

Benevolence and Justice as Moral Demandingness regarding Extreme Poverty

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PREFACE

Please allow me to explain why I have chosen *justice, extreme poverty and moral obligation* as the subject of my thesis. It could perhaps partly be related to my experience of extreme poverty when I had to flee from civil war and extremist ideology. In consequence, I had to live in refugee camps and shelter homes. This happened in Afghanistan. So, being a war child and living at the lowest class in a developing country could be a (unconscious) reason for me to write about famine. Despite the above experience it is mainly my interest and motivation that made me choose for this subject. The most important reason is that I care about *justice* and realize that the unjustified life conditions of the global poor must be improved. I believe in such changes because of the moral progress that have been made throughout the decades, hence I am convinced that being positive and optimistic will help us to find new solutions because the answers are there for the one's who wants to find them. I believe that people are more able to imagine new realities which are improvements compared to what people previously have tried; we just need to *see problems from another perspective* – which is the purpose of this paper. And by *accepting the other perspective* as well, *better solutions* can be created than those we have available now. Precedents show that some things once seemed unlikely to change - women's rights, end of slavery - until they changed nevertheless: some people happened to have different insights which lead to *better alternatives*. Moreover, I argue that it is of the utmost importance to *prioritize* the problems of those who do not have the *basic human needs* - food, water, shelter, basic medical care – and are being the victim of the *injustice global economic order* in which we, as *affluent nations*, are *involved as well*. That entails that this thesis is dedicated to the *worlds' poor*. I hope that by writing this paper my view on this subject – supplementary to my funding charitable organizations and sending money directly to the poor – will somehow contribute to enhance the life of the global poor. By giving famine the proper and legitimate attention and by exposing my view on the matter I hope in the end to convince some individuals, non-governmental organizations or governments to combat extreme poverty.

WORDS OF THANKS

I would like to thank my mentor Dr. Alfred Archer for his guidance, insights, advice and patience. His teaching was important to keep me at the right track because occasionally I included subjects that were meaningful and interesting, but at the same time they distracted my attention from the purpose of this paper. Dr. Archer's help was not only of significant importance to the result of this thesis, but also to my developing skills in writing an academic paper for in the process I have learned to stay more focused. Moreover, as result of the comments of my mentor I have made some critical changes which have positive effects on this thesis. In conclusion, I have learned a lot from my mentor's comments and therefore I thank him kindly for his valuable mentoring.

INTRODUCTION

UNICEF statistics demonstrate that an average of 29,000 children die every day because of extreme poverty. When including adults, this number amounts to 50,000 daily deaths. This means that annually approximately 18 million people die due to poverty related issues.¹ Because of the regular usage of terminologies such as *extreme poverty* and *famine* in this thesis, I first provide a clarification of how they are used in this thesis. By using the term extreme poverty, I primarily refer to famine – because living in poverty, the state of being needy or poor, can lead to extreme shortage of food and water – which is the most severe form of poverty. Another reason of the usage of these terminologies is to indicate the difference in severity of poverty between affluent and poor nations. The reality of the above-mentioned statistics is inhumane and, therefore, a well-founded and effective attitude is needed to deal with this problem. To approach this problem, I focus on *benevolence* and *justice as moral demandingness* regarding extreme poverty, which leads to the following main research question: *What kind of moral obligation does the Western civilisation have towards less developed countries concerning extreme poverty?* By moral obligation I mean a duty that ought to be performed. Hence, this duty arises out of the consideration of right and wrong. For example, a set of code to follow, and such code could go against one's desire but one considers following it for the sake of the common good.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the affluent nations' moral obligation and to search what is needed to remedy famine. As such, the *causation of poverty* is examined; this concerns the reason 50,000 people are starving while there is so much wealth in this world. According to Thomas Pogge and Noam Chomsky, the enriched institutions from the affluent nations are keeping poor countries poor due to profitable purposes for the Western countries. To illustrate, people in low income countries are being neglected by the political and financial system which involves developed countries. For this reason, it is essential to examine the Western role in the existence of famine. Pogge's and Chomsky's allegations are a game changer in the discussion about the Western moral obligations towards the less developed countries. Poverty causes *financial, social, and political problems*, which cannot be ignored due to the significant negative influence it has on the lives of many. By exploring the causation, I assess the *reason of justice* by using John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism approach. Moreover, I argue that this line of argumentation is *more powerful, more effective, and more convincing* than Peter Singer's approach, which is the *reason of benevolence*. Thus, Mill's theory is meant to support Pogge's view, explaining why it would be more effective to argue in the line of justice (even though Mill believes that benevolence is all that matters).

In the first chapter, I provide facts about the famine issues in global context by using, for example, Pogge's statistics on this matter. For the sake of clarity, this chapter focuses merely on describing the problems of famine rather than introducing philosophical arguments.

The second chapter examines Singer's approach to famine because of his widespread and controversial position. I argue that there are reasonable objections against Singer's *benevolence* argument that cannot be argued against the *justice* reason. Because the above-named jargon might not be clear, I briefly explain how they are used in this thesis. By benevolence, I refer to doing good for others (goodwill), when one is doing charity, or when people desire to help each other. For example, helping classmates with homework, because they ask or you observe the need of wanting help. I use the term justice to indicate fairness in protection of rights and punishment of wrongs; the

¹ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 2.

quality of being righteous, fair, and impartial. For example, helping classmates with homework because they helped you in the past. Singer merely approached the problem of famine from one perspective, as he does not look at the *causation* of the problem. I argue that it is vital to also examine the problem from other perspectives for the sake of effectiveness. This can, for instance, be achieved by using the reason of justice; the affluent nations have been causing the global poor damage. Therefore, it is not only these nations duty out of kindness but also out of *justice*: this means the nations need to stop hurting the low-income countries and start to help these countries adequately.

In the third chapter, I discuss Pogge's and Chomsky's theories because their positions are based on the argumentation of *justice*. I argue that their views are not merely *more effective* and *more powerful* but also *more persuasive*. As such, I mean that they use a more convincing philosophical argument than benevolence as moral demandingness. To explain above-mentioned terminology, with moral demandingness terminology, I intend to demonstrate the exploration of how much people can demand from each other; this entails holding themselves and others to some degree of expectations and standards. As this and above-mentioned terms can have different meanings, I choose the ones that are close to the focus of this thesis. Regarding the previously mentioned persuasiveness, the effectiveness and persuasiveness are connected, as the former is also contributing to the latter due to the adequateness of the argumentation. The consequence and the utility of the justice theory would be that it works better than the argumentation of *kindness* of Singer. Thus, it is – pragmatically speaking – more useful and helpful because of its workability. I illustrate why the Western civilisation, considering its role in the existence of extreme poverty, is morally obliged to decrease poverty. By this I discuss why it is a more effective, more powerful tool and more convincing philosophical argument than *benevolence* as moral demandingness.

In the fourth chapter, I elucidate Mill's utilitarianism philosophy to support Pogge's approach: the claim of *justice over benevolence* as Mill also supports the claim of *justice*, and that some kinds of moral reasons are based on *justice* and make stronger demands to help others. This reveals that even a utilitarian, such as Singer, can accept Pogge's notion of justice and Mill's utilitarian understanding of justice. I accomplish this by arguing why the entire practice of moral obligation in line with justice argumentation is useful. Finally, a conclusion is reached based on the discussed issues.

I. PROBLEMS OF EXTREME POVERTY

This chapter concentrates on the issues of radical poverty (which means that the philosophical view is provided after this chapter). A comprehensive view is provided to indicate how famine is caused for the sake of the awareness, magnitude, and seriousness of this problem. The first paragraph presents data evidence to illustrate the problems of famine. The second paragraph offers a clear definition of the term extreme poverty. The third paragraph describes geopolitical effects on poverty to demonstrate the causation of famine.

I.I The effects of extreme poverty and the statistics

This thesis is concerned about excessive poverty, which includes issues such as basic human rights, global justice and moral norms. There is a great deal of suffering in poor countries due to radical famine. People in these countries are exposed to misfortune, difficulty, and misery such as hunger,

diseases, and deaths. Moreover, due to chronic poverty, these people are defenceless and incapable to respond to these miseries. To be specific, an average of 50,000 people die on daily basis from extreme poverty, UNICEF statistics indicate that on average 29,000 children die every day from preventable poverty related causes, 830 million people are chronically undernourished, 1,100 million people cannot access safe water, 2,000 million do not have an admission for the use of necessary medical drugs, 1,000 million have no access to proper shelter, and 218 million children from the age of five to seven are involved in wage labour. In total, 18 million people die annually because of poverty related issues.² Due to poverty, approximately 925 million people are systematically undernourished, and because they cannot eat sufficiently, they have developed health issues.³ The above-mentioned shortages also harms their political rights, which is discussed in paragraph 1.3.⁴ Furthermore, parents are forced to sell their children to paedophiles or to rent them out (child prostitution). If these children are not being sold or rented, they must work (child labour). So, these children are being used as means to an end due to poverty issues. Hence, these difficulties make morality problematic because of the preventability of severe famine because famine is – for the most part – avoidable.

I.II Definition of extreme poverty

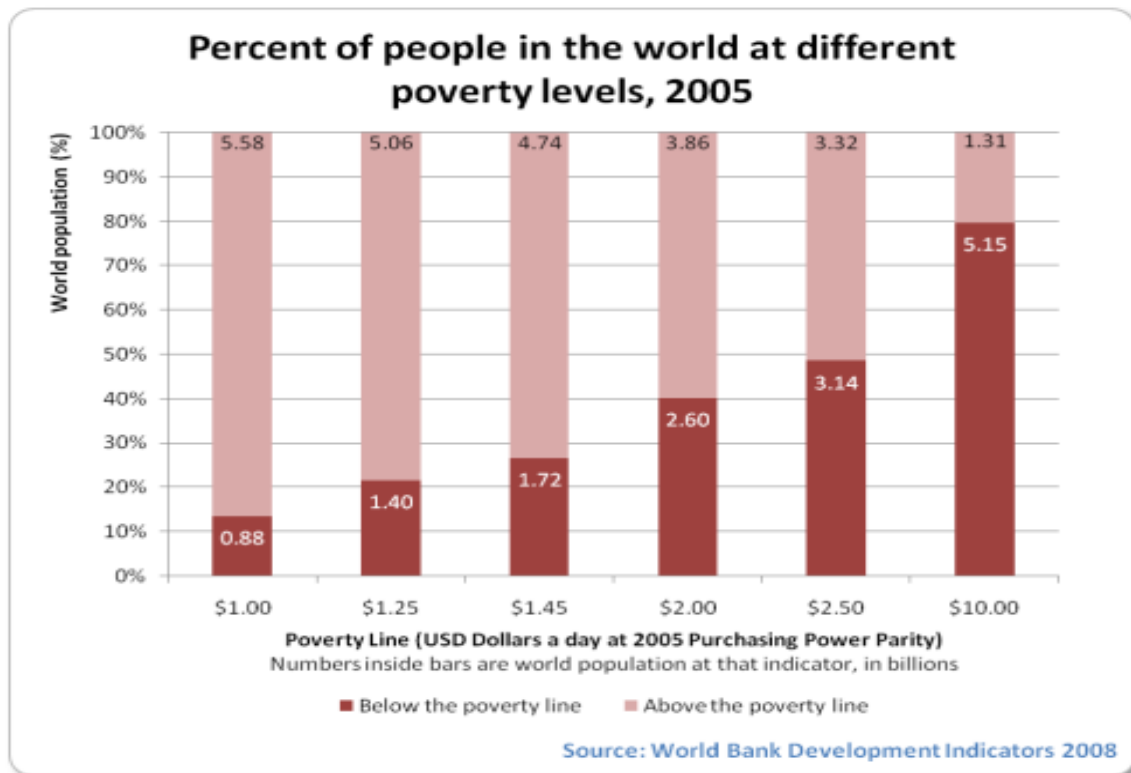
Since the term extreme poverty is frequently used in this thesis, a clearer theoretical frame is required than is given in the introduction. Up to 2015, the World Bank defined *extreme poverty* as earning less than 1.25 U.S. dollars per day; this poverty line has been raised to 1.90 U.S. dollars a day. This entails that people who earn less than this, are dealing with severe poverty. This means that the situation is more severe than previously thought.⁵ In the following histogram, it can be observed that at least 30 to 40 per cent of the world population lived under poverty line in 2005.

² Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 2.

³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2010). *925 million in chronic hunger worldwide*.

⁴ Pogge, T., & Horton, K. (2008). *Global Ethics: Seminal Essays*.

⁵ Hoy, C. (2015). *The definition of extreme poverty has just changed – here is what you need to know*.



I. III Causation and effects of extreme poverty and geopolitics

It is essential to discuss geopolitics and the effects of extreme poverty since I argue to examine the *reason of justice* and, thus, looking at the *causation* of extreme poverty.

The world's poor are unfortunate due to their small voice or representation in constitutional and public discourse because they are trivialised from society, rendering them incapable to escape poverty. In contrast, the affluent nations benefit from financial and governmental systems, as they control the economic system and decide who are included and who are not. As a result of this exclusion, approximately every 4 seconds a child dies due to extreme poverty.⁶

Furthermore, social institutions might influence the life of the non-participants. For example, the financial and political foreign policy (military power, foreign investment, trade) of the United States have a huge impact on people who are not residents or citizens of that nation. Moreover, people in poor countries are not as free as people from affluent nations, who can travel and live all over the world, while many in the poor nations have no choice but to stay where they are. Thus, living in extreme poverty entails that the world's poor do not live in liberty, and are not treated equally because of the radical financial inequality which causes other kinds of inequality. This case of *injustice* is the focus of this thesis.

In addition, the poor people in poor nations are also being deprived of their right to life because of 50,000 deaths on daily basis.⁷ This entails that most of these people do not grow old, which is why they cannot pursue their right to happiness. Hence, people in the poor countries are being divested of their capabilities to organise their life properly and humanly due to the global

⁶ Global issues. (2014). *Causes of Poverty: today around 21.000 children died around the world.*

⁷ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights.* p. 2.

economic geopolitical order in which the affluent nations are involved. Hence, it can be argued that there is also a case of *international causal effect*, which is discussed in a later phase of this thesis.⁸

Since the problems of the global poor have been described, I can introduce philosophical discussions about this matter in the next and following chapters. I commence by describing Singer's theory on famine and discuss the plausibility of his argumentation.

II. SINGER'S APPROACH

This chapter focuses on Singer's theory because of his position regarding the debate about extreme poverty. His theory is one of the most widely read theories and thus has a great influence on the opinions regarding famine. Another reason to discuss Singer's theory, the argument of *benevolence*, in this chapter is to indicate that there is another approach – the argument of *justice* – which has a *more solid foundation* than Singer's approach. By doing so, I also address the *effectiveness* and *persuasiveness* of Singer's approach. First, Singer's position on excessive poverty is described comprehensively. Subsequently, Travis Timmerman's view is described because of his objection to Singer's moral obligation argumentation. Finally, I provide some insights into the methods of the mentioned writers due to the differences in the approach of reducing famine.

II.1 Singer's position on famine

Singer has argued that suffering and death due to famine are *avoidable*, but human beings are not making the necessary decisions to change that because only few people have responded in a significant way. Most people do not help the poor in need by supporting funding organisations, have not protested against famine, and have not represented themselves in the parliament by writing their representatives. Singer wrote about famine in a time where people were dying in East Bengal because of lack of food, water, shelter, and medical care. He was troubled that despite this vast group of people in need, they did not receive much help from the affluent countries while this problem was well-known throughout the media. Furthermore, the governments did not provide the sort of aid that could help the refugees because they valued other things. For instance, Britain has spent 275,000,000 pounds on supersonic transport, and the sums that Australia has spent on aid are less than one-twelfth of the cost of Sydney's new opera house,⁹ while these were the two countries who had given the most aid. The amount of money that was needed to keep those refugees alive for one year was 464,000,000 pounds but only 65,000,000 pound was given.¹⁰ To make the link to the current famine problem, due to the nowadays refugees (e.g. Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans), the size of famine has increased. These people are fleeing from the radical ideologies of, for example, ISIS, Taliban, and Boko Haram. Around the world, there are 65,000,000 refugees who are forcibly displaced and most of them live in severe poverty.¹¹ To return to Singer, he has argued that the moral conceptual scheme should change. He started with the assumption that death from lack of food, shelter, and medical care are bad.¹² The question that arises is, what moral obligations do the developed nations have to remedy these situations? What kind of *moral demands* are there? Singer

⁸ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, pp. 38-39.

⁹ Singer, P. (1972). *Famine, Affluent and Morality*, pp. 230.

¹⁰ Singer, P. (1972). *Famine, Affluent and Morality*, pp. 231-232.

¹¹ UNHCR. (2017). *Figures at a Glance*.

¹² Singer, P. (1972). *Famine, Affluent and Morality*, p. 231.

attempted to answer these questions by offering two principles, which are discussed in the subsequent sections.

II.I Two principles

II.I.I The strong version

Singer has offered two principles on why the affluent people have moral obligations towards the global poor. He begins with the *strong version*: 'If it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening without sacrificing anything *comparable moral importance*, we ought, morally to do it'.¹³ By this, he meant not to induce something else that is bad in a comparable way, meaning not to provoke transgression or to fail in causing in eliciting something that is morally good – which is comparable in importance to the bad things that can be restricted or prevented.¹⁴ This assumption leads people to: 'only to prevent what is bad, and not to promote what is good, and it requires this from us only when we can do it without sacrificing anything that is, from the moral point of view, comparable important'.¹⁵

II.I.II The weak version

Singer also used another version, which is called the *weak version*. According to this version, 'If it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening without sacrificing something of *moral significance*, we ought morally to do it'.¹⁶ Singer has supported this claim with the following example: suppose you see a child drowning in a pond. You could wade in the water to save the child; however, this means that you will ruin your new suit. What should you do? The *moral requirement* is to *save the child from drowning*. The sacrifice of the suit has neither *moral significant* as *comparable moral importance* in comparison with the life of a child (appealing to the principle of the strong version and the weak version). However, if people are aware that by saving the child they would lose their life, then they are not obliged to save the child. Thus, this weak version makes one morally required to save the drowning child because he or she will not sacrifice anything of moral significance by ruining his or her suit.

II.II.III The link with famine

II.II.III.I Singer's argument step one

- Premise 1) Singer's assumption: Suffering and death from lack of food, shelter, and medical care are bad.
- Premise 2) Singer's principle: If it is in people's power to prevent something bad from happening without sacrificing anything of *moral significance*, people ought to morally do it.
- Conclusion) If it is in people's power to prevent suffering and death from lack of food, shelter, and medical care without sacrificing anything of moral significance, people should do so for moral reasons.

¹³ Singer, P. (1972). *Famine, Affluent and Morality*, p. 231.

¹⁴ Singer, P. (1972). *Famine, Affluent and Morality*, p. 231.

¹⁵ Singer, P. (1972). *Famine, Affluent and Morality*, p. 231.

¹⁶ Singer, P. (1972). *Famine, Affluent and Morality*, p. 231.

II.II.III.II Singer's argument step two

- Premise 1) If it is in people's power to prevent suffering and death from lack of food, shelter, and medical care without sacrificing anything of *comparable moral importance*, people are morally required to do it.
- Premise 2) Effectiveness of charity:
Despite living on another continent, people can help those in need due to the technological improvement. Thus, modern communication technology and charitable organisations facilitate helping those suffering from famine on the other side of the world. This possibility, to speak in Singer's drowning child metaphor, makes people morally obliged to save 'the child' from drowning. For example, there is no high opaque wall which prevents people from seeing the child drowning and therefore unaware of the situation. Currently, Western civilisation is closely connected to the world's poor and can observe that these people are starving to death. For instance, there are many charitable organisations that are now better able to support the global poor, and these organisations are depending on Western support. Moreover, it becomes easier to donate money to charitable organisation as people can do so by using their computer or smartphone while sitting at home, and this money will go straight to the charities which support the global poor.
- Premise 3) Lack of morally significant costs:
By donating disposable income to charity rather than spending it on luxuries, people do not sacrifice anything of moral significance. To argue in Singer's drowning child example, merely the new suit becomes soaked when saving the drowning child, which has not the same moral importance compared with the child's life.
- Conclusion) According to Singer, people have a moral obligation to donate as much as possible, at least to the point at which by donating more could cause sincere harm to people's selves or those who are dependent on them.

So, when accepting that dying from lack of food is preventable, and that by preventing it, people would not lose anything of moral importance compared to extreme poverty, then people are morally obliged to help those who are starving to that extent to which they do not harm themselves or the people who count on them. This argumentation entails that if everybody would do this, then some of the sacrifices would be not necessary. Furthermore, these claims do neither consider nearness nor distance, as this makes no difference in line of morality whether one is helping someone in other continents or helping neighbours. Thus, according to the above-mentioned reason, donating money to charitable organisation for the global poor is morally mandatory.

II.III Timmerman's objection

Singer has considered various objections and has offered responses to them. However, I am not going to examine these objections and responses, and focus instead on Timmerman's objection to Singer's argument because of its reasonableness to a certain extent. I used both Singer's and Timmerman's arguments and metaphors to take the argument of justice into consideration rather than benevolence, and therefore to focus on the causation of famine rather than just providing aid.

Timmerman's objection was that the argument of Singer has been based on a false analogy; the drowning child case is a one-off case (one of a life time situation). Yet, in Timmerman's view, providing charity is not comparable. Timmerman has argued that when the case of the drowning child is properly examined, it can be argued that it is occasionally justified to let a child drown. To illustrate his argument, Timmerman used the drowning children example.

Unlucky Lisa receives a call from her bank that hackers have hacked into her bank account and that they are taking 200 dollars every five minutes. Lisa rushes to the bank and on the way, she sees 100 ponds with 100 children in them. Unless someone helps these children, they will drown. Hence, Lisa must decide how many children she should save before entering the bank. She knows that saving one child will take her 5 minutes. The situation becomes even worse; For the rest of Lisa's life, the hackers will be hacking her bank account.¹⁷ By using this analogy, Timmerman desired to demonstrate that if Lisa acts by Singer's theory, Lisa must continue to save the children until she runs out of her money and assets. Hence, Timmerman wanted to argue that the second premise of Singer is based on false analogy and claimed that

Few moral truths may seem more obvious than that one is obliged to sacrifice 200 dollars to save a child's life at least one. But it's far from obvious that one is obligated, for his entire life, to constantly sacrifice everything comparable insignificant to a child's life.¹⁸

When Lisa keeps helping these children, she will not be able to ever rebuild her life. Timmerman claimed that it would be alright if Lisa, at least one day in her life, stops the hackers in time to enjoy some good although this is not nearly as important as a child's life.¹⁹ Therefore, Timmerman has disagreed with Singer about where to draw the line of moral obligation towards the developing countries. Although Timmerman has not indicated where the line should be, his point is to reveal that Singer's principle is too demanding, as people are not committed to the second premise that Singer made.

II.IV Validity of Singer's and Timmerman's reasoning

Both Singer's and Timmerman's arguments appear reasonable; however, I argue that Singer's vision is too demanding for most people and that Timmerman's example of the drowning children may not be persuasive when it is closely examined.

II.IV.I Singer's approach

To start with Singer, his response regarding over demandingness has been that people would not consider it overdemanding if they were willing to change their society's moral norms.²⁰ However, it can be argued that the moral norms do not correspond with Singer's argument, and this could explain why Singer's theory has been perceived as overdemanding. Because society's moral norms are currently not (yet) in line with Singer's ideals, other reasons for solving famine need to be considered. Furthermore, Singer's theory is not pragmatic, which is a necessary attitude to solve extreme poverty. In other words, Singer's theory is *not strong, effective, and motivating enough*. In addition, his theory might appear too demanding because it merely appeals to the *reason of benevolence*. People might offer much more aid if they felt some kind of responsibility, being aware of their involvement in the *causation* of the problem. However, the reason of justice might also be too demanding for most people. Another way would be to trigger people step by step to help the poor nations by motivating and stimulating people through education and information; these are examples of benevolent acts. At the same time, I argue that the current minimum of moral obligation towards famine should enhance significantly. To avoid vagueness, I argue that the daily 50,000

¹⁷ Timmerman, T. (2015). *Sometimes there is nothing wrong with letting a child drown*, pp. 208-209.

¹⁸ Timmerman, T. (2015). *Sometimes there is nothing wrong with letting a child drown*, p. 211.

¹⁹ Timmerman, T. (2015). *Sometimes there is nothing wrong with letting a child drown*, pp. 209-210.

²⁰ For clarification of these jargons, I refer to the intro of this paper.

deaths due to radical poverty have urgency.²¹ To focus on Singer's claim to offer as much as possible to the point where it could cause severe harm²² might seem too radical for some people, and this could have contra pragmatic effects. Although Singer is right when saying that people should not be left to die from lack of food, shelter, and medical care, his argument to donate until people can no longer give sounds too radical. If the expectations of helping the poor are too high, people might withdraw from donating money or do less. A number of objections have been made against Singer's assumptions, which I choose not to discuss in detail. One of the objections was that Singer's belief is too demanding, and if the moral code is too demanding, morality will break down. Nevertheless, I do agree that people should donate substantial sums of money to aid agencies. Even though I cannot indicate the exact amount, the bare minimum should be preventing a significant amount of the 50,000 daily deaths. Moreover, the approaches to reduce famine differ since I argue that in addition to providing aid to relief funds, the focus should also be on the causation of excessive poverty. Hence, the issue is not about helping others, but to ensure they do not need any help. Furthermore, in the next chapter, I examine the matter of not hurting the global poor by describing and applying Pogge's view. I also focus on this matter in the final chapter in which I provide several suggestions for reducing extreme poverty.

II.IV.II Timmerman's approach

As mentioned, Timmerman's argument is not persuasive when it is viewed from another viewpoint. The case of Lisa is not representative of the people in developed countries. To elucidate, politicians, large businesses, academics, economists, and the media appear more responsible for the current situation than individuals such as Lisa. This is because they are more informed about extreme poverty than an ordinary citizen. Even though Lisa is aware of the drowning, she is not fully aware of severe poverty. The reason is that this problem is not sufficiently known by the ordinary citizens who are not directly involved with the causation of famine. The other above-mentioned parties, are more aware for they are consciously involved in the global economic order. They also have more knowledge about e.g. capitalism and consumerism; hence, they have more influence to reduce famine. As such, it is relevant to mention '*the ought implies can*' principle since politicians, large businesses, academics, economists, and the media can do a lot more than Lisa can. To illustrate, the politicians can plea for more aid to save people from starvation, while large businesses and economists can stop doing business in an inhumane and malicious way. Additionally, the media can pay more attention to famine-related issues. The role of the latter is connected to Lisa's responsibility. She depends on the information that she receives from the media. Moreover, the right-wing parties do not take their responsibility in this matter, while they are aware of the magnitude of extreme poverty in poor nations. They could, for instance, ensure that the collaboration with the poor nation improves, as they easily could start an initiative and attract a great deal of attention. Yet, especially political will is lacking in the right-wing parties. The politicians could alleviate international trade regulations so the poor nations could achieve their target much easier.

²¹ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 2.

²² Singer, P. (1972). *Famine, Affluent and Morality*, p. 233.

II.V Nuance: the responsibility of the normal citizen

However, what if the citizens refuse to vote on these right-wing parties or refuse to vote for the parties who cut on foreign aid? By addressing this question, I desire to illustrate that the ordinary citizen can affect the foreign policy, and is, therefore, also morally responsible for severe global poverty. For this reason, the moral obligation towards the developing nations should not merely be viewed from Lisa's example, as this case only contains the argument of benevolence. Yet, it should be regarded as *a case of justice* rather than *a case of benevolence*. In the case of Lisa, there is *no causality between the starvation of the poor and the wealth of the affluent*. As such, Timmerman's argumentation could be used to establish that Singer's benevolence argument is more radically demanding than Singer's initial example has suggested. Nonetheless, the *reason Lisa's case also seems unfair is because Lisa is not responsible for the problem*. However, this thesis argues that *the affluent are involved in the existence of famine* and for this reason, I contend that the *argumentation of justice rather than benevolence* should be used because this approach *makes a real difference to what, why, how, and how much we morally can demand people*. To specify, although citizens in the affluent nations are not as much responsible as politicians, large businesses, and the media, people are still to some extent responsible for the existence of famine. For instance, citizens are involved in the political influence, as voting for right parties that cut aid funds bring negatively affects regarding the world's poor, and by not supporting aid funds themselves (when a charitable organisation has a certain number of members, they are eligible for a subsidy from the government).

II.VI Possible correlation between Timmerman and Pogge

It can be argued that in the drowning children example, the focus is too much on Lisa, whereas it should be on the 'hackers' for they are the cause of the problem. Yet, the question is who should be identified as the 'hackers'. As such, I suggest comparing the hackers with the foreign Western policy: refined large companies and politicians who steel the resources of the poor nations (and by doing so, using them as a means to an end) to see a link between Pogge and Timmerman. Pogge offers another approach of considering global poverty, and he appears to agree with Timmerman. Pogge has argued that there is a different issue, as the affluent countries should be looking to their own actions and their role in the existence of famine. According to Pogge, the Western enriched institutions are keeping the low-income countries poor. Thus, he has claimed that there is causality between the affluent countries and poor countries. This approach makes it possible to examine famine through the justice argument. From this perspective, the connection between these two thinkers can be observed, which would be to tackle the root of the problem. This is one of the reasons why Pogge's theory is discussed in the next chapter. Yet, the main reason why Pogge's approach is discussed is to illustrate that although Singer's theory has - till some extent - created moral obligation because of the effectiveness of reason of benevolence, a more effective, more forcible, and more motivating line of argumentation exists to reduce famine. Since 50,000 people are starving to death every day, it is time to look beyond altruistic argumentation that has been provided for the last four decades, as this has not led to much change.

III. POGGE'S APPROACH

This chapter explores Pogge's theory because he has offered a different approach to reduce famine. Unlike Singer, he used *the argumentation of justice as the source of moral obligation*. This entails that the objections that can be raised against the benevolence argument cannot be raised against

justice argument.²³ This way, the *moral obligation* towards the poor nations is demonstrated from *another perspective*. In other words, due to this approach, the affluent nations can examine their *role in the existence of severe poverty* and then ask why they are morally obligated to reduce extreme poverty. Since the *rich nations* are *involved* in the *starvation of millions of people*, the *justice* argument works better as it is *more powerful and more forcible* than the benevolence argument in the deliberation about moral demandingness. In this chapter, Pogge's position on famine is first described. Next, I focus on the details by elucidating his positive and negative duty, which is a key part of his deliberation. Subsequently, his proposal to reduce famine (global resource dividend) is explained for it is the affluent's responsibility to come up with a fair share economic global order. I also briefly discuss the environmental issues created by the advanced nations, while the global poor must face the consequence (a case of injustice). Finally, I expound the adequateness of Pogge's approach.

III.I Pogge's position on famine

Pogge has argued that the issue of deliberating and solving global extreme poverty is different than explained in prior chapters. Unlike Singer and Timmerman, he has focussed on the causation of global radical poverty. By doing this, he has examined the actions and roles of the affluent nations in the problem. This means that Pogge used the argument of *justice*. According to him, the enriched institutions are keeping the developing countries poor, which is the main reason why his theory is discussed in this section. Yet, first a general overview of Pogge's theory is presented.

Pogge has claimed that *prima facie* so-called developing nations have changed from colonies into independent states. Nonetheless, many people are still suffering from extreme poverty and are oppressed while the affluent nations receive – up to this point – the natural resources they desire.²⁴ According to Pogge, although the rich nations *do not longer practice colonialism, slavery, or genocide*, they *are even now profiting from the economic, military, and political dominance* throughout the world while many people have difficulties with surviving.²⁵ As such, Pogge asked 'How so much misery can persist despite great progress in moral norms, unprecedented technological advances, and solid global economic growth?'.²⁶ The problem that the poor nations are facing is that they cannot participate in a fair international trading market. This is an outcome of a study that has been conducted by W. Martin (from the World Bank) and T. Hertel (from Purdue University). They have demonstrated that the import tariffs from the poor countries are four times higher than the import tariffs from rich countries. This a large burden for the poor nations. In addition, they could have exported over 700 million dollars if the developed countries opened their markets sufficiently.²⁷ Hence, the developed countries influence the lives of people in poor countries. Pogge has described this phenomenon as follows: 'It is undeniable that our governments, by pressing this WTO Agreement on the rest of the world, have foreseeably taken out millions of poor persons

²³ For the convenience, I shall once again explain the above-mentioned terminology for the sake of clarity:

Benevolence: To do good to others, doing charitable things, desire to help others or a feeling of goodwill.

Justice: Fairness in protection of rights and punishment of wrongs.

The distinction: benevolence is only looking to the future, while justice is what people deserve: it is backward looking.

²⁴ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 6.

²⁵ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 6.

²⁶ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 5.

²⁷ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 20.

who would otherwise have survived'.²⁸ Pogge has thus argued that *developed countries do cause harm to the low-income countries* and that this is a violation of human rights.²⁹ Therefore, the affluent countries should change their foreign policies and respect the basic interests of the poor nations. To elucidate, governments of developed countries profit from taking advantage in superior bargaining and expertise position. That means that *the global financial system is neglecting global justice, and therefore the lives of the global poor*. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that Pogge aimed his critique at the parties, which actively cooperate in constructing social institutions, are responsible for the deficit of human rights. This refers to companies, presidents, trade ministers, foreign policy ministers, prime ministers, economists, academics, and journalists, as they are aware of these facts.³⁰ Additionally, the UN experts and the World Bank do not find it important to highlight these facts.³¹ Although the latter has the purpose to decrease famine, its management is controlled by the affluent nations, meaning that their policy is dependent on the interest of the affluent countries. Now the base has been laid, I focus on some specific aspects of Pogge's theory.

III.II Two types duty

According to Pogge, own behaviour and role in the existence of global extreme poverty need to be examined. By taking this position, he distinguished two kinds of duties, which are discussed in the succeeding sections.

III.II.I Positive duty

Positive duty entails helping people in need, while negative duty means not doing unjust things. Usually, developed countries' duty to the low-income countries is thought of as a positive duty – a duty to help because we can.

The positive duty, however, provides a weak and optional moral reasons for some people and, therefore, they do not feel obliged to encourage virtuous principles. According to Pogge, many people feel entitled to offer money to charities that are close to them (nearby schools, churches, environment, or cancer research) than to strangers in other continents. Since many do not feel morally obliged to provide aid to stop extreme poverty, it is in Pogge's view, essential to investigate whether global severe poverty is related to the Western civilisation. If people want to live a moral life then this inquiry is important; moreover, it is essential to the global poor. As Pogge explained, if the developed nations were situated on another planet, then they could not have been contributing to the perpetuation of the poor nations suffering.³² However, as these nations are living on the same planet and the fact that their conducts influences the lives of others, they have a strong responsibility to reflect on their foreign policy. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the enriched institutions are keeping the developing countries poor by refined a global economic market. It has been built by the affluent nations and forced upon the poor nations. Hence, the developed nations have been profiting from the industrial revolution while the poor nations now must deal with the consequences of the climate change; this is discussed more in detail in section III.V.

²⁸ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 22.

²⁹ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 26.

³⁰ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 3.

³¹ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 27.

³² Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 204.

III.II.II Negative duty

However, Pogge has claimed that perhaps the affluent nations are violating their negative duty, declaring that they cannot fulfil their negative duty, which would entail not benefiting from unjustified depletion.³³

As mentioned in the previous section, developed countries are violating their negative duty: 'The effects of shared social institutions, the uncompensated exclusion from the use of natural resources, and the effects of a common violent history'.³⁴ To specify, *developed countries have been gaining wealth by taking the resources the global*. In other words, they are harming the poor countries and this has to do with their unjust global economic order and its starting point. This starting point is determined by an *unjust history by e.g. Dutch imperialism, British imperialism, enslavement, and genocides*.³⁵ 'The affluent have been using their power to shape the rules of the world economy according to their own interests and thereby have deprived the poorest populations of a fair share of global economic growth'.³⁶ Hence, the affluent countries are *violating their negative duty of justice* by contributing damage that is caused by the resistance of renewing the current global economic order.³⁷

III.II.III Conclusion positive and negative duty

In conclusion, the affluent nations are not some far-off bystanders of the starvation of millions, and these countries are causally involved in global extreme poverty. This means that they are violating their negative duty, as the affluent that shape the fates of the global poor.³⁸ Moreover, as these Western countries participate in the existence of the global poor, Pogge has developed an economic global programme to stop the involvement in extreme poverty, which is discussed in the next section.

III.III Pogge's proposal for global extreme poverty

III.III.I Global resource dividend

According to Pogge, a *global resource dividend* (equal share of profit) should be established. The purpose of this approach is to limit the autonomous property rights of governments and states on the resources in their area. The aim is that *some stake will belong to the global poor*. The advantage of this method is that *all human beings can meet their basic needs with dignity* and people to capture their vital interests.³⁹ In addition, this concerns a simple moral way of thinking since *all people own the earth's resources*. Pogge has asserted that this proposal envisages that *governments and states do not have full libertarian property rights on the subject of natural resources in their territory*. The set up is that *the global poor own an untranslatable share in the limited natural resources*; hence, 'The goal is not merely to improve the nutrition, medical care, and sanitary conditions of the poor, but also to *make it possible that they can themselves effectively defend and realise their basic interests*'.⁴⁰

³³ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 203.

³⁴ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 205.

³⁵ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 209.

³⁶ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 207.

³⁷ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 216.

³⁸ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 217.

³⁹ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 203.

⁴⁰ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 203.

III.III.II Responsibility of the affluent in the global economic order

That is the goal, but the facts are that the *mutual establishment is designed by the better-off and forced on the worse-off*. Accordingly, the affluent shape the lives of the global poor through trade bribes, culture export, loans, sex tourism, and investments.⁴¹ This entails that *their survival is built upon Western choice of consumption*, meaning a causality exists between the Western way of life and their despair. Furthermore, affluent people should aim to counter the existence of famine. As such, they must worry about the global economic order and the *foreseeable and avoidable negative effect* it has on the poor nations. Because the developed nations have a superior position, both in military as in economy, and can control and shape these rules, they have responsibility to come up with adequate solutions to remedy extreme poverty.⁴² Economic reforms are needed due to the violation of the negative duty, which entails not forcefully and efficiently excluding the poor from an equal stake.⁴³ The affluent's responsibility is to stop enticing corrupt money from the poor nations into their investment conformity. Hence, these nations could stop funding corrupt governments and tyrants when they decide to loan money on the behalf of their population, and therefore causing their countries to build up debts:

Such rulers are internationally recognised as entitled to sell natural resources and to borrow money in the name of the country and its people. These international privileges facilitate oppressive rule and greatly encourage coup attempts and civil wars in the less developed countries.⁴⁴

Almost identical argumentation is provided by Chomsky.⁴⁵ Chomsky demonstrated that this kind of economic order is unfair towards the global poor by providing the following example: 'But if I borrow money and send it to a Swiss bank, and then can't pay my creditors, is that your problem or mine? The people in the slums didn't borrow the money, nor did the landless workers'.⁴⁶ This quotation concerns advanced nations borrowing money to the elites of the poor nations, and then – unjustifiably – asking the money back from the poorest people in the poor nations while they did not agree to anything. Moreover, the poorest people have not been benefiting anyway. So, treating that elite as entitled to consent on behalf of the people should be halted.

Developed countries should also stop purchasing low-income countries' natural resources. Instead, the trading position of these countries should be advanced.⁴⁷ Pogge has argued that many have criticised that World Trade Organization's free market policy has negative effects on the global poor. Furthermore, Pogge has also highlighted that the global market is too little open for the global poor to be able to participate efficiently in international trade under fair rules, benefiting from the free trade.⁴⁸

III.IV The adequateness of Pogge's approach

My argument is that *Pogge's approach on global poverty is more effective, more powerful, and more motivating way of deliberating than Singer's approach*. Hence, in other words, it *works better* for it is *more persuasive, more stronger, and more forceful technique* to remedy starvations of millions.

⁴¹ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 205.

⁴² Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 206.

⁴³ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 217.

⁴⁴ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 29.

⁴⁵ Chomsky, N. (2011). *How the World Works*, p. 255.

⁴⁶ See Chomsky, N. (2011). *How the World Works*, p. 256.

⁴⁷ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 9.

⁴⁸ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 18.

Pogge's approach, moreover, has a solid base to which it can be held and is, therefore, not easily refutable. So, I argue in the same line of Pogge's argumentation that if the wealthy side of the world stopped neglecting the poor countries through the enriched institutions, then they would no longer need any help. The difference between *colonisation* and what I call *neo-colonisation* is that the latter is a refined and a latent phenomenon because it is not observed directly by many, not even by the poor. In the past, in the colonisation era, the global poor could see their enemy and fight although their chances of winning were small. Yet, they could aim their anger to a real enemy.⁴⁹ Nowadays, most people – including the global poor – do not know that the affluent nations pay the elites and the native monarchs for the resources of the developing nations. For this reason, it is not perceived to be as cruel as colonisation. At first glance, it might not seem so cruel, but if one is familiar with the financial and political system, the truth is revealed: 'The worse off are not merely poor and often starving, but are *being* impoverished and starved under our shared institutional arrangements, which inescapable shape their lives'.⁵⁰ Therefore, I wonder how it is possible that the economic growth is rapidly rising while hundreds of millions of people are on the brink of survival. Moreover, it is not merely a matter of taking the natural resources of the global poor but also about polluting their environments, which I discuss in the next section.

III.V Environmental issues

There are environmental problems that are created by the industrial era of the developed countries. In addition, the rich nations are profiting from this period of technological evolution, for which the less developed countries have been paying the price. Environmental issues can result in massive evacuation of many people who are living in poverty. For example, the poor nations cannot build the same kind of dikes that are built in the Netherlands. Recent statistics indicate that more than 19.3 million people in 100 different countries were forced to leave their homes due to environmental issues in 2014.⁵¹ Now, to demonstrate Pogge's theory, I use a metaphor in the next section similar to Singer and Timmerman.

III.VI The unsafe ponds

Because the metaphors of *the drowning child* and *the drowning children* have been used by Singer and Timmerman, it seemed beneficial to deliberate Pogge's argument on the same level of thought. Hence, I use a similar metaphor, but it is called *the unsafe ponds*. First, the 'children' represent 'the global poor' and 'the administrators' of the ponds 'the affluent nations'. I argue that Pogge could have responded on Timmerman's argument by claiming that the *ponds are not safe enough* and that this is the reason why many *children are drowning*. This is also why Lisa finds herself in a position where she has to decide how many children she should save. As such, the ponds can be made *safe* enough by *investing* in the developing nations instead of merely providing aid. Hence, the ponds will become much safer, paying huge amounts of repair costs or *victim support costs* is no longer necessary. More important, if the administrator - the affluent nations - of the ponds *did not take the children's resources* away, then these children could *build their own safe ponds* (having the capability

⁴⁹ A similar response is made by Noam Chomsky and Andre Vltchek (2013). *On Western Terrorism from Hiroshima to drone warfare*, pp. 1, 6 & 12.

⁵⁰ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 207.

⁵¹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2015). *Global Estimates 2015: People displaced by disasters*.

to build a solid economy), *consequently*, they would *not drown*.⁵² Then, Lisa would be able to have normal life and not have to rescue the children all the time. In other words, *then it is no longer necessary to donate* huge amount money to the poor countries because *they will not need it; there would also be no need to invest* for they will *be capable of taking care of their own*. Furthermore, *Asia and Africa are not poor* continents since they are actually rich for they have *rich natural resources*. The problem is that they are not using themselves. *So, the problem would be solved if the developed nations stopped taking the resources away from them*.⁵³ By arguing this, Pogge has focussed on *the causality* of the problem, which makes the *moral obligation* towards the global poor *more demanding*. Although I have been arguing for Pogge's approach, it does not mean that Singer's line of argumentation is not valid. I merely aim to demonstrate that there is another method (reason of justice) and that even a utilitarian like Singer, who does not care about justice, can accept this too – if Mill's view on justice is be accepted. This is one of the reasons why Mill's utilitarianism is expounded in the next chapter. Another reason is that Mill's view on justice can be regarded as a pillar for Pogge's approach, explaining why it would be more powerful, more effective, and more persuasive to argue in the line of justice.

IV. MILL'S APPROACH

In this chapter, I discuss the utilitarian approach of John Stuart Mill because the argument of *justice* is more powerful, more effective, and more motivating to reduce famine than the reason of *benevolence*. Mill has attempted to argue that utilitarianisms should take *justice* as moral obligation into account because of its *usefulness*; it can help people to act better.⁵⁴ In addition, he has considered justice as the *most important* binding part of all morality since justice concerns fundamental human well-being and is, therefore, absolutely binding. First, I explain Mill's ideas about utilitarianism. Next, several positions of justice are provided and Mill's opinion. Afterwards, I focus on the question where *the sentiment of justice* stems from. To explain the sentiment of justice properly, I also consider *moral psychology* in relation with justice. Subsequently, I address *reciprocity* between society and one's feeling of retaliation because it explains the sentiment of justice more clearly. Then, the *importance of security* is illustrated in direct relationship with justice to aid the understanding of the sentiment of justice. In addition, Mill attempted to combine the notion of justice with the *notion of right*, which is also discussed. Thereafter, I elucidate the difference between act and rule utilitarianism to indicate that *utilitarianism can care about justice*, if this distinction is accepted. It is, moreover, worthwhile to investigate whether it would be better for a utilitarian to examine *the past* for the sake of utility. By taking justice into consideration, it becomes a plausible approach. People might think that benevolence is the most essential according to Mill, yet he has acknowledged the role of justice, as he has argued that utility and justice are not incompatible since rules of justice ought to be found on utility. Thus, I discuss the *backward- and forward-looking approach* to demonstrate that despite the assumption that utilitarianism considers past actions of a person to be irrelevant, there are reasons that indicate that it is relevant for a utilitarian to explore at the past. Because of the backward-looking approach, it becomes necessary to look to the *causation* argumentation. I argue why, even though utilitarianism holds that it is not directly relevant to look at

⁵² Martha C. Nussbaum made a similar point when she talked about 'capability approach'; see *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*. (2011).

⁵³ A similar point is defended by Chomsky. (2011). *How the world works*, p. 257.

⁵⁴ Utilitarianism. (2008). Ch. 5.

the fairness of the consequences, yet a focus on the reason of justice is needed. Therefore, to clarify the causation reasoning, I examine the metaphors that have been used by Singer (the drowning child) and Timmerman (the drowning children) in more detail.

IV.I Mill's position on justice

I commence with Mill's thought about justice. He has claimed that it is necessary to investigate whether the feeling of injustice correlated with individuals, who believe that their subjective feelings that they themselves cannot explain, is a manifestation of objective reality. Thus, an inquiry of the subjective and objective feelings towards the reality, examining whether justice is an independent moral principle.⁵⁵ According to Mill, this is not the case. He began with the assumption that justice is merely a name for certain kinds of moral orders, which cares about the fundamental human well-being to a greater extent than any other regulation for guidance of life, and that the idea of a right is derived from this notion of justice, which makes it more obligatory binding. Therefore *justice is the main part of all morality* and for that reason to a greater extent *most sanctified* and *absolutely binding*. In Mill's words,

I regard the *justice* that is based on utility as being the chief part, and incomparably the *most sacred* and *binding part*, of *all morality*. 'Justice' is a name for certain kinds of moral rules that concern the essentials of *human well-being* more closely, and therefore are more *absolutely binding*, than any other rules for the guidance of life; and the notion that we have found to be of the essence of the idea of justice—that of a right residing in an individual—implies and testifies to this more binding obligation.⁵⁶

Mill has debated assertion of theories that claim to bring about some kind of imaginary standard of justice, which is not built on utility. Instead, he has argued that *justice*, which is derived from *usefulness*, is *most important piece of all morality*: 'Moral rules forbid people from hurting each other [...] Moral rules is the only thing that preserves peace among human beings'.⁵⁷ Hence, justice is merely a name for *social utility* that people tend to find *vitaly important*. The fact that people generally feel so strongly about justice has to do with their understanding of its utility, which is to protect their key interests. This entails that justice is an essential tool because it has – to speak in pragmatic terms – practical positive consequences. Furthermore, since justice is important to people, the utilitarian approach has advocated to use the reason of justice and to disprove unjust conduct.⁵⁸

IV.II Universally agreed view on justice and the law

Because justice can have various meanings, the question arises what justice entails. Mill has asserted that there are several positions to defend when it comes to the argumentation of *justice*, but that despite these different views, a *universally agreed opinion* exists. Moreover, because an *unjust law* can also exist, a law cannot be the ultimate criterion of justice – for a law can go against somebody's right. It is also universally agreed that each person receives what he or she deserves (whether good or evil). In addition, Mill has also claimed that the obligation of justice can be ignored when there is a stronger necessity of justice, which means that justice is – despite being a more absolutely binding part of all morality – not an absolute phenomenon.⁵⁹ According to Mill, that what the law ought to

⁵⁵ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 29.

⁵⁶ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 40.

⁵⁷ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 40.

⁵⁸ Crisp, R. (1997). *Mill: on Utilitarianism*, p. 162.

⁵⁹ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, pp. 30 & 40.

be, has to do with whether it provides people *satisfaction* and whether it corresponds with their *feelings* regarding what is *convenient, fitting, and satisfactory*. As such, Mill has argued that ‘We would be glad to see just conduct enforced and injustice repressed, even in the smallest cases of our lives’.⁶⁰ For this reason, individuals tend to think in long-term effects, which means that they abnegate from immediate satisfaction because of the inconvenience it would bring about in the (near) future. In the following sections (IV.V, IV.VI, and IV. VIII), it becomes more clearer why people consider a universal agreed view of justice and law to be essential. Moreover, justice is not merely something that is right to do or to withhold oneself from but is also an aspect to which an individual can claim his or her moral *right* from others.⁶¹

IV.III Justice and rights

The idea of a *right* originates from the *sentiment of justice*. A person can claim his or her right from the society because of justice. The reason why the society should safeguard these rights is, according to Mill, for the sake of *general utility*, which concerns securing security. Without the rules of justice, it would not be possible to live in a community without being afraid of the more powerful people who are able to dominate or are dominating the rest of the people. Hence, as Crisp has explained, ‘the moral rules (justice) protect the very groundwork of our existence [...] without the rules of justice, Mill says, each would see everyone else as an enemy’.⁶² Therefore, it is in people’s interest not merely to punish those who *harm* (the sentiment of justice) but also to contribute to *self-discipline*; not to hurt another person. The idea of desert has become entangled with the idea of justice because of the relationship it has with punishment (good for good, evil for evil). If one does bad things, then he or she does not have the right to certain things anymore. However, if one does good, then he or she would have a right to good.⁶³

IV.IV The sentiment of justice

Now the Mill’s theory has partly been explained, the views on justice and rights have been described, and the link between justice and rights has been elucidated, I can start with describing Mill’s opinion regarding *the sentiment of justice*. First, Mill has questioned where the feeling of justice comes from, because this question is essential to understand the notion of justice. Mill has mentioned two fundamental factors in the sentiment of justice, which are the *desire to punish* a person who committed a harmful act and the idea that *harm* is done to an individual. The desire to punish who has done harm has the following components: the urge of *self-defence* and the *sensitivity for sympathy*. Mill has argued that *the origin of the sentiment of justice* should be investigated. According to him, it is normal to feel retaliation against those who (want to) harm people and those for whom people feel sympathetic. Whether it would be an intellectual or animal instinct, every animal deals with this phenomenon. The difference between human beings and animals is that the former are capable of feeling sympathy in a broader sense (with all humans). Hence, it is, in Mill’s view, the case that human beings have a more sophisticated intellectual capacity,⁶⁴ and, therefore, humans are able to comprehend the *notion of community as interest between the society and themselves, of which they are a part of* for any danger to the society is a danger to the individuals. To

⁶⁰ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 33.

⁶¹ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, pp. 33-34.

⁶² Crisp, R. (1997). *Mill: on Utilitarianism*, pp. 159-160.

⁶³ Crisp, R. (1997). *Mill: on Utilitarianism*, p. 161.

⁶⁴ Crisp, R. (1997). *Mill: on Utilitarianism*, p. 159.

be more specific, people feel sympathy due to *self-interest*, which has to do with *self-defence* and securing one's own security.⁶⁵ The sentiment of justice is according to Mill as follows:

(1) the animal desire to repel or retaliate for a hurt or damage to oneself or to those with whom one sympathises, widened so as to include all persons – with the widening brought about by (2) the human capacity for broadened sympathy and human conception of intelligent self-interest.⁶⁶

In this sense, it might be the case that feeling, belief, and opinion (sentiment) of justice have to do with the human wide sympathy and *the capacity to know that being just is good for one's self*. Because of this, moral rules do not only keep people safe from being hindered in one's liberty of achieving one's goals in life but also prevent an individual to harm others. Since people perceive protection and freedom as fundamentally important for survival, they have the strongest interest in declaring and imposing these moral rules.

IV.V *Justice and moral psychology*

To offer a better understanding of the sentiment of justice, a focus on the moral psychology is needed. According to Mill, people generally understand why they feel so strongly about justice once they are conscious of its *natural origins* as a tool that protects their essential interests.⁶⁷ Thus, acting in line of justice, not harming others, is because of one's own self-interest.⁶⁸ Moreover, *the principles of justice* are still used today because they *worked*. They worked better than injustice principles, since they appeared to be *useful*. Consequently, it can be argued that it had a pragmatic effect – positive practical consequence – and that that is the reason why it is still in use; in Mill's words, moral rules are involved in the very meaning of utility.⁶⁹ *In addition, according to Mill, justice is based on utility as the most important part of all morality.*⁷⁰ Witnessing injustice must be the sentiment of people's moral indignation and disapproval.⁷¹ According to Donner and Fumerton, Mill has claimed – through his moral psychology argumentation – that *virtue* becomes part of the element of our *happiness* through psychological association. Despite the fact that individuals are longing virtue to achieve individual happiness, due to psychological association, *morality* becomes *pleasurable* and, therefore, part of all people's *happiness*.⁷²

IV.VI *Reciprocity between society and one's feeling of retaliation*

As mentioned in the previous section, it is normal to feel retaliation towards those who (want to) do harm and those with whom people tend to sympathise. Mill has explained the reason for this as follows:

A just person resents a hurt to society even if it isn't directly a hurt to him, and he doesn't resent a hurt to himself, however painful, unless it is a kind of hurt that society, as well he himself, would want to prevent.⁷³

⁶⁵ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 35.

⁶⁶ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 36.

⁶⁷ Crisp, R. (1997). *Mill: on Utilitarianism*, p. 162.

⁶⁸ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 41.

⁶⁹ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 42.

⁷⁰ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 40.

⁷¹ Crisp, R. (1997). *Mill: on Utilitarianism*, p. 156.

⁷² Emanuel, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Modern Philosophers: From Descartes to Nietzsche*, Ch. 16, p. 348.

⁷³ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 35.

Hence, because a bad conduct that is done to someone and that person *feels resentment*, is because it has *hurt the society* of which a person is part and *benefits* from. As such, according to Mill, it might be alleged that there is some kind of reciprocity between society and one's feeling of resentment. For instance, it might be argued that the *society is people's backyard*, or home, and, thus, people want it to be *safe*. Hence, this approach makes the sentiment of justice more understandable and plausible.

IV.VII Social rules, justice, and security

When considering the society as people's backyard, then it is unavoidable to find *social rules* and *security* vital. Mill has argued that security is derived from the *general interest*, which is a fundamental phenomenon in human life. *It is justice that brings security about* since when there was no justice and security, people can be deprived of their property, freedom, and life by those who are stronger. This is the reason why citizens should engage in making their society safe, which forms the *most fundamental groundwork of existence* and brings about feelings that are far more intense than other kinds of utility.⁷⁴ This entails that there are *preferences in utilities*. *As such, justice brings about the most utility, as it provides people with security, which is the a key utility.*⁷⁵ If a conduct forms a danger to the society, it will be forbidden based on the rules of customary morality established on the doctrine of enhancing utility.⁷⁶ The individuals who do not follow or intent not to follow these rules are regarded as opponents of justice. According to Donner and Fumerton, what Mill attempted to achieve is to link punishment with moral obligation and made a model based on *coercive social rules*, meaning that a wrong conduct is associated with wrongness or with some kind punishment. It is worth mentioning that the punishment is built upon the social coercive rules; therefore, to consider a conduct as bad, it has to be proven that it is against the coercive social rules. This assumption brings about moral obligation, and violating these rules is considered to be wrong.⁷⁷

IV.VIII Act and rule utilitarianism concerning human rights

Now that the sentiment of justice due to its relationship with moral psychology, reciprocity, security, and social rules, has been explained, it is possible to provide the relation between justice and rights, which relates to the plea for taking the reason of justice into consideration. It has been assumed that utilitarianism does not care about justice and rights. However, when looking closely, a distinction can be made between *act utilitarianism* and *rule utilitarianism*. By making this distinction, it is possible for a utilitarian to accept rights by applying 'indirect utilitarianism'. Act and rule utilitarianism can be explained as follows:

- By *act (direct) utilitarianism*, I mean a conduct that is justified by its instantaneous outcome and deciding what is right or wrong by examining the outcome of a particular situation.
- Using *rule (indirect) utilitarianism* terminology, I attempt to demonstrate that it takes the *further improvement* of the majority's happiness (essential enactment of the government) as necessary consideration and following duties for the sake of general moral rules; acting according to these general justified moral rules even when they would not lead to the best consequence.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Crisp, R. (1997). *Mill: on Utilitarianism*, p. 159.

⁷⁵ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 37.

⁷⁶ Crisp, R. (1997). *Mill: on Utilitarianism*, p. 159.

⁷⁷ Emanuel, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Modern Philosophers: From Descartes to Nietzsche*, Ch. 16, p. 350.

⁷⁸ Emanuel, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Modern Philosophers: From Descartes to Nietzsche*, Ch. 16, p. 349.

Conducts that conflict with these basic rules are not considered to be just. Moreover, short and long-term effects and outcomes of particular situation and general situation distinguish these two types of utilitarian theory. For instance, acting according to the law of the state increases happiness for the greatest number, and, therefore, it is not good to go against the law even though it will bring about an immediate satisfaction. Furthermore, society has an interest in providing individuals with rights since it prevents and punishes those who break the law (causing harm to others), which makes it a necessary and fundamental phenomenon to keep people safe, defending liberty.⁷⁹ It is also worthy to mention that lack of the rights of slaves, women, and homosexuals made these groups defenceless and caused a great deal of pain and that – unlike Jeremy Bentham – Mill has emphasised the necessity for the rights of these minorities and women to protect the fundamental interests.

IV.IX Backward and forward approach:

I argue that a *utilitarian should consider what happened in the past* despite the argumentation that a utilitarian merely cares about the future.⁸⁰ It has been asserted that utilitarianism is only forward looking and, therefore, the benevolence type of argument is suitable. Yet, I argue otherwise by claiming that the past also needs to be considered because of the distinction that can be made between the reason of *benevolence* and the reason of *justice*. When examining the benevolence argument, the past is not important. However, when investigating the justice argument, considering the past is needed and unavoidable. Moreover, the reason that I have discussed Mill's utilitarian approach in the previous chapter is because my arguments are partly based on a number of the claims that Mill has made; for example, that it might be *better* (useful) to *focus on justice argument* even if one is a utilitarian. This perhaps might be surprising because a utilitarian has been described to only care about the future. Nevertheless, I am convinced that *the justice consideration is more motivating* and, consequently, the focus should be on the claim of justice, when accepting that Mill has been right about that. The next section offers more understandable and plausible arguments regarding why the focus should be on the justice argument rather than the reason of benevolence.

IV.X The causation argumentation

Singer's utilitarianism argument follows from the line of reasoning that the affluent nations have moral obligation towards the global poor based the reason of benevolence. As I argued in chapter 2, his approach is *not entirely motivating*; hence, *not effective and powerful enough*. As such, the justice argument works better for it is more convincing. This line of argumentation can be perceived as a *deontological type argument* due to the focus on the justice aspect. In any case, when accepting what Mill has argued, then a utilitarian can accept this too. This line of reasoning entails that people should not merely be focusing on the fact that people are starving but also on what is the cause of starvation to effectively tackle the problem. As previously mentioned in this thesis, there are plausible arguments that starvation of millions of people is related to the actions of the developed nations such as *colonisation* and *neo-colonisation*. The latter entails indirect politically, socially, and economically dominance of Asian, African and South American nations by their former colonial masters. To illustrate, exploiting developing countries by mass investment, having many companies in the less developed countries, having the global poor working for cheap labour, and acquiring the natural resources of the poor nations.⁸¹ So, the argumentation of justice is about *causality*. As such, it

⁷⁹ Mill, J.S. (2008). *Utilitarianism*, p. 37.

⁸⁰ BBC. (2014). *Ethics Guide: About Consequentialism*.

⁸¹ Top5resources (2017). *Method used by neo-colonialism to exploit developing countries (third world country)*.

is essential to ask why the poor nations are poor. Therefore, 'the unsafe ponds' example in the third chapter aimed to demonstrate that people are starving because Western foreign policy. In addition, the rich people's need of consumption affects the lives of the global poor. Hence, my position is that if people resolve famine, then the affluent nations should not simply be looking at the fact that other people require their help but should also take into account that they are somehow responsible for the poor nation's position and consider their moral obligation from this perspective. The benefit of this approach is that *it will tackle the roots of the problem* to solve it in a more successful way. Hence, I argue that the reason of justice is stronger, more powerful, and more effective than the argument based on benevolence and, therefore, works better.

IV.XI The drowning child, the drowning children, and the unsafe ponds examples

To make the causation argumentation of the previous sections more understandable, I consider the metaphors used by Singer, Timmerman, and myself in the second and the third chapter. As mentioned, this thesis focusses on the *causality* argumentation, which entails examining moral obligation from a different perspective. Therefore, in Singer's 'the drowning child' and Timmerman's 'the drowning children' examples, it can be argued that there was no *causality* between the child or children and the one who had to save them. Yet, people are fundamentally involved in the existence of 'the drowning child(ren)' and because of this, the *justice argument* is *more forcible* as it is *more persuasive*. This is also why 'the unsafe ponds' example is a *more effective* metaphor assessing the moral obligation towards the global poor. For instance, each year approximately 50 billion U.S. dollars in aid and 40 billion in payment goes to Africa. This might seem generous, yet 400 billion is gained by taking their resources. This means that poor continents, such as Africa, are not necessarily poor but are being robbed by the affluent continents.⁸²

V. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have investigated *what kind of moral obligation the Western civilisation have towards the Third World countries concerning extreme poverty*. I have started by introducing the severity of extreme poverty, describing that annually 18 million people die because of famine. I have also illustrated the effects of severe poverty and used statistics to demonstrate how real the problem is. I have argued that this number of deaths should be avoided, which means that another approach is needed than the current ones to remedy extreme poverty.

I have examined Singer's approach to discuss *the reason of benevolence* because his method entails that it would be an act of benevolence to provide aid to the global poor. I have argued that this approach is one way of looking at famine, but that it would be better to focus on the *causation* of famine. As such, I have claimed that the affluent nations are responsible for harming the world's poor.

I have also discussed Pogge's theory since he has offered another perspective of considering famine. Unlike Singer, he has used *the argumentation of justice as the source of our moral obligation*. I have argued that since the affluent nations are involved in the causation of severe poverty, *the justice argumentation* is *more effective, more powerful, and more persuasive* than the reason of benevolence. Pogge has namely argued that people should not profit from unjust improvement of

⁸² Earthshearing. (2017). *Poverty*.

others. Because of the injustice (the violation of the negative duty),⁸³ he has suggested a *global resource dividend* (equal share of profit) programme to remedy extreme poverty.⁸⁴ According to Pogge, this involves a simple moral way of thinking: *everyone owns the earth's resources*. The purpose of this approach is to include the *world's poor in owning untranslatable share in the limited natural resources* so that they will be able to take care of their own basic needs and be independent. Currently, states and governments do not have complete freedom of property rights concerning natural resources in their region.⁸⁵

After discussing Pogge, I have used Mill's theory about justice to support Pogge's approach. At the same time, I have contended that even a utilitarian like Singer can accept the reason of justice when accepting Mill's view about justice and why it would be more effective to argue in the line of justice (although Mill, as a utilitarian, believes that all that matters is benevolence). Mill has argued that the rules of justice are the *most important* part of all morality because these rules *concern the crucial human well-being*, and are, consequently, *absolutely binding*. Therefore, according to Mill, justice is essential to organise people's lives.

My solution is that by endorsing the *reason of justice* as a *moral obligation*, allows to make a more *forcible and powerful claim* on the affluent nations to remedy extreme poverty. Moreover, the reason of justice allows people to examine the problem from another perspective. I have claimed that this approach will have useful consequences. If this plea can be accepted, it will make most people in the developed countries – who care about justice – realise that this unjustified, undeserved, and unforgivable way of life (severe poverty) must end. In addition, the awareness of the causation about famine reveals the necessity of *solutions that have not thought about before*. Consequently, new approaches will be established based on this kind of argumentation, which could contribute to remedy severe poverty. Furthermore, when accepting the justice argumentation, people's thought will be not merely fixed on the reason benevolence but a more powerful direction will also be considered, which will generate other insights and better approaches.

Based on the above-mentioned information, for future research could include the psychological viewpoint to examine how people will act when merely the argumentation of benevolence is applied, and how they will act when the argumentation of justice is tested. This type of research should be conducted to ascertain whether people will feel more obliged, as I have suggested, to help others when they are aware of the causation of a problem and their conduct. Moreover, experiments should be done on this subject to gather empirical facts to provide practical support.

In addition, I would like to share several suggestions to reduce extreme poverty. Yet, it should be kept in mind that I do not intend to know the right answer, but simply provide a number of ideas based on the line of reasoning of this thesis.

V.I Stop taking the resources of the poor nations

Radical rethinking is required to reduce extreme poverty. I have argued to look to the causation of this problem: the affluent nations have been excluding the global poor from the use of their natural resources.⁸⁶ Hence, the affluent nations are *gaining wealth by taking resources of the world's poor*. Thus, extreme poverty can be reduced and prevented if developed countries stop harming the global

⁸³ See paragraph III.II.II.

⁸⁴ See paragraph III.III.

⁸⁵ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 203.

⁸⁶ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 205.

poor in the first place. As argued in paragraph IV.XIII, 40 billion goes in aid annually to Africa, while 400 billion is gained by taking their natural resources.⁸⁷ As such, the affluent nations should either disconnect themselves from the global poor to stop harming them,⁸⁸ or they should ensure to treat the low-income countries fairly. Because the former is unlikely, it is better to focus on the latter, meaning that a justified system is needed, which is discussed in the next section.

V.II Fair play ground

A justifiable global economic order is necessary in which the global poor will be protected from starvation. A system where the affluent nations do not continue benefiting from international political and financial systems that have been originally set up by these nations for their own benefit. As such, new market members should not be disadvantaged, but should be offered a fair chance in the global economic market. *The entire construction is designed to damage the rights of the global poor*, while extreme poverty is itself violation of human right. The contemporary institutional system is established by the affluent nations who benefit from systematic injustice in the past, genocide, and imperialism. That is the reason why I have argued in the final chapter to adopt the backward approach; to reduce extreme poverty, past actions are relevant. I have asserted that developed countries should stop oppressing the global poor and start assisting them with rebuilding their lives. If these points are accepted, the world's poor will stand a chance to survive, to provide themselves of water, food, and shelter, and to become independent of Western foreign aid. As I have demonstrated in paragraph III.III.II, Pogge has argued that actually the global market is too little open for the global poor to be able to participate adequately in international trade under fair rules and, in consequence, the global poor are currently unable to benefit from the free trade.

V.III The role of individuals in shaping Western social institutions

When living in democratic society, people have to take responsibility for their own actions, which can, for example, be done through *voting*. To do so, these individuals need to think how their institutions are set up. Individuals can attempt to *change the way institutions are functioning during elections*. This way, the debate from moral obligations of individuals can be shifted towards the institutions. As such, individuals should start to think about what they can do to change the way their current social institution is currently neglecting the right to life of the world's poor. It will aid the global poor if the citizens of developed countries started to *vote for political parties that plea for more foreign aid* (which would be the left-wing parties) and refrain from voting on parties that desire to reduce or even stop giving aid to the global poor. This way, every individual can take their responsibility to positively influence the lives of the global poor. Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to answer the question why developing countries suffer extreme poverty. I have argued that the enriched institutions are keeping them poor, yet not all people are aware of this injustice. By accentuating the *reason of justice*, which is discussed in the subsequent section, I attempt to reveal that developed countries possess a strong moral obligation to change their foreign conduct. This justice approach is a more profound and effective way to reduce extreme poverty.

⁸⁷ Earthshearing. (2017). *Poverty*.

⁸⁸ See paragraph III.VI.

V.IV Supporting charitable organisation(s) and focusing on the reason of justice

Supporting charitable organisations is always a helpful manner to reduce extreme poverty. The global poor is dependent on this type of assistance to survive. Offering money to charity usually does not involve a great sacrifice. As Singer concluded, 'If it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening without sacrificing anything *comparable moral importance* or something of *moral significance*, we ought morally to do it'.⁸⁹ Giving to the world's poor is giving to the neediest people in the world and it makes a large difference to them.

Moreover, the advertisers for aiding the poor should accentuate Western foreign policy and how it is effecting the lives of the global poor more clearly. This might perhaps convince people to do more about famine. When accepting this, aiding the global poor is not merely an act out of kindness, but more an act of justice because of the *causation* of extreme poverty. I have contended that in consequence that people will feel more obliged to donate money to charitable organisations than they do now. As I have argued in paragraph IV.XIII, justice is useful because it makes people act better. For this reason, it is an essential tool for human beings because of the sentiment of justice; people relate the common wealth with their own interests, which is security. This is why I suggest a safety net for the world's poor in the succeeding section.

V.V Global welfare and global healthcare

A safety net for the global poor who *lack control* should be established. Their lives are in some ways determined because they are born in a poor country. Yet, they have the right not to be killed unjustifiably, and, therefore, a safety net is needed to provide them with *fundamental aspects to stay alive*: food, water, and shelter. It is people's duty to reduce starvation. The rich nations have gathered more than their fair share and, consequently, disadvantaged the global poor from a decent life or even to stay alive, by taking their vital supplies. As such, it is righteous to plea and strive for a fair distribution of justice by providing *global welfare and global healthcare* so the global poor can have a decent life and, moreover, stay alive. Because the advanced nations are the cause of the poor nation's misery, it is their responsibility to provide such a worldwide welfare and healthcare to the point where they are not negatively affected by Western foreign policy (social share institution, exclusion of the world's poor, and abusive history). Even if the rich nations have done nothing wrong, the global economic and political order permits extreme poverty, which is morally objectionable. Thus, I plea to implement the kind of security net that is available in the affluent nations and, as a result, the number of daily deaths of 50,000 people, including 29,000 children, can be effectively reduced.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ See paragraph II.II.

⁹⁰ Pogge, T. (2008). *World Poverty and Human Rights*, p. 2.

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