maintain a nuanced view on 'inclusion.'

In conclusion, both the relational and the wellbeing approach were necessary in order to capture micro/individual/household processes of illbeing and the more macro/structural processes of inclusion and exclusion of extreme poor people. By bridging these two approaches, this research transcends both the individualistic agency approach, which equates poverty with a lack of income, and the more structuralist approach, which sees poverty as the product of structural inequalities (only). This more comprehensive approach towards

illbeing derives its principles from a range of sources: (i) multi-dimensional human wellbeing (ii) lifetime dynamics, and (iii) agency and structure.

Targeting strategies

This research has shown that extreme poor people do not benefit from interventions that are not specifically designed for them. This finding resonates with the work of Sen & Begum (2010), who proposed targeting methods adopted to extreme poor people. The case studies have shown that two of the studied NGOs did not have any targeting methods in place for extreme poor people and made use of 'open access' methods. One of the studied NGOs made use of community-based targeting; however, as stated by Alviar *et al.* (2010), this method is highly susceptible to nepotism and favouritism and this was indeed the case. Interventions were dominated by local elites, excluding extreme poor people. Nevertheless, this method was also used in the urban case study whereby extreme poor people were successfully targeted. The difference is that here, community-based targeting was implemented alongside the simple means test method.

It thus seems that combining different methods of targeting increases the probability of including extreme poor people, which was also suggested by Alviar *et al.* (2010). In order to counter the challenges of community-based targeting, it may be worthwhile utilizing community participation in order to build a context-specific conceptualization of extreme poverty, rather than including them directly in the actual identification process.

8.4 Methodological reflection

This section reflects on the strengths and challenges of the research methodology and the different methods that were used to carry out this research.

Comparative case study

This research used comparative case study as the overarching methodology. For the purpose of this research (namely, discovering mechanisms of in- and exclusion of extreme poor people at multiple levels), this methodology has been very valuable. The comparison has revealed several important

findings in terms of differences and commonalities/patterns. Looking first at the differences, it became clear that analysis of extreme poor people is highly context-specific and, in particular, structural causes and categories of extreme poor people are subject to the context. At the same time, it was possible to develop a broad definition of extreme poverty on the basis of the commonalities found in the four case studies. Furthermore, without the comparison, the importance of the cognitive dimension of wellbeing may not have come to light.

Participatory research methods

The methods used in this research were predominantly inspired by the participatory approach and relied heavily on methods of the PADev methodology. For the purpose of this research, participatory research methods, specifically PADev methods, have proved to be a useful tool for gathering a wealth of context-specific data and in terms of taking a bottom-up approach. The methods have been especially helpful in identifying the different wealth categories in the research areas in an inductive manner, making it easier to locally identify the extreme poor. At the same time, these methods provided information on the broader historical, political and socio-cultural context from the perspective of locals and, as Robb (2002) rightfully stated, this deepens the understanding of poverty.

Nevertheless, participatory methods alone were not sufficient to study extreme poor people. The intention of participatory research to give agency and a voice to the poor, by engaging them in poverty research, did not necessarily work for extreme poor people in a mixed setting as they did not attend the meetings. Even when organizing separate meetings with extreme poor people, they were sometimes reluctant to voice their concerns and it took some time and probing for them to open up. Most importantly, they lacked information on certain topics and could not therefore give their opinion. For example, during one of the exercises conducted as part of a participatory workshop, the extreme poor were asked to list and evaluate development interventions in their area. Since they were unaware of many of the interventions, they could not participate in this exercise. For this research, it meant that for this particular topic (development interventions), the PADev workshop did not fully serve its purpose. However, this does not mean that the method itself is not suitable for extreme poor people. It may be more difficult to break the ice (if they are not familiar with the topic), but it is possible to bring extreme poor people together and discuss certain issues

(that concern them). Moreover, the extreme poor participants who were invited to the workshops were honoured and happy to participate and be noticed.

What did yield a wealth of information were the life histories; not only because extreme poor people were more comfortable sharing things one on one, but also because they provided information over an extended period, allowing the researcher to analyse different aspects of poverty, such as the dynamics, causes and different dimensions of wellbeing, especially the relational and cognitive dimension. Moreover, the participants greatly valued the opportunity to share their stories, experiences and difficulties and were grateful for the chance to express themselves and bring issues to the table that were relevant to them.

Thus, taking a qualitative approach that combines participatory research and life histories is recommended for the study of extreme poor people and their wellbeing. However, responding to the methods used in this research requires a lot of effort, is very time consuming and is physically, but especially mentally straining. This will be elaborated upon. Moreover, this research did not include the full range of extreme poor people, such as highly mobile and mentally challenged people. Researching these people would require different research methods and tools than those used in this research.

Researching extreme poverty

Before replicating this type of research it is important to consider the following: Doing this type of research (with intensive research methods, such as life histories and PADev exercises, which creates sound knowledge of extreme poor people and their context) is a highly time- and energy consuming undertaking. Researching extreme poverty can have an impact on the researcher on different levels, physically (e.g. searching for extreme poor people, recovery time between different field locations and possibly an affected immune system), but also mentally.

It is important to realise that as a researcher studying extreme poverty, one is constantly confronted with extreme forms of human illbeing. Especially when conducting life histories, participants' difficulties and suffering are visible and become a reality. Reading about extreme poverty is not the same as seeing it first-hand. Furthermore, by conducting life histories and spending time with the participants, some form of bonding may occur. During the life histories conducted in this research, participants revealed certain issues

that they had not spoken about before to anyone, not even their partner or close family members. It may become hard to stay 'detached' when one is party to intimate details of people's lives and interacting with them on a daily basis during fieldwork. This is especially true when taking a human-centred approach, such as the wellbeing approach, which includes people's thoughts and emotions. Participants often express gratitude and call blessings and prayers upon the researcher. While, on the one hand, this can be very satisfying (knowing there was direct and positive impact for the participants), it can also instil an uncomfortable feeling, as this may be the 'only' thing that participants gain from taking part in the research. Lastly, once the research is done and the researcher leaves, often returning to a comfortable, or at least a dignified life, life for the participants continues as usual. Therefore, it is important to understand these issues prior to undertaking such research and to ask the question whether, as a researcher, one can really handle this (alone).

Another important element to studying extreme poverty is the requirement to be able to be sensitive to and deal with (organizational) politics. During this research, NGOs, government institutions and local elites often tried to sugar coat their actual impact and, in some cases, even tried to sabotage acquiring data. It was often not possible to directly confront an organization or local leaders with such behaviour to avoid offending them and risking being cut-off from gathering any data at all. It is thus important to be alert to the possibility that this may occur and have the sensibility to find ways of still being able to acquire data.

In sum, researching extreme poor people is not an easy task and there are many possible issues that a researcher should take into consideration before committing to such research.

8.5 Recommendations for further research

This section presents recommendations for further research on the basis of the findings of this research.

Complex interrelations between social exclusion and self-exclusion

In the course of doing this research, it was found that ‘inclusion’ of extreme poor people is affected by the complex and dynamic interrelation between social exclusion/adverse incorporation and self-exclusion. This book has scratched the surface of this relationship, but further research is required to grasp its complex nature.

Some concrete research questions further unravelling this complexity are: to what extent does social exclusion/adverse inclusion and the politics (corruption, elitism) of inclusion affect the cognitive dimension of wellbeing and lead to e.g. self-exclusion? What is the role of a negative self-image for social exclusion and adverse incorporation? Does feeling inferior to others make extreme poor people more susceptible to accepting unjust conditions (for inclusion)? And, as proposed earlier, there is an additional question to operationalize ill-/wellbeing, namely how do extreme poor people perceive themselves?

Furthermore, this research has shown that idiosyncratic events⁹⁹ such as an illness, can impact both the social-relational (social-exclusion/adverse incorporation) and cognitive (self-exclusion) wellbeing. Further research into idiosyncratic events in the lives of extreme poor people may lead to uncovering other (unexpected) emerging processes than those found in this research.

Determining the role of local elites?

The literature on successful interventions for extreme poor people recommended including local elites (e.g. assisting extreme poor people through participating in village committees). This research found, however, that often local elites act as a barrier to extreme poor people entering development interventions. While it is not always possible, or advisable to neglect local elites, it is worth exploring what the conditions and scope to include local elites are in order to achieve optimal results for extreme poor people.

⁹⁹ Idiosyncratic events are events that affect individuals and household. Examples of such events are loss of a family member, illness, loss of property, unemployment (Ludi & Bird, 2007).

Generational studies

While this research did not include cross-generational studies, it did find that children of extreme poor people are frequently affected negatively, especially in terms of their education. Children quickly became labour assets of a household and the drop-out phenomenon was therefore commonplace. On the basis of these findings, investigating the likelihood of extreme poverty being passed on to children, and how different members of a household cope with this, is recommended. What are the differences amongst brothers and sisters? What are the conditions for escaping and under what conditions is someone bound to extreme poverty as a result of ‘inherited extreme poverty’?

8.6 Recommendations for sustainable and inclusive development interventions for extreme poor people

Context-specific conceptualisations

Since poor people and extreme poor people clearly belong to different categories and extreme poor people are not a sub-category within the category of poor people, any attempt to include extreme poor people should start with a solid context-specific conceptualization and understanding of extreme poor people – a conceptualization and understanding that includes (i) multi-dimensional human wellbeing (ii) lifetime dynamics, and (iii) agency and structure.

Considering the multiple forms of exclusion

This research has shown an important interrelation between social exclusion/adverse incorporation and self-exclusion. Both processes are to be considered in the design of interventions aiming to include extreme poor people. It is important to state that instruments to counter social exclusion/adverse incorporation mechanisms should be designed after context-specific exclusionary mechanisms and controlling forces are identified. However, broadly speaking, in cases where local elites and local government officials are not systematically held accountable for their role in the implementation of an intervention, there is little to no incentive to be transparent and practices of nepotism and corruption can continue to prevail. Intensive monitoring and evaluation are one way to counter this. Furthermore, in some

contexts, honour and pride are important to local elites. Involving local elites actively in the (implementation) process and making them partly responsible (with their consent) for its success gives them a sense of importance. When extreme poor people do not benefit from interventions, it then means that local elites are partly responsible. This would have a negative reflection on their ability as leaders and affect their sense of pride and honour.¹⁰⁰ This may prevent practices of corruption and nepotism.

In cases where it is evident that power abuse and corruption by local elites and institutions are inevitable, it may be advisable to avoid involving them directly in the implementation phase, and instead to find another role for them or to seek permission to carry out an intervention 'independently'. This can prevent influential people from feeling insulted, ignored or defied and guard against them hindering an intervention. Such an approach requires diplomacy, tact and sensitivity on the side of the development agency.

Social exclusion/adverse incorporation from the side of the community also requires attention and countering. Community members are sometimes unaware of their exclusionary behaviour towards extreme poor people. Moreover, misbehaviour towards and negative perceptions of extreme poor become ingrained in local culture. Creating awareness of such behaviour and breaking traditions that sustain negative perceptions of extreme poor people are important steps towards inclusion of extreme poor people into the community. Furthermore, community members can take up the role of supporter and encourager of extreme poor people even in small ways, such as greetings, small conversations, but most importantly by acknowledging the presence of an extreme poor person. This process can be initiated by employees of development agencies – once they start interacting with extreme poor people, community members are likely to follow.¹⁰¹

While implementing instruments to counter social exclusion/adverse incorporation, instruments to counter self-exclusion are to be implemented

100 In conversations with local leaders and influential people, especially in the rural areas in Benin and Ethiopia, it became evident that a good reputation and being honourable are important to them. In these contexts, including local leaders in the implementation of an intervention and holding them partly accountable may work.

101 Especially in the rural case studies, there were many extreme poor people who had been 'forgotten' by their community. They had been isolated for so long that it was as if they did not exist. Once they saw the researcher interacting with an extreme poor person, it was as if they remembered that this person also belonged to their community. The result of this was that community members started greeting and talking (again) to the extreme poor participant in

simultaneously. The cognitive (internal and mental processes) dimension of extreme poverty remains under-highlighted in poverty research and action, yet plays a critical role in the self-exclusion of extreme poor people from the communities and environments they live in, as well as in their interactions with development agencies. This oversight misdirects and undermines the effectiveness of (extreme) poverty interventions, resulting in many agencies focusing their programmes on the averagely poor. Development agencies aiming to include extreme poor people are advised to pay attention to the psychosocial aspects of poverty through e.g. personal coaching, confidence building and assertiveness trainings. Although not intentionally studied, this research found that paying attention to the cognitive dimension does not necessarily require complicated processes or intensive sessions with a psychologist. Many of the interviewed extreme poor people longed for human contact and respect, both mentally and physically. Often, providing a listening ear, showing respect and taking their story seriously can build enormous confidence and a change of attitude. Furthermore, extreme poor people may benefit from sharing their experiences and issues with other extreme poor people. This research showed that currently, with the exception of the urban case study, extreme poor people are isolated and do not belong to any social groups. Group formation of extreme poor people may provide mutual support. By doing all this, development agencies may enhance the participation of their intended beneficiaries and minimize the chances of creating patronage dependencies. Furthermore, this investment may pay off in the long run by providing more sustainable and inclusive results, as Browne (2013) also suggests.

Holistic interventions

This research, and research conducted on successful interventions to include extreme poor people, such as BRAC and CGAP/Ford (Karlan & Thuysbaert, 2016), have shown that in order to lift extreme poor people, who require temporary aid, out of their state of illbeing, a holistic intervention is necessary. Hence, an intervention that pays attention to not only asset transfers, but also skill training, coaching, takes a community approach of local communities and elites and makes them responsible in ensuring inclusion of extreme poor people. However, carrying out such interventions require high capacity organisation and administration (financing, complex

question. To the extreme poor participants this meant the world. In some cases it even meant that they felt human (again).

targeting systems, analysing complicated data, expertise, thorough M&E). These type of interventions are hard to reproduce and implement by low capacity development agencies. Moreover, further research will have to reflect on its longterm effects and whether the initial successes are sustained over time.

Social protection policies

The multi-dimensions of extreme poverty must thus be addressed in efforts to include extreme poor people. The lessons learnt in this research can also serve as input for social protection policies, which are proving increasingly effective in reaching extreme poor people (e.g. Bolsa Familia, China's Minimum Living Standards Scheme and India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme). Social protection policies are also essential in addressing those extreme poor people who require permanent or long term assistance (e.g. elderly, people with severe disabilities). Development interventions that have been able to address extreme poor people focus on 'economically active' extreme poor people. This means that 'economically inactive' extreme poor people are and will be excluded from these interventions. Taking responsibility for the human wellbeing of these people is a responsibility of society collectively; however, the necessary governance structures, i.e. tax systems, are not always in place. It may be worth investing Overseas Development Aid (ODA) in the development of strong national tax systems in order to develop and fund contextualized social protection policies, as also suggested by Barrientos & Hulme (2008).

8.7 A global responsibility

This is an invitation to fellow researchers and organizations/institutions to look at the macro level to research the relations between extreme poverty, in- and exclusion and inequality and macro processes and policies, because the majority of development agencies in the studied cases hardly address the multiple causes of (extreme) poverty. They provide relief and assistance to individuals or communities, but often do not address the underlying (macro) causes, e.g. corruption, lack of citizenship, elitism, climate change and cultural traditions sustaining systems of values reproducing extreme poverty. Some agencies even contributed to and reproduced existing causes. The effect of this is that people continue to fall into (extreme) poverty. Development agencies and government authorities are advised to address and pay more

attention to the multiple causes of (extreme) poverty in their interventions to prevent rather than cure (extreme) poverty; in other words, to work systematically instead of predominantly symptomatically. Moreover, the international community also has a responsibility to engage in diminishing the macro level causes that are affecting the Global South, such as the climate change and trade liberalization policies causing cuts in the revenue base of some countries in the Global South. Furthermore, scientists, policymakers and citizens of countries in the Global North are obliged to critically reflect on their national policies concerning the Global South. In the case of the Netherlands, this means critiquing current policies of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, where the assumption is made that international trade will positively impact extreme poor people. As this research has shown, the extreme poor are hardly able or completely unable to participate in local trade, let alone international trade. Furthermore, the case studies have shown that trickle down did not contribute to uplifting extreme poor people. Moreover, current policies promote and support the development of the Dutch private sector, which sometimes negatively affects local jobs in the Global South, or leads to adverse inclusion of extreme poor people. There is a need to diverge from a neoliberal agenda and move towards paying substantial attention to power inequities and focus on the human dimension. Hence, eradicating poverty and especially extreme poverty is not only the responsibility and concern of the Global South, but requires global commitment and effort.

Only then can we realise the goal of 'leaving no one behind'!

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Annex 1: Checklist household data extreme poor participants

- Occupation
- Age
- Sex
- Marital status
- Religion
- Level of education
- Family members earning
- Children
- Level of education of children
- Occupation of children
- Level of education of parents
- Occupation of parents
- Living with
- Type of house, rent or owned
- Description of house
- Fuel available, if yes, what type
- Source of drinking water
- Access to health facilities
- Access to land
- Domestic animals
- Furniture
- Vehicles
- Gold/silver
- Electronics
- Meals per day
- Income per week/month minimum and maximum
- Expenditure per week/month
- Loans
- Family members with a disability
- Main cause of poverty

Annex 2: Item list/questions life history

Sex:

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Marital status:

Currently living in:

Religion:

- Can you describe your life, starting from childhood, as much as you can remember? How was life then (family situation, wealth status etcetera)? Timeline: important events (especially for the women: where were you born, where did you go to school, did you move when you got married?)
Can you describe a normal day in the dry season and rainy season?
- Difficulties? What is the most difficult thing for you?
- Hopes and dreams (past, present, future)?
- Support systems?
- Main cause of your illbeing according to you?
- How do you think you could escape your state of illbeing?
- How would you describe yourself, how do you see yourself?
- How do others see you/describe you?
- What do you think the future of your children will be?

Throughout the life history ask the participant what type of emotion/feeling/mental state was experienced during an event or situation recollected (e.g. abandonment, maltreatment, marriage etcetera)

Annex 3: Questions institutional interviews

- Are you currently targeting extreme poor people and why is that important for your organisation?
- How do you define extreme poor people and has this definition changed over time?
- Can you explain how you target extreme poor people? Identification process?
- Did you succeed to reach extreme poor people during your first attempt, if so what do you think is the main reason of this success. If not, can you explain what your 'trial and error' learning process is?
- What do you measure when you try to find out whether you have succeeded in reaching extreme poor people? What is your M&E process?
- What is the difference in your (organisational) opinion between a poor person and an extreme poor person?

Annex 4: Operationalisation of wellbeing

Concepts	Dimension	Variables	Indicators
Wellbeing	Material	Occupation	Employed/unemployed
			Type of employment
		Income	Income per month
			Number of household members earning
		Shelter	Type of housing
			Own house/rented/borrowed
		Food	Meals per day
			Type of food
			Ever been without food? If so, longest period without food?
		Land	Access to land
			Owned/rented/borrowed
			Amount of land
		Domestic animals	Domestic animals owned/borrowed
Type of domestic animals (e.g. goat, chicken)			
Number of domestic animals			
Education	Level of education		
	Level of education children		
Health	Access to health facilities		
	(drinking) water		
Fuel	Access to drinking water		
	Source of drinking water (e.g. well, pond)		
Loans	Type of fuel (e.g. wood, gas)		
	Type of loan		
	Loan received from		

		Electronics	Owned/borrowed Type (e.g. radio, T.V.)
		Vehicles	Owned/rented/borrowed Type of vehicle (e.g. bicycle, motor)
		Furniture	Owned/borrowed Type (e.g. chair, bed)
		Gold/silver	Any gold/silver owned
	Relational	Social networks	Living alone or with family Relations with family (e.g. warm, discrimination, complex) Any friends? Relations with community (e.g. warm, discrimination, complex)
		Support systems	Who assists in times of need? What type of support? (e.g. money, food, offering comfort)
		Social in-/exclusion	Access to groups Access to social events (e.g. weddings, funeral, community meetings) Access to institutions Access to development interventions Opinion/voice valued?
		Power relations	Corruption, elitism, but above mentioned indicators also give insight into the power relations of extreme poor people between family, community and (social) institutions
	Cognitive	Mental stress/pain	Feelings of depression, negative emotions (e.g. sadness, hopelessness, pain, anxiety)
		Hopes and dreams	What are your hopes and dreams for the future? Did these change over time, if so, how?
		Self-image	How would you describe yourself? How would others describe you?

		Autonomy/ agency	Do you feel you have the power to change or influence your situation (or e.g. will of God)?
		Competence	Do you feel the desire to change/influence your situation?
		Relatedness	Sense of belonging

Annex 5: Overview of poverty approaches

Approach	Definition/ description of poverty	Dimensions	Assessment/ Measurement	Contributions	Limitations
Monetary approach					
Atkinson, 1970; Booth, 1887; Deaton, 1980; Foster, Greer & Thorbecke, 1984; Lipton & Ravallion, 1993; Ravallion, 1998; Van Parijs, 1995	Shortfall of monetary means with a poverty line as a threshold	Income, expenditures/consumption levels	GDP, PPP, Gini coefficient, \$1.25 dollar a day, FGT (Foster, Greer, Thorbecke) index ¹⁰²	The monetary approach is objective, comparable at multiple levels of aggregation, comparable across contexts when corrected for price differences and comparable over time	Poverty is multidimensional. The monetary approach covers one dimension and needs to be complemented with other dimensions
Capability approach					
Drèze & Sen, 2002 Nussbaum, 2001; Sen, 1980; 1985; 1987; 1993; 1999a; 1999b; 2000; 2001; Ul Haq, 2000; 2003, UNDP, 1993		Sen: no fixed list of dimensions Nussbaum: life, bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination, thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play, and control over one's environment. UNDP: health, education, decent standard of living	Sen and Nussbaum: to be decided by the researcher UNDP: HDI (Human Development Index)	The capability approach is a people-centred approach with the focus on lack of freedom instead of income (monetary means). Income is considered important, but as a mean, not the end Sen: The approach is difficult to operationalise Nussbaum and UNDP: predominantly objective approach with little room for subjectivity	Sen: The approach is difficult to operationalise Nussbaum and UNDP: predominantly objective approach with little room for subjectivity

¹⁰² List of measures is not exhaustive, but measures most often used are mentioned.

Participatory approach					
Chambers, 1988; 1992; 1997; Freire, 1970; Robb, 2002	Locally defined/ context specific	PRA: decided by local people RRA: decided by researcher, possibly by input from local people	PRA: decided by local people RRA: decided by researcher, possibly by input from local people	The participatory approach allows active participation of local people, empowering them to conduct their own research/analysis and gain ownership of it	In practice participatory interventions tend to be topdown and reproduce existing power structures. Moreover, difficult to overcome unequal power relations between donors and beneficiaries
livelihoods approach					
Bebbington, 1999; Carney, 1998 Chambers & Conway, 1992; De Haan, Drinkwater, Racadri & Westley, 2002; De Haan & Zoomers, 2005; Ellis, 1999; 2000; Moser; 1998; Rakodi, 1999; Scoones, 1998	Inability to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses while maintaining or enhancing capabilities and assets in the present and future	Capitals: human, physical, natural, social, financial	Assessing livelihoods through the capitals, but unclear whether the capitals should be weighed equally and if not how this is determined	The livelihoods approach is a flexible approach that is implementable in different contexts and has a focus on people and their assets instead of the conventional policy focus on sectors. Promotes both human development as well as environmental conservation	The approach misses elements of human existence, e.g. culture and enjoying life. Also, measurement and assessment of capitals not clear

Relational approach	Alsop, 2005; Ferguson, 1994; Harriss, 2007; Harriss-White, 2005a; 2005b; Hickey & Du Toit, 2007; Mosley, 2012; Mosley, Hudson & Verschoor, 2004; Mosse, 2010; O'Connor, 2001	Unequal power relations/processes	Political, cultural, social, economical	No measure, but emphasis on structures and institutions that reproduce poverty and inequality	The relational approach pays attention to the processes that sustain poverty. It is a context specific approach that is capable of critical analysis of institutions and structures of poverty	The approach focuses on processes, but little to no attention for the poor themselves
Multidimensional approach						
Alkire, 2007; 2011; Alkire & Foster, 2007; 2011a; 2011b; Alkire & Sarwar, 2009; Anand & Sen, 1997; Chambers, 1988; 1992; Kakwani & Silber, 2007	Failures in the many dimensions of human life, be it unemployment, health, hunger, social exclusion, poverty, etc.	Choice of dimension up to researcher	MPI (Multidimensional Poverty Index), AF (Alkire Foster) method, HPI (Human Poverty Index)	With the multidimensional approach one can not only show who is poor, but also how people are poor and the different disadvantages that that they experience. Therefore allowing differentiation amongst the category of poor	With the multidimensional approach one can not only show who is poor, but also how people are poor and the different disadvantages that that they experience. Therefore allowing differentiation amongst the category of poor	With the multidimensional approach one can not only show who is poor, but also how people are poor and the different disadvantages that that they experience. Therefore allowing differentiation amongst the category of poor

<p>Wellbeing approach</p> <p>Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2001; Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2002; Doyal & Gough, 1991; Gough, McGregor & Camfield, 2006; 2006b; McGregor, 2004; Pouw & McGregor, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sen, 1999; Ura, Alkire, Zangmo & Wangdi, 2012</p>	<p>a state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life</p>	<p>Material, relational, cognitive</p>	<p>Macro level: GHI (gross national happiness), OECD's Better Life Index Community/household level: RANQ (Resources and Needs Questionnaire) WeDQoL (WeD group Quality of Life instrument)</p>	<p>The wellbeing approach is a human-centred approach with attention to multidimensional aspects, e.g. material, relational and subjective aspects. Instead of studying deficits, it looks at what people can be and do</p>	<p>The concept of wellbeing concerning poverty is still rather elusive. Moreover, who decides when it is achieved and how to assess it, subjectively or objectively?</p>
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Annex 6: Characteristics of the rural poor people and extreme poor people¹⁰³

Characteristics	Poor people	Extreme poor people	
Material	Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • day labourers (Bangladesh) • farmers (Benin, Ethiopia) • labour work (e.g. collecting firewood for the rich) (Ethiopia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those who can work: rickshaw, van pullers, boatmen, day labourers (Bangladesh), make charcoal, remove skin from dead animals (Ethiopia) • unemployed, occasionally aid others for money or food (Benin, Ethiopia) • migrants (Bangladesh, Ethiopia) • people with disabilities • elderly left by their children (Bangladesh) • beggars • vagrants
	Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eat at least one meal a day • no surplus • children usually eat leftovers of previous day (Benin) • eat cheap food (e.g. potatoes) (Ethiopia) • receive food from the rich from time to time (Ethiopia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food is major problem, no certainty • eat whenever they have food and eat mostly rice (Bangladesh) • beg for food (Benin, Ethiopia) • get some food from their workplace (Ethiopia) • steal food (Benin) • children eat leftovers and children suffer from malnutrition (Benin)

¹⁰³Data collected through participatory rural appraisal techniques with the studied communities. For more detailed information see the fieldwork reports (Altaf, 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016d)

	(Farm)land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land for shelter, but no land to farm, farm on land of rich people and share crops (Ethiopia) • do not own land (Bangladesh) • harvest not sufficient for an entire year, need assistance (Benin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land for shelter, sometimes provided by relatives (Ethiopia) but no land to farm, farm on land of rich people and share crops. Have to go far to find farmland to work on (Ethiopia) do not own land (Bangladesh) • harvest not sufficient (Benin)
	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly able to attend primary education but with difficulties (no money for food, uniforms, books). • Motivated to educate children (Bangladesh) • Mostly unable to attend secondary education • Children work after school hours (Ethiopia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mostly able to attend primary education (Bangladesh) • -cannot attend primary school unless assisted (Benin) • children mostly work for the rich, the bigger children look after the cows and oxen, the smaller ones after the goats and sheep. In case of several children, one may attend school (Ethiopia) • high drop-out rate (Ethiopia)
	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school (Ethiopia) • high drop-out rate (Ethiopia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficult to access clinic • need assistance • traditional medicines and healing methods • wait for a disease to pass (Ethiopia)

	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • own a small hut/house • roofs are made of strong grass, straw or old tin • mostly permanent shelter (Bangladesh) • no cement for the walls, but mud, bamboo or plastic • one space for everything, cooking, sleeping, animals etc. (Ethiopia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • live in a hut • roof made of leaves (Bangladesh), cheap grass (Ethiopia) or straw, not always completely covered (Benin) • walls made of the stem of maize and have holes (Ethiopia) • need assistance to build their house (Benin) • get evicted many times (Bangladesh) • do not stay in one place very long (Benin) • some share hut with other households (Bangladesh)
	Livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of them own livestock • some borrow sheep/goats from the rich for breeding and then return the borrowed animals (Ethiopia) -no large animals, e.g. cows/oxen (Ethiopia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no livestock • no livestock lent either, out of fear that the extreme poor cannot protect the livestock well enough against wild animals, as they have no space in their houses to keep the livestock (Ethiopia)
	Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little or no savings • early marriage is common (Bangladesh) • no awareness of family planning (Bangladesh) • dirty and sometimes torn clothes • do not wish to create problems and do not lie (Benin) • children are always well behaved (Benin) • women may offer sex to the rich to feed the family and cover it up by saying they lent money from a sister (Benin). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no access to credit (Bangladesh) • old and torn clothes given by others (Benin, Ethiopia) • considered dirty • look like a mad man (Benin) • they have nothing (Benin) • some are just lazy, they are born that way (Benin)

	Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot solve their own problems, require assistance rich pity them (Bangladesh) access to NGOs, e.g. in the form of school uniforms, school fees (Benin). assistance from relatives and rich community members, sometimes in return for work children take better care than the children of extreme poor, as the poor's children may inherited some land (Bangladesh) marriage: small ceremonies/feast, usually made possible through assistance funeral: small and simple gathering possible if assisted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not respected not considered in the society, their absence goes unnoticed people pity them and laugh at them hated and ignored (Benin, Ethiopia) not treated equally dependent on assistance (Bangladesh, Benin) not helped, unless they can offer something, e.g. labour (Ethiopia) deprived from justice, no aid when a crime is committed against them (Bangladesh) cannot pay bribe money to access certain facilities, e.g. health card (Bangladesh) if men are married, easily get divorced, as they cannot take care of their wife. Easier for women to stay married, they take care of the food (Benin) marriage: mostly no ceremony/feast or sometimes just live together without marrying funeral: no graveyard, buried along the riverside or on Kash land (Bangladesh). Need assistance to organise funeral
	Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> poor people look unhappy (Ethiopia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> always suffering, it is destiny (Benin) always praying for life to change and for help (Benin)

Annex 7: Characteristics of the urban poor people and extreme poor people¹⁰⁴

Characteristics		Poor people	Extreme poor people
Occupation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labour work, e.g. carpenters, painters. Buying and selling things on the street, working in people's homes (Ethiopia), farmers (Benin), able to work every day and majority of household members work. Usually day labourers, small businesses (Bangladesh) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> those who work: servants, work at the garbage dump, make alcohol, bake injera (Ethiopia), day labourers, e.g. rickshaw causes, single source of income, engaged in petty crimes (Bangladesh) beggars homeless people with illnesses, e.g. HIV, TB (Ethiopia) street children (Ethiopia)
Material	Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority manage to eat twice a day, but eat "poor people's food", e.g. cabbage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> food is a major problem no certainty of a meal every day eat leftovers from garbage dump (Ethiopia) buy leftovers from hotels, if they manage to get a lot, they sell it to other extreme poor (Ethiopia) get involved in petty crimes to buy food or steal food (Bangladesh)
	(Farm) land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No land (Ethiopia) some own land, but not sufficient to sustain themselves (Bangladesh) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mostly do not own any land

¹⁰⁴ Data collected through participatory rural appraisal techniques with the studied community in Addis Ababa. This table also includes the wealth ranking done by "officials" in Benin and Bangladesh and the wealth ranking done by the extreme poor.

	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children have access to education (public schools) • some require assistance for books and uniforms (Ethiopia) • most poor children cannot make it to university (Ethiopia) • strive to be educated, access to free education (Bangladesh) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • majority do not have access to education • 50% have access, but only through assistance of government or NGOs, 50% of the children work at the garbage area, beg together with their parents or steal (Ethiopia) • many extreme poor lack information about the application processes of NGOs to access education (Ethiopia) • due to fees and private tuition, extreme poor do not attend school, in spite of free education until class five (Bangladesh) • children preferred as assets for income generation, rather than sending them to school
	Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to government clinics (Ethiopia) • sometimes free treatment through local government (Ethiopia) • use traditional medicines (Ethiopia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to medical services only through assistance, be it government or community (Ethiopia) • some die as a result of not being able to access medical care (Ethiopia)
	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own a house (Bangladesh) made of mud or rent an old cheap house (Ethiopia) • live in houses built by NGOs (Ethiopia) • houses are in poor condition (Benin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homeless • “Live” around the church (Ethiopia) • houses made of plastic and wood (Ethiopia) • Some live in groups of 10-15 people and rent a very small house together (Bangladesh, Ethiopia)
	Livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n/a

	Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little to no savings and capital (Bangladesh) • little access to natural resources (Bangladesh) • discriminated and deprived of justice (Bangladesh) • no social power (Bangladesh) • depend on others (Benin) • second hand clothes (Benin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • untouchables and vagrants (Bangladesh) • clothes from garbage area (Ethiopia), very old and torn clothes, second hand clothes • no clothing at all and “wear” a sack (Ethiopia) • those giving birth on the streets, abandon their babies and leave them at the church or the garbage area (Ethiopia) • deprived of information and technology (Bangladesh) • marriage: mostly no ceremony, sometimes no marriage at all, just live together • funeral: mostly no ceremony, often no coffin or coffin made of strong grass (Ethiopia) • sometimes local government will bury the dead (Ethiopia)
Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the poor are needy (Benin) • those able to assist help extreme poor people, those who cannot, cooperate with them and drink coffee together (Ethiopia) • Marriage: • Funeral: small, simple and quick ceremonies • buried in a simple or no coffin • assistance from “Iddir” (community support groups) to organise funeral (Ethiopia) • at the bottom of society and not respected (Ethiopia) • rich do not wish to see them (Ethiopia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • isolated and not respected, especially by the rich and considered a burden on society • no support from the rich • extreme poor support and love each other (Ethiopia) • usually live in groups and share food, especially street children (Ethiopia) 	

Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• leave everything up to God (Ethiopia)• live day by day, do not think about tomorrow (Ethiopia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• extreme poor people have nothing• darkness and depression surrounds them (Ethiopia)• lead an inhuman life (Bangladesh)• believe in God to feed them when He wishes
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While the inclusion of extreme poor people is a noble and necessary objective, it is challenging. Attempts to include extreme poor people in development interventions have often been disappointing. This book addresses the challenge of including the poorest people. It provides deeper understanding of the mechanisms of in- and exclusion of extreme poor people, the structural causes of extreme poverty and the desirability of a univocal definition of extreme poverty. The book contributes to such an understanding through an analysis of extreme poor and marginalised people and their multiple dimensions of wellbeing. Furthermore, this book sheds light on the discourses and practices applied by development agencies in order to draw lessons about how the extreme poor can be sustainably included in development interventions. This is based on original field research – using a participatory approach – carried out in Bangladesh, Benin, and (rural and urban) Ethiopia.

Dr. Anika Altaf has over a decade of experience in the field of international development covering a range of topics from, Fairtrade, clean water, and identity to, sustainability and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), with a strong focus on sub-Saharan Africa (Benin, Burkina-Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, South-Africa) and South-Asia (Bangladesh and Pakistan). Her area of expertise is Inclusive Development and Human Wellbeing, specifically of the most marginalised people.



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