

**THE GLOBAL SOCIAL PROBLEM**  
**Challenges for a Research School like CERES**

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**INAUGURAL LECTURE**

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**Research School for Resource Studies for Development**

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My first inaugural lecture,  
in Amsterdam, 1996,  
was dedicated to my father, Harry Dietz

This second inaugural lecture  
is dedicated  
to my mother, Dolly Dietz-Olierook  
to my wife, Annemieke van Haastrecht  
and to  
Arie de Ruijter, founding father of CERES

they have all been  
valuable resources for my development

*Poverty amid Plenty is the World's Greatest Challenge*  
James D. Wolfensohn, President, The World Bank, August 2000.  
World Development Report 2000/2001, p. V

Geachte Rector Magnificus, Ladies and Gentlemen,

**Manchester, 1845**

Friedrich Engels was 24 years old when he published 'Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England'<sup>1</sup>. He had not been a PhD student in a Research School and he did not publish his findings in a refereed academic journal. Probably the academic publishers of his time would have rejected his contribution. Yet, when it was reprinted in 1969, with an introduction by the famous historian of the labour movement, Eric Hobsbawm, it was regarded as a 'vitaly important political, social and historical document, written out of a deep humanity and with great analytic skill'<sup>2</sup>. He did not have the support of the established academic community of his time, but he had his father, a German manufacturer, who also co-owned a factory in the heart of the Industrial Revolution, Manchester, where his son was sent to learn the business. It gave young Friedrich a very important entry into the world of capitalist entrepreneurs. He did not have a group of international peer PhD students with whom he could develop his ideas. But prior to his trip to England, in 1842, Friedrich had been involved in debates among the Left-wing Hegelians in Germany, which gave him access to the intellectuals in the nascent British Labour movement. Neither did he have CERES' Lolita van Toledo to guide him through a multitude of training opportunities. However, he did have Mary Burns, the immigrant Irish factory girl whose love gave him first-hand knowledge of working-class life and provided him with information on the conditions of those who were paupers, or sub-proletariat, or what was later called the industrial reserve army. His fieldwork abroad lasted twenty-one months and focused mainly on the conditions in Manchester, although he carried out comparative surveys in Yorkshire and London. He published his book in Germany, using the German language. It would be 42 years before the book was translated into English, first in the United States, and five years later in Great Britain itself, a few years before he died.

Friedrich Engels's book about the conditions of the working class in England features many elements of what came to be known as the social problem. Eric Hobsbawm wrote: 'by the 1830s it had become clear to every intelligent observer that the economically advanced parts of Europe

faced a social problem which was no longer simply that of 'the poor' but of a historically unprecedented class, the proletarians'<sup>3</sup>. Friedrich Engels wrote about social polarisation, about growing concentration and urbanisation, about unrestrained exploitation of labourers, about the miserable urban working and living conditions of those labourers and about continuous quests for cheaper labour, which, in the words of Hobsbawm 'was planting the seeds of urbanism in the countryside'. Engels wrote about individual and collective resistance and about the beginning of an emancipation movement of wage labourers on the economic and political fronts. He acknowledged the opportunities that the capitalist cycles of boom and burst gave to organised labour and he also recognised the possibilities offered by alliances with enlightened segments of the bourgeoisie, academics and civil servants. After all, he was to be one of those capitalists himself for most of his lifetime. However, he also wrote about the destruction of petty commodity producers, the peasantry and petty-bourgeoisie, about the growing numbers of extremely poor, many of them immigrants from pre-industrial backgrounds, who had lost all or most of their means of production, but had not yet gained a position as permanent wage earners. He wrote about the substantial risks the urban poor had to endure, both the labourers and the surplus labour force: 'everywhere social war, every man's house a fortress, everywhere marauders who plunder', and the misery of a dehumanised life full of oppression, criminality, lack of basic security, lack of care, disease and early death. It is interesting to see that he uses a variety of sources, including those of what he calls the 'well-meaning societies for the up-lift of the working-classes' (the World Banks, DGISs and NOVIBs of his time)<sup>4</sup>.

### **Durban, 2003**

Since then 158 years in the history of capitalist social transformation have passed. I have just been to a conference of the South Africa - Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development, SANPAD, in which CERES plays a role in supporting the PhD training programme of the Research Capacity Initiative. Honourable Obed Mlaba opened the conference. He is the Mayor of the Thekwini-Durban Municipality, a metropolis of more than 1.5 million people<sup>5</sup>. A recent survey of the level of satisfaction with the quality of life had shown that

78% of the black population, 43% of the Indian population and 16% of the white population in that multi-cultural melting pot were not satisfied with the lives they were living<sup>6</sup>. In his speech, the mayor summarised what he called the real social problem of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century for most of the inhabitants of his city and for the majority of the world's population: poverty, exploitation, ignorance, illiteracy, health disasters, appalling housing and sanitation conditions, conflicting cultural approaches and discrimination along class, racial and gender lines<sup>7</sup>. In a review of the most pressing research themes and priorities according to the top of South Africa's current social scientists, Johann Mouton stressed the importance of theme-based or problem-based strategic research to understand those social problems, and to resist the restorative tendencies of a lot of current social science bureaucracies to withdraw within disciplines and sub-disciplines. Collaboration can result in a critical mass being reached across disciplinary, university, and national boundaries that can have a greater impact on scholarship and policy. One of the core themes would be the analysis of the causes of poverty and the successes and failures of poverty reduction programmes<sup>8</sup>. It is also a core theme of CERES.

### **Globalised capitalism**

Looking back at 158 years of social transformation we can say that a sequence of revolutions in styles of labour and innovation capability management have succeeded in expanding the capitalist economy to every corner of the globe. The seeds of capitalism and of urbanism have been planted in the global countryside. Globalised forms of production and distribution go hand in hand with globalised communication, styles of consumption and even styles of thinking and socio-cultural behaviour and valuation. On the other hand, it would be very unwise to equate globalisation with uniformity. There are very many alternative forms of capitalism<sup>9</sup> and a host of counter-ideologies and cultural specificities. It is diversity, not uniformity, which is the trademark of globalised capitalism<sup>10</sup>. In the course of the last one-and-a-half centuries since Engels wrote his book we have seen that British and Continental European forms of capitalist development have been overtaken by North American and East Asian forms. A variety of forms of liberal democracy, social democracy and fascism have been used to attempt to speed up

social transformation, involving various forms of state interventionism in social modernisation and development projects. We have seen that colonialism and imperialism have resulted in successes and failures of capitalist transformation all over the world<sup>11</sup>. But we can now also say that a diversity of communist and state-socialist social experiments have ultimately succeeded in acting as pioneers of capitalism, some very successful, as evident in Shanghai, some failures, as shown in some Siberian cities. All over the world basically agrarian, localised economies, with only a thin shell of commercial relationships surrounding a self-centred provisioning of goods and services and with largely illiterate workers who often died before they had reached the age of 40, have turned into basically non-agrarian, globalised economies, where most social behaviour is deeply influenced by what happens elsewhere. The average life expectancy of all human beings on Earth has increased to 67 years; 75% of all people of 15 years and above are literate and 90% of the world's children of the relevant age group are enrolled in primary schools. Almost half of the world's six billion people now live in urban conglomerations and agriculture is, for a growing majority, no longer the most important source of their livelihood<sup>12</sup>. In around 1850, when Engels wrote his book, there were only 1.2 billion people<sup>13</sup> and I estimate that less than 10% of them lived in urbanised environments, while the large majority of humankind were farmers or peasants<sup>14</sup>.

### **The globalisation of wage labour**

In my opinion, the most important social transformation of the last 158 years has been the expansion and globalisation of wage labour conditions. However, capitalist globalisation has not yet reached its mature state. Capitalism as a mode of production has not yet turned the majority of the world's potential labour force into permanent wage labourers. The World Bank's 1995 World Development Report, which was devoted to the theme of 'workers in an integrating world', provides data, which enables us to make an estimate of the world's wage labourers<sup>15</sup>. Of the world's 2.4 billion workers, 900 million were defined as wage labourers. This is only 38%. According to the source, the majority of those wage labourers were to be found in the services sector, namely 513 million, 287 million worked in the industrial sector and only 86 million in the agricultural sector. However, the shift in the world's

wage labour force is also clearly shown: in the early 1990s, the majority of the world's wage labourers no longer work in high-income countries, but in middle-income countries. People are defined as wage labourers, or employees, in most of the current global statistics if they work in a more or less permanent salaried position for more than 20 hours a week. In addition, there are also a lot of people who sometimes work as casual or seasonal labourers, quite a number of them being part of a floating labour force which continuously migrates to places where they expect to find paid work. Many of them have diversified livelihood profiles, in which wage labour is combined with forms of self-employment, or even the role of employer.

*Table 1: wage labourers as part of the labour force, in agriculture, services and industry, and in low-income, middle-income and high-income countries, approx. 1990.*

<i>sector</i>	<i>low-income</i>		<i>middle-income</i>	
	<i>total</i>	<i>wage</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>wage</i>
<i>Agricult.</i>	865	31	190	49
<i>Services</i>	320	148	260	177
<i>Industry</i>	200	60	180	138
<i>Total</i>	1385	239	630	364
<i>%</i>		17		58

<i>sector</i>	<i>high-income</i>		<i>world total</i>	
	<i>total</i>	<i>wage</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>wage</i>
<i>Agricult.</i>	15	6	1070	86
<i>Services</i>	220	188	800	513
<i>Industry</i>	100	89	480	287
<i>Total</i>	335	283	2350	886
<i>%</i>		84		38

Studying the facts and figures on the dynamics of wage labour expansion is no easy task. The International Labour Organisation stopped providing statistics on numbers of employees in 1990 and only scant data had been provided previously. However, the data that does exist shows us that in the cradle of industrial capitalism, the United Kingdom, 29 million

people of the 38 million between 15 and 64 years of age are regarded as economically active, of which 22 million are employees or wage and salaried labour. This means that 58% of the potential labour force actually works as wage labourers, either in the private or in the public sector. This percentage is considerably higher in North America, and in Russia and most former socialist countries in Eastern Europe where it is almost 70%, and it is lower in other industrialised countries, being close to 50%. In newly industrialising countries, like Brazil or Mexico, it begins to reach comparable levels (42%, resp. 46%), but in others it is still much lower. In Egypt for instance it is only 23%, in Indonesia 18%, in China 16%, in Pakistan 14%, and in India only 11%. On the other hand, it is obvious that a major shift in the world's wage labour is taking place from the old industrialised countries to the many new ones. Moreover, in the world's rural areas, the importance of a variety of forms of wage labour in and outside of agriculture is rapidly increasing as well.

*Table 2: wage labourers in the late 1980s, selected countries, and a comparison with 1960 (millions of people)<sup>16</sup>*

pop = population

PLF = potential labour force (people between 15 and 65 years old)

WL = statistically registered wage labourers/employees

<i>Country</i>	<i>pop. 1989</i>	<i>PLF 1989</i>	<i>WL c 1989 and % of PLF</i>	<i>WL 1960</i>
<i>Russia</i>	149	99	68 = 69%	...
<i>USA</i>	247	163	112 = 69%	58
<i>Canada</i>	26	18	12 = 68%	5
<i>Poland</i>	38	25	15 = 60%	...
<i>Australia</i>	17	11	7 = 59%	4
<i>UK</i>	58	38	22 = 58%	23
<i>W. Germany</i>	62	43	25 = 58%	22
<i>Netherlands</i>	15	10	5 = 53%	3
<i>Japan</i>	123	85	45 = 53%	29
<i>France</i>	56	37	18 = 48%	15
<i>Mexico</i>	84	48	22 = 46%	...

<i>Brazil</i>	147	88	37 = 42%	11
<i>Venezuela</i>	19	11	4 = 38%	1
<i>Philippines</i>	61	34	10 = 29%	2
<i>Egypt</i>	51	28	6 = 23%	4
<i>Indonesia</i>	178	105	19 = 18%	10
<i>China</i>	1088	726	116 = 16%	...
<i>Pakistan</i>	108	57	8 = 14%	6
<i>Colombia</i>	32	19	3 = 13%	3
<i>India</i>	816	477	52 = 11%	...

### **The globalisation of the social problem**

Many of the world's wage labourers have become part of an affluent society and have become wealthy consumers. However, in many of the countries affected by rapid increases in wage labour, poverty, poor and unhealthy working conditions, exploitation and oppression are part and parcel of livelihood profiles in which wage labour has become a dominant characteristic. This is an area, which is not given enough attention in the many livelihood studies, which have become one of CERES' core domains<sup>17</sup>. There is a huge difference in wage levels and working conditions in the world for comparable types of work. Female unskilled textile workers in Frankfurt earned an annual average of 18,000\$ in 1994, while they earned less than 1,000\$ in Jakarta or Nairobi. University-trained engineers earned 53,000\$ in Frankfurt and 5,000\$ in Bombay. If I am asked to do a consultancy job for our Minister for Development Co-operation my university wants at least 1,000 euro per day, much more than the 200\$/day which is the so-called global World Bank tariff. Indian or Kenyan colleagues are even willing to do the same work for less than half that price. In a few newly industrialising countries average wage levels have gradually improved, but in many other countries real wages have deteriorated during the last thirty years. Working hours are often long, child labour still considerable, labour conditions unhealthy, social security arrangements meagre or absent, jobs very unstable and payment often erratic and subject to long delays. Many of the world's wage labourers are unable to support their families with the wages they earn, and there often is a strong perception of poverty<sup>18</sup>.

The globalisation of the world's social problem of wage-related poverty has, of course, a lot to do with the fact that many others are not yet part of the world's wage labour force. Some of them are strongly connected to the global economy by commercial linkages, while retaining self-employment types of labour organisation. But many of the non-wage workers work use means of production, which generate very low productivity and provide them with only a marginal existence. They are hardly integrated into the global economy as producers or as consumers. Whenever the World Bank and the OECD talk about absolute poverty<sup>19</sup> they nowadays use the one-dollar-of-purchasing-power-a-day cut-off point, below which people are regarded as extremely poor. It is a very crude tool, which has been successfully used to put the poverty debate back to the centre of the development debate during the last few years. After 55 years of official development assistance, the basic questions are again what they were back in 1948: how to get rid of human deprivation in the light of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and how to assure the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for humankind as a whole.

### **Poverty: pressing research questions**

The debate on human deprivation, and on poverty, has recently seen a proliferation of complexity in concepts and a simplification to one basic concept: the number of people with less than one dollar a day. Complexity and simplicity are both needed.

Complexity is needed to understand the linkages between the many causes of human deprivation and to understand the reasons for success or failure of poverty reduction approaches, like the current Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the use of a tool like Poverty and Social Impact Analysis<sup>20</sup>, or a participatory intervention evaluation<sup>21</sup>.

To understand the causes of poverty in any particular situation it is important to look at the various causal factors that may result in a situation of relatively low consumption, and related ills like hunger and occasional famine conditions, bad housing, unhealthy living conditions, a lack of knowledge and education levels, a lack of endowments or assets, a lack of access to social networks and social security arrangements,

social isolation, and exclusion, a lack of entitlements, a lack of access to power to change conditions and finally a lack of protection against natural and socio-economic disasters and against violence and theft.

A basic element of all poverty research is to understand the reasons for low real income. Five basic questions should be asked:

**What are the real labour hours?**

Are they low in a society because of relatively high numbers of inactive people, or a relatively high number of inactive hours? (youth, elderly, non-working women, people who do not work or cannot work because of disabilities, diseases, religious taboos, holidays, 'low labour ethos')

Are they low because of high transaction costs? (e.g. because of distances to work, water, energy, fields, markets, etc.)

Are they low because of a preference for leisure time, or for socio-cultural activities with a low labour output?

**What is the labour productivity per hour of labour in volume or weight?**

Is it low because of adverse natural or physical circumstances?

Is it low because of inefficient labour organisation?

Is it low because of lack of tools, or lack of knowledge?

Is it low because of low or adverse management support?

Is it low because of theft, storage losses, and inefficient secondary use?

**What is the labour productivity per hour of work in monetary terms?**

Is it low because of relatively low payment for products, as a result of competition, or market imperfections?

Is it low because of low gross wages?

Are high contributions made to owners of means of production, to tax agencies, to social security agencies, to creditors?

Is it low because the more productive jobs are out of reach (geographically or socially)?

Is it low because of high wastage, poor accessibility of markets, expensive transport, or high trade margins?

**What are the existing arrangements with regard to income and product sharing?**

What are the financial/economic arrangements of care for children, the elderly and the handicapped?

What are the existing formal and informal social security, insurance and credit arrangements?

What are the possible coping mechanisms for people facing acute income stress?

What survival mechanisms exist to deal with calamities?

**What can be bought with net incomes?**

What is the real purchasing power of a certain net monetary income?

Is there a high leakage of income to socio-cultural or religious obligations?

Is there a high leakage to rent and interest payments and to forms of tribute payment?

Are prices for consumer goods and services relatively high compared to prices for labour (e.g. because of a terms of trade problem)?

The 1970s and 1980s were characterised by a large number of rather complex poverty and labour productivity studies. In the 1990s, researchers and policy makers seemed to be keen to get back to basics again. It was concluded that simplicity was needed to catch the eyes and ears of a world community of decision makers and of public opinion leaders who had become victims of a disease called aid fatigue and also to break through the vested interests of the world's wealthy groups. The following are the constructed facts:

*Table 3: The number of people living in absolute poverty (living on less than 1 \$ per day)<sup>22</sup>*

<i>Region</i>	<i>% below 1\$/day 1987</i>	<i>Number in millions 1987</i>
<i>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</i>	15.3	64 = 5%
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	4.3	9 = 1%
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	46.6	217 = 18%

<i>Eastern Europe &amp; Central Asia</i>	0.2	1 = 0%
<i>South Asia</i>	44.9	474 = 39%
<i>China</i>	30.0	303 = 25%
<i>East Asia &amp; Pacific (- China)</i>	23.9	114 = 9%
<i>Total</i>	28.3	1202 = 100%

<i>Region</i>	% below 1\$/day 1998	Number in millions 1998
<i>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</i>	15.6	78 = 7%
<i>Middle East and North Africa</i>	1.9	6 = 1%
<i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>	46.3	291 = 24%
<i>Eastern Europe &amp; Central Asia</i>	5.1	24 = 2%
<i>South Asia</i>	40.0	522 = 44%
<i>China</i>	17.2	213 = 18%
<i>East Asia &amp; Pacific (- China)</i>	11.3	65 = 5%
<i>Total</i>	24.0	1199 = 100%

This data does not yet include the results of the East Asian Crisis and the further deterioration of the situation in Africa and the former Soviet Union. One may fear that the improvement in the world percentage of the extremely poor, between the mid 1980s and the mid 1990s, was undone between 1996 and 2000. The number of extremely poor in the world has further increased, possibly even to beyond 1.3 billion people. One can assume that most of these extremely poor are also the majority of those without formal education, with a short life expectancy, with high incidences of child mortality and that they are likely victims of violence and crime. Many of them are women, certainly more than their world share; and many of the extremely poor live in degraded and risky physical environments.

In Copenhagen, at the World Social Summit of 1995, the eradication of world poverty was formulated as the most important goal of development assistance. It became the first of eight so-called Millennium Development Goals.

*Table 4: Millennium Development Goals<sup>23</sup>*

- I. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- II. Achieve universal primary education
- III. Promote gender equality and empower women
- IV. Reduce child mortality
- V. Improve maternal health
- VI. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- VII. Ensure environmental sustainability
- VIII. Develop a global partnership for development

In 1996, a straightforward target had been formulated, namely a halving of the number of extremely poor by the year 2015. That would mean: 650 million people would have gone beyond the 1\$ per day target. If their average poverty gap would have been a quarter \$ it would mean a redistribution of about 150 million US\$ per day, or close to 60 billion US\$ per annum. Despite the stagnation or even reduction in international official development aid in recent years, the annual total ODA sum still stands at 50 billion US\$. The annual flow of foreign direct investment to low and middle income countries from private sources is more than 100 billion US\$ and migrant remittances from North to South are also approaching that level<sup>24</sup>. The big question of course is how can one make sure that at least part of those international flows to, and part of the domestic savings in, developing countries will improve and not further deteriorate the situation of the extremely poor. What are the most effective approaches to ensure the right to a decent life for these 1.3 billion people below what is, at the level of the planet, currently regarded as the bare minimum?

### **Social polarisation**

One of the tragedies of the last four so-called development decades is that the global successes related to improving people's average health and literacy levels<sup>25</sup> have resulted in many relatively healthy, relatively educated people, whose labour and skills have not become part of the global economy as employers or employees. The outlook of many of these people has become at least partly global and their desires definitely go far beyond the poverty and hopelessness, which they endure.

Globalised capitalism is not affecting them as permanent wage labourers with technologically advanced means of production and productive modes of organisation. At best they remain a marginal labour force of casuals, peasants, and informal sector workers. Poverty affects them continuously and results not only in poor living conditions and marginal participation in the world's technological and social progress. It also results in a psychological state of self-blame and images of failure. Or it translates into hatred and criminal, often destructive or even terrorist behaviour. Social polarisation translates into more authoritarian solutions towards those who are regarded as criminal offenders of the law, or as illegal immigrants into forbidden lands. According to the International Centre of Prison Studies, of King's College in London, the number of prisoners in the world has gone up from an estimated 5.6 million people in 1992 to 8.7 million people in 2002. This means that of every 100,000 people in the world 150 are currently in jail. Ten years ago this was only 100 per 100,000. More details are provided in Table 5.

*Table 5: The World's prisoners, 1992 compared with 2002<sup>26</sup>*

<i>Regions</i>	<i>1992 x 1000</i>	<i>2002 x 1000</i>	<i>index 2002/ 1992</i>	<i>2002 per 100,000 people</i>
<i>Africa</i>	( 550)	829	151	130
<i>America</i>	1780	2786	157	348
<i>Asia</i>	(1579)	2923	185	88
<i>Europe</i>	1439	1869	130	232
<i>Middle East</i>	166	249	150	176
<i>Oceania</i>	22	31	141	107
<i>WORLD</i>	5536	8687	157	145
<i>selected countries</i>				
<i>Rwanda</i>	(4)	112	(2800)	1400
<i>USA</i>	1295	2019	156	702
<i>Russia</i>	723	905	125	628

<i>Kazakhstan</i>	...	84	...	522
<i>Ukraine</i>	130	199	153	406
<i>Thailand</i>	94	258	274	401
<i>South Africa</i>	112	177	158	400
<i>Singapore</i>	5	16	301	388
<i>Cuba</i>	...	33	...	297
<i>Iran</i>	102	164	161	226
<i>Poland</i>	59	80	137	208
<i>Morocco</i>	33	54	165	191
<i>Mexico</i>	88	155	176	156
<i>Brazil</i>	126	240	190	137
<i>UK</i>	53	80	152	135
<i>Egypt</i>	...	80	...	121
<i>Tanzania</i>	...	44	...	120
<i>China</i>	...	1512	...	117
<i>Philippines</i>	36	70	194	94
<i>Netherlands</i>	7	15	202	93
<i>Turkey</i>	32	61	194	89
<i>France</i>	48	51	106	85
<i>Germany</i>	57	75	132	82
<i>Bangladesh</i>	44	70	159	54
<i>Japan</i>	46	67	146	53
<i>Pakistan</i>	73	79	108	51
<i>Nigeria</i>	...	39	...	33
<i>Indonesia</i>	41	63	153	29
<i>India</i>	...	281	...	28

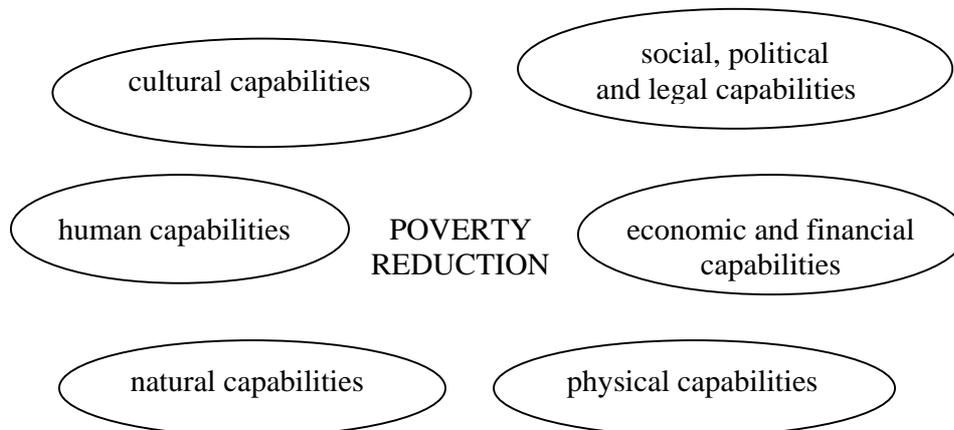
It is quite revealing that, with Rwanda as the only exception, the country with the highest percentage of people in jail is the Land of the Free, the United States of America. It also has the highest absolute number of prisoners in the world, more than 2 million, almost a quarter of the world's prisoners, and more than in China. In income-distribution terms it is also one of the most polarised rich countries in the world, with abject poverty alongside blatant wealth<sup>27</sup>.

## **The perception of poverty**

Poverty is not only about dollars a day. Poverty is also about perception. People are poor compared to their own ambitions, often fed by their own histories of education and travel. People are poor if they compare themselves with others nearby who have been more successful according to the prevailing norms of success and failure. Quite a number of people regard themselves as poor compared to their own parents and grandparents, or compared to their own past. They have not recovered from periods of civil wars, economic crises, or natural disasters, or they have become victims of disease and misfortune in their own immediate social environment, without adequate provision from a social security network. Finally, many people regard themselves as poor when they are confronted with images of elsewhere, images, which nowadays reach the most remote corners of our world. Radio and newspapers have had a considerable impact for years. I remember my surprise in 1982 when I visited a very remote area in North-western Kenya and I found a group of schoolteachers listening to the news every evening. First the news of the Kenyan state-owned broadcasting corporation was laughed away, then it became serious when the BBC World Service was listened to and finally most attention was given to the English-language programmes of the German radio station for Africa. After that the teachers would discuss their interpretations with their many friends and family members who would come to find out what it was that was useful to know. In 2002, I visited the area again and this time I was there when a large number of people flocked around the newly installed colour television set to watch World Cup soccer games and a variety of videos in a building left behind by a religious NGO which had been kicked out of the country. The area was still rather isolated but now you could also find people who were used to internet and email and who used mobile phones. The impact as regards images of wealth must be enormous and it certainly adds to the travelling culture and even generates trans-national outlooks. CERES' recent paper on transnationality gives a vivid description of its importance<sup>28</sup>.

## Capability domains

It is in CERES' tradition to combine levels of scale. In addition to a global, macro-level analysis we find an emphasis on meso-level analysis with regard to institutions and organisations and we find a lot of work on the social micro-level of scale: individuals, households, kin-groups, and village or neighbourhood communities. The perspective is mostly from below, as it is often called<sup>29</sup>, and with a growing sophistication of participatory research approaches<sup>30</sup>. Recently I was involved in one of the attempts to understand the impact of NGOs on poverty alleviation, as part of the research activities of the Steering Committee on Evaluation of Dutch Co-financing Programmes<sup>31</sup>. Together with Ghanaian colleagues I was responsible for the study in north-eastern Ghana. We had decided to work using the approach developed by Anthony Bebbington<sup>32</sup> and to define poverty as the lack of a capability to deal with insecurity. We used six capability domains<sup>33</sup>:



Together with local stakeholders, we organised workshops to define local concepts of poverty and to arrive at a locally meaningful operationalisation. We also tried to acquire an insight into the variety of intervention agents with an impact on poverty and rural change and we tried to find out about the local evaluation of change by a variety of people, differentiated according to relative wealth, age, gender, religious

and ethnic classes. We also selected villages for in-depth studies of the pathways of change.

### **Balungu-Lungu**

One of those villages was Balungu-lungu, near the boundary with Burkina Faso<sup>34</sup>. It is interesting to see what type of variables were regarded as useful tools to identify poverty or wealth levels, and what the poverty or wealth scores were in this village. It was important to have separate questions for the (senior) man of the household and for the (senior) woman present, often his first wife, and it was interesting to note that a variety of physical and natural assets dominated the wealth indicators. Monetary income, or levels of remittances were not regarded as very relevant in this village, because of its fluidity and relative unimportance<sup>35</sup>.

People with different wealth profiles view recent changes as different, and attach different values to the activities of intervening agencies. But men do this differently to women, old people very differently to young people and, in this particular area, people who had recently become Christians act differently in comparison to people who still adhere to so-called traditional religion. Some villagers bemoan the health risks of new water projects, or the fact that there is increased trouble making, high teenage pregnancy and an increase in what they regard as 'waitism' and even 'whitism', which means you only do things if an external agency lures you into action and if a white face is connected to that external agency. However, in this study area people generally noticed an improvement in living conditions and reported major positive changes in most of the capability categories. This can partly be attributed to overall improvements in rainfall, political stability and economic growth in Ghana as a whole, since the disaster years of the early 1980s. However, people also attribute it to the successful activities of the most important NGO in their village, at the same time lamenting the government, which has become increasingly ineffective or invisible. In our study we were able to prove that the scores on dynamic variables between those who were member of the NGO group were better when compared to those who were not. In a pathway study approach it became evident that most of the changes in household's capabilities happened after they had

become members of the NGO group. It is an interesting illustration of the sceptical attitude in the current Dutch development arena that we had to defend our positive findings against considerable disbelief. It also illustrates, though, that forty years of major Dutch development assistance hardly resulted in long-term panel data in core areas of Dutch involvement. The evaluation practices have continued to have a hit-and-run character and can never provide good insights into long-term processes of change and the relative importance of development initiatives. The argumentation behind changes in policy, for instance with regard to project aid versus sector aid, or aid via international, governmental or non-governmental agencies, or country and sector choices, has often been based on changing belief systems rather than on hard evidence<sup>36</sup>. Many of the studies are stories, constructions with little sophistication. CERES could play a role in increasing quality, but a major perception gap then has to be covered between the community of social scientists and the community of aid practitioners and policy makers. This has to be implemented in the Netherlands and at a European and global level.

*Table 6: Selected Poverty/Wealth indicators, and scores for Balungulungu, North-eastern Ghana*

man = 'head of the household', the senior man in charge  
 woman = (often) the senior or first wife of the head of the household

type of capital/capability	percentage of sample			
	>75 %	50- 75%	25- 50%	<25 %
<i>natural capital</i>				
woman owns chicken	+			
man has access to > three acres of fields		+		
last year's harvest lasted > five months			+	
woman has a dry season garden				+
<i>physical capital</i>				
man's house has door and window frames	+			
man owns a radio		+		
man owns a plough			+	
woman owns a sewing machine				+

<i>human capital</i>				
woman received agricultural training	+			
man had gender awareness training		+		
woman is literate			+	
man is literate				+
<i>economic capital</i>				
man sold livestock last year	+			
woman receives remittances from her children		+		
woman sold crop			+	
member of the household is employed locally				+
<i>social-political capital</i>				
household in a village water committee	+			
at least one child worked in S. Ghana		+		
the household belongs to the <i>Tindana</i> lineage			+	
household is represented in a unit committee				+
<i>cultural capital</i>				
people in the hh can speak other languages	+			
woman has >2 ceremonial bowl types		+		
the woman has become a Christian			+	
people in the household speak English				+

### **Needed: an overhaul of development and poverty-oriented research**

What is also clear to me is that the organisation of poverty and development-oriented research in the Netherlands needs a major overhaul. The majority of our current research efforts is organised around individual PhD projects, which often have a combined fieldwork period of one year, and a rather limited time frame. This individualised set-up will never produce the necessary long-term data sets, which are needed both to understand change and to understand the relative importance of a variety of change agents. It has resulted in an exaggeration of agency and micro-level research at the expense of finding the structure behind agency, and hence a more meso-level and macro-level research. It has

also led to an emphasis on the poor in poor areas, without understanding processes of wealth accumulation in these same areas, with their obvious impact on the poor. Poverty research can benefit considerably from longitudinal research efforts, proving the enormous fluidity of assets and income and also proving the problematic character of most of our concepts that we use to characterise people: us urban or rural, as agricultural or non-agricultural, as rich or as poor. Many people experience rather dramatic turns in their livelihoods and many have diversified portfolios. Many are also very mobile, both looking at geography, sector, and even culture<sup>37</sup>.

### **A twelve-point agenda for CERES**

What does all this mean for CERES? CERES has become the largest research school in the social sciences in the Netherlands, with more than 200 senior members and more than 250 PhD students. Since the start in 1993, 198 PhD theses have successfully been defended in a variety of sub-domains.

*Table 7: CERES Strength and Performance*

*CERES Working programmes:*

1. Management of natural resources, human resources and social security
2. Rural transformation: resources, adoptions and linkages
3. Enterprise, governance and local-global interactions
4. Structural adjustment and sustainable development
5. State formation and disintegration
6. Health, well-being and population dynamics
7. Culture, religion and identity formation
8. The management of meaning and the meaning of management

*CERES WP      senior staff      senior staff      current      past PhD*

	<i>numbers</i>	<i>fte</i>	<i>PhD candidates</i>	<i>theses</i>
1	29	10.2	87	63
2	28	9.1	51	44
3	33	7.7	29	22
4	10	2.1 *	10	11
5	43	13.1	37	36
6	8	2.1 **	10	3
7	25	9.9 ***	21	15
8	26	10.0	14	4
Total	202	64.2	259	198

\* linkages with the Tinbergen and Mansholt Research Schools

\*\* linkages with the ASSR and NETHUR Research Schools

\*\*\* linkages with the CNWS and NOV Research Schools

It is important to connect the scientific debates about some other core concepts in the domain of CERES with the renewed debate on poverty and poverty alleviation. It is important to do that in all eight CERES working programmes and in relation to the core concepts which were central in the recent ‘pathways of development’ project:, namely livelihood, globalisation, governance, identity, transnationalism, and knowledge construction<sup>38</sup>. The attempt to do so is central to this year’s summer school<sup>39</sup>. It is also useful for making the debate truly global and comparative and for devoting attention to poverty and deprivation in the so-called rich countries as well. The number of CERES research projects in the Netherlands and other parts of the European Union is increasing.

The research school’s research and PhD training work, its *raison d’être*, should be embedded in an enabling environment for high-quality and high-impact scientific work. With the start of the next five-year period, in 2004, we have set ourselves new targets, an agenda of twelve action points:

1. We want to continue the positive experiences with ‘concept mapping’ groups, by starting new ones every year, and by stimulating cross-cutting discussions in CERES as a whole.

2. We are generally happy with our first-year training programme, but we should improve the training of more advanced PhD candidates in and outside the CERES working programmes.
3. We want to maintain and strengthen the national network function of CERES for social transformation, development, poverty and multicultural research in the Netherlands, by also co-ordinating research training facilities at the level of the new Research Masters programmes of the various CERES partners.
4. We want to counter the tendencies in some Dutch universities to support local and mono-disciplinary research or graduate schools at the expense of national, multi-disciplinary schools like CERES. We need creative membership structures to enable scholars to participate in CERES' activities alongside participation in local, or mono-disciplinary (graduate or research) schools. CERES will also increase its association with related research institutes in the Netherlands<sup>40</sup>, and its co-operation with neighbouring research schools.
5. With 'societal transformation' gradually becoming the core of CERES' research agenda, there is a need to break through some of the research boundaries which were created with the formalisation of the research school system in the Netherlands. One solution would be to change from a membership organisation to a 'membership and network' organisation and to widen the possibilities for association with CERES' work, as part of a knowledge community.
6. We want to improve our quality improvement and assessment function by introducing a more sophisticated system of productivity valuation, based on clear rules of publication rating and of research time valuation. We will support attempts at the European (EADI) level to come to a more European-based (less USA-biased) system of publication rating.
7. We will resist attempts to restrict the valuation of scientific work by looking at publications in so-called top-level journals only. CERES' own system of valuation also values consultancy and policy-oriented work, the dissemination of results in fieldwork countries and in local

languages, including Dutch, and forms of dissemination through video, and internet presentations and in popular media and textbooks for education purposes. We will improve our own assessment of effect and impact, in addition to output-based judgements.

8. CERES will try to establish a European network of like-minded institutes and has taken the initiative to come to a European system of accreditation of research and research training institutes in our domain. It will also increase the level of European networking.
9. Part of CERES' research work straddles the boundaries between scientific work on the one hand and policy-oriented and practical work on the other. CERES attempts to increase the synergy between researchers and practitioners and will do so by, for example, starting a CERES Development Policy Review Network. CERES will continue to participate in research capacity building initiatives in developing countries.
10. Communication is central to the success of the School and its members. The CERES website is playing an important and growing role within the CERES community. We should be able to achieve more, however, through, for example, website publishing. It is also relevant to maintain good contacts with our alumni, making use of the CERES website.
11. With the sheer numbers of scientists involved in CERES there is a need for more transparent governance structures.
12. In view of the financial difficulties facing Utrecht University and some other partner universities, it is wise to try and find additional sources of financing and facilitation at NWO, KNAW and EU levels. Public-private research alliances will also be explored.

## **Thanks**

The University of Utrecht has hosted CERES from the start. Utrecht University and its Faculty of Social Sciences were a secure centre of

gravity. A new wind seems to be blowing now and new leaders are taking over who, as yet, do not know the full history. Let me take this opportunity to tell the most important part of the story. In old Italian mythology the Goddess CERES was the Goddess of the plebeii, those inhabitants without political and civil rights, the poor, whose livelihoods and even lives, depended on the whims of Patrician magistrates. In Roman times the Temple of CERES, in the slums of Rome, became a free haven for destitutes and refugees. It was near the Circus Maximus, so you can see how relevant it is that Princess Maxima has agreed to become the chairperson of the Prince Claus Chair for development studies at this University. Gradually, maybe thanks to the mythical power of the Goddess, the plebeii were given protection, organised themselves and after only 220 years acquired complete political freedom. The annual Cerealia feast held in ancient times has now become our annual summer school, to which I would like to invite you all, from this afternoon onwards!

I would like to thank the Rector Magnificus, and the leadership of Utrecht University, as well as the former and current Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences for their support and for honouring me and CERES, with this professorship. I hope you will continue to treat CERES like a Goddess, even if it is the Goddess of the poor, and that you appreciate the creative work that is done by its many scholars, including those in Utrecht itself. I would also like to request your support so that the current involvement of the various faculties of this University in CERES' work can, at least, be maintained. We are prepared to look for creative solutions if necessary. I also like to thank the Board of CERES and its chair Hans Opschoor, for their trust in me and for the leadership which they have showed over the years.

I like to thank my many CERES colleagues, who have made CERES what it is now, senior and PhD members, PhD alumni, current and former members of the Board, Directorate, and Management Teams. Above all I would like to thank the four pillars of the CERES Temple: Ab van Eldijk, Agniet Cools, Lolita van Toledo and Caroline Muilwijk. With confidence we look forward to the next five years of the interesting work we are doing. Some research schools in the Netherlands seem to have concluded that they have fulfilled their function and that it is time now for new parochialism. At CERES we think that we have not yet reached that level

of saturation. There is a lot more work to do and the international and national network that CERES provides is a valuable asset, particularly for our PhD candidates, that should be defended and expanded.

Let me finally thank those whose support has been a major resource for my own development. I dedicated my first inaugural lecture, in 1996, to my late father. This time I like to dedicate it to my mother. I do not intend to give a third one so let me also dedicate it to my wife Annemieke. And I hope both of you will accept that you have to share it with the person, without whom CERES would not have existed: Arie de Ruijter. Thanks again, Arie, for your pioneering work<sup>41</sup>.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Published by Druck und Verlag von Otto Wigand, in Leipzig, 1845.

<sup>2</sup> Book cover text of the edition, published by Panther Books Ltd in 1969 (I used the reprint of 1976).

<sup>3</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric, Introduction to 'Frederick Engels The Condition of the Working Class in England, From Personal Observation and Authentic Sources'. Frogmore, St. Albans: Panther Books Ltd, 1969 (reprint 1976), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Engels, Frederick, 1969 (reprint 1976, original 1845), the Condition of the Working Class in England, From Personal Observation and Authentic Sources'. Frogmore, St. Albans: Panther Books Ltd, Preface to the First German Edition, p. 20. It is also relevant that he does not want to take a position with regard to the valuation of poverty in the urban versus the rural areas. In his preface to the first, German edition, he wrote: "...in the case of most quotations I have indicated the party to which the respective authors belong, because in nearly every instance the Liberals try to emphasise the distress in the rural areas and to argue away that which exists in the factory districts, while the Conservatives, conversely, acknowledge the misery in the factory districts but disclaim any knowledge of it in the agricultural areas".

<sup>5</sup> Figure for 2000; based on Dietz, Ton & Fred Zaal, 2002, The provisioning of African cities, with Ouagadougou as a case study, in: Baud, I.S.A. & J. Post, Realigning actors in an urbanizing world. Governance and institutions from a development perspective. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp 265-286, and particularly p. 267. The database shows that there were 24 African cities larger than Durban in the year 2000.

<sup>6</sup> In Nuthan Maharaj, 2003, Doctoral Research Proposal for the School of Development Studies at the University of Natal, Durban: Local governance and urban management in Post-Apartheid South-Africa: a case study of eThekweni Municipality, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Opening speech of the SANPAD Themes conference for Phase 2, Durban May, 14, 2003 by Mayor Hon. Obed Mlaba of eThekweni Municipality. SANPAD is one of the major research and training programmes funded by the Netherlands Minister for Development Co-operation and is meant to stimulate South-African-Netherlands social science collaboration. It is comparable to IDPAD, which is a vehicle for India-Netherlands social science collaboration.

<sup>8</sup> Johann Mouton, 2002, SANPAD A Review of research themes and priorities. University of Stellenbosch: Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies. Keynote address for the SANPAD Themes Conference Phase 2, 'One Step Further', May 14, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> The title of a very recent book, which deals with a wide range of examples of what is called the semi-peripheral regions of the world, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Latin America, and East Asia ('Alternative capitalisms: geographies of emerging regions', by Robert Gwynne, Thomas Klak and Denis Shaw, London: Arnold, May 2003).

<sup>10</sup> As was also stressed by Leo de Haan in his inaugural lecture: L.J.de Haan, 2000, Livelihood, locality and globalisation. Nijmegen: Nijmegen University Press.

<sup>11</sup> A book that I still regard as very influential in my own outlook has been Bill Warren's 'Imperialism. Pioneer of Capitalism', published in 1980, by Verso in London.

<sup>12</sup> The urban population was 46% in 1999 according to the World Bank's World Development Report 2000/2001, 'Attacking poverty', p. 277 (Oxford: OUP, 2000). The

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estimates about life expectancy, literacy and primary school enrolment are also from that source. According to the World Development Report 1995, 'Workers in an integrating world', there were approximately 2.4 billion people working in 1995, with 1.1 billion with the core of their activities in agriculture, 0.8 billion with the core of their activities in services and 0.5 billion with the core of their activities in industry (p. 2; in addition 0.1 billion people were defined as 'unemployed'). In the agricultural sector only 15 million were working in high-income countries (GNP/cap > 8626 \$ in 1993), 190 million in middle-income countries, and 865 million in low-income countries (GNP/cap < 695 \$ in 1993). In services the figures were 220 million, 260 million and 320 million respectively, and in industry 100 million, 180 million and 200 million respectively.

<sup>13</sup> Jan Broek and John Webb, 1968, *A Geography of Mankind*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, p. 423. How wonderful to have a text book of my first year as a geography student, which still is a source of inspiration and facts.

<sup>14</sup> In his book 'La question urbaine', (1973, Paris: Maspéro, p. 29) Manuel Castells starts his data about urbanisation trends in 1920, when, according to him, 253 million people out of the world's 1,860,000 could be regarded as urbanised.

<sup>15</sup> By combining the data on p. 2 with data on p. 72; in appendix A2, on p. 147-148 details are given about countries; this also shows that the data base is often rather old.

<sup>16</sup> ILO, *Labour Yearbook*, 1960, 1970 and 1989. Geneva. Thanks Bastiaan Teune for some fact hunting. Also: World Bank, *World Development Report 1990 (Poverty)*, and for estimates of China, Russia, Mexico, India, and Poland: also WDR 1995, appendix A2.

<sup>17</sup> One of the six recent 'concept mapping reviews', which were part of the CERES Pathways of Development Project was about 'livelihood'. See Kaag, M. et al., 2003, *Poverty is bad: ways forward in livelihood research*. CERES: Utrecht. However, in my opinion, it is based so much on research experiences in marginal areas, outside the core areas of recent wage labour expansion, that it neglects the labour conditions and poverty of wage labourers and of those whose livelihood profiles are conditioned mainly by these permanent, seasonal, or casual wage labour conditions.

<sup>18</sup> In the World Development Report of 1995 interesting evidence is provided: about the fact that the earnings differ tremendously across the international wage hierarchy (p. 11), about the different paths of real wage development between 1972 and 1992 in Malaysia, Poland and Ghana (p. 17) and about the actual (1992) and projected wages and employment shares by region and skill level (p. 121). On p. 3 evidence is provided about trends in real wages in the manufacturing sector, between 1970 and 1990: in East Asia and the Pacific average real wages had increased 2.7 times, in South Asia 1.6 times, in the Middle East and North Africa 1.3 times, in Latin America and the Caribbean 1.1 times and in Sub-Saharan Africa they stagnated. Between 1980 and 1990 real wage levels in the Middle East and North Africa also stagnated, while they had deteriorated in Latin America and the Caribbean (from an index figure of 140 to only 100, taking 1970 as 100). In the government-dominated service sector structural adjustment packages often resulted in a deterioration of real wage levels.

<sup>19</sup> As in the World Development Reports of 2000/2001 (see before) and in the OECD DAC Guidelines on Poverty Reduction (Paris, 2001; see [www.oecd.org/dac/poverty](http://www.oecd.org/dac/poverty)). I was involved in some of the preparations for this document, together with Kees

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Koonings and some other CERES members; see T. Dietz, 2002, *The Agenda*. In: Middleton, Neil, Phil O'Keefe & Rob Visser (eds), *Negotiating Poverty*. New Directions, Renewed Debate. ETC International in association with Pluto Press (London/Sterling, Virginia), pp. 19-25.

<sup>20</sup> This is currently high on the agendas of the World Bank and the British Directorate for International Development. It has now also been picked up by DGIS (DSI/AI; see News Flash DSI/AI, May 2003, MinBuZa, The Hague). Some CERES members are involved.

<sup>21</sup> In research projects in Kenya and Ghana I am trying to develop a research tool, in which local stakeholders are stimulated to do their own research about societal changes, intervening agencies, and the attribution of change to interventions. It covers periods of twenty to thirty years and breaks through the 'normal' evaluation rituals in which one agency or one project is studied but in which the context of the variety of on-going changes, as well as the multitude of intervening change agents are often neglected. I call it Participatory Intervention Assessment.

<sup>22</sup> World Bank, WDR 2000/2001, p. 23. Also see: T. Dietz, *The Agenda*, see note 19. The figure for 1987 for China is my 'guestimate'.

<sup>23</sup> OECD, 2001: DAC Guidelines on poverty reduction. Executive summary, p. 18. Paris: OECD ([www.oecd.org/dac/poverty](http://www.oecd.org/dac/poverty)).

<sup>24</sup> According to IS, Internationale Samenwerking, published by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (May 2003, p.11) foreign investments from "North" to "South" were 133 billion \$ in 2002, remittances 74 billion \$ and development assistance 45 billion \$. It is of course always good to put these figures into perspective. The current annual balance of payments gap of the United States has reached a level of 650 billion dollars; meaning that the sum of credit and investments flowing to the United States from the rest of the world is at least 12 times as high as the world's annual development assistance to low and middle income countries. The total annual military expenditure for the world as a whole had reached more than 700 billion dollars in the late 1990s. At least 20 billion dollars were spent on the recent few weeks of war on Saddam's Iraq alone (according to Sheila Sitalsing, in *De Volkskrant* April, 26, 2003, "wederopbouw is minder sexy dan oorlog"), and the total accumulated debt of low and middle income countries had reached a staggering 2.5 trillion dollars in 1998 (2,536,046,000,000 \$, according to WDR 2000/2001, p. 315).

<sup>25</sup> One of the measurement tools, which can be used to understand the world's social problem is the Human Development (or Quality of Life) Index, which was introduced by UNDP, to counter the emphasis on economic variables (and mainly GNP/capita) in World Bank and IMF circles. The HDI indeed shows impressive improvements in many countries of the world, due to its emphasis on education and health criteria (see <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2002>). Recently very useful, and broader assessments of the world's social problem can be found in the annual Social Watch documents (No. 1 in 1997), published by the Instituto del Tercer Mundo, in Montevideo, Uruguay, assisted by NOVIB (see <http://www.item.org.uy>; and also the South-North Development Monitor of the Third World Network in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: <http://www.sunsonline.org>).

<sup>26</sup> Source: International Centre of Prison Studies, King's College London; see: [http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/rel/icps/worldbrief/world\\_brief.html](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/rel/icps/worldbrief/world_brief.html). For the figure for 2002 I used the most recent data in the database. For the figure of 1992 I used the available

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evidence for the early 1990s and constructed some of the missing data, making use of regional trend figures for countries with existing information.

<sup>27</sup> The WDR 1995 (workers in an integrating world) gives details about income distribution in the mid 1980s and early 1990s (pp. 220-221). If we divide the income of the richest 20% by the income of the poorest 20% of the population the figure in the USA was 8.9 (the top 20% were almost nine times wealthier than the bottom 20%). Among most industrialised countries this was considerably lower: Germany 5.8, Japan 4.3, the Netherlands 4.5. Only in the UK, Australia, and Singapore was it more extreme than in the USA: 9.6. Among the low-income and middle-income countries there were more extremes: for instance Brazil 32.1, or South Africa 19.2. In the early 1990s, Russia had already lost its communist heritage of income equality and had reached a figure of 11.4, unlike countries like Poland (3.9), China (6.5) or India (4.7).

<sup>28</sup> See Mazzucato, V., R. van Dijk, C. Horst & P. de Vries, 2003, *Transcending the nation. Explorations of transnationalism as a concept and phenomenon*. Utrecht: CERES.

<sup>29</sup> As in the book 'Rethinking poverty, comparative perspectives from below', edited by CERES members Wil Pansters, Geske Dijkstra and Paul Hoebink, together with Erik Snel (published by Van Gorcum & Comp., Assen, 2000; it was based on the UNESCO conference on poverty in The Hague, 1998, in which also CERES's first director, Arie de Ruijter, played a major role).

<sup>30</sup> Of which many of us owe gratitude to the leadership provided by Robert Chambers, e.g. see his 'Whose reality counts? Putting the first last'. London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1997.

<sup>31</sup> Our Ghanaian report was called "By the grace of God, the day will come when poverty will receive the final blow. The impact of NGOs supported by Dutch co-financing agencies on poverty reduction and regional development in the Sahel. Northern Ghana report" (Ton Dietz, David Millar and Francis Obeng, 2003). Working document to the Steering Committee for the Evaluation of the Co-financing Programme. Amsterdam/Bolgatanga: University of Amsterdam/University for Development Studies Tamale. It was one of the documents behind the "Final Synthesis Report of an assessment of CFA activities to combat poverty in the Sahel" (Fred Zaal, Ton Dietz, Annelet Broekhuis & Ali de Jong and with Adama Belemvire, Francis Obeng, David Millar, Younoussa Touré and Constant Zango). Report to the Steering Committee for the Evaluation of the Co-financing Programme. Amsterdam/Utrecht: University of Amsterdam/University of Utrecht, 2003. Its findings were part of "Eindrapport Stuurgroep Evaluatie Medefinancieringsprogramma" (A. de Ruijter, N. van Niekerk & A.Leliveld, ed., Oct. 2002).

<sup>32</sup> See Bebbington, A., 1999, *Capitals and capabilities: a framework for analysing peasant viability, rural livelihoods and poverty*. *World Development* 27 no. 12, pp. 2021-2024. Bebbington has also been involved in the Andes research of the same Steering Committee: see Anthony Bebbington, Rafael Rojas and Leonith Hinojosa, 2001, *Contribution of the Dutch co-financing program to rural development and rural livelihoods in the highlands of Peru and Bolivia*. Report to the Steering Committee for the Evaluation of the Co-financing Programme.

<sup>33</sup> My own previous work was mainly on the interface between natural, economic, and socio-political capital; e.g. see my first inaugural lecture: Dietz, Ton, 1996, *Entitlements*

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to Natural Resources. *Contours of Political Environmental Geography*. Utrecht: International Books (inaugural lecture University of Amsterdam). In the current inaugural lecture I do not explicitly deal with the link between environment and poverty, although a lot of recent research shows the linkages, both with regard to how environmental conditions are partly responsible for (growing) poverty and with regard to how the poor have difficulties managing their environment in a sustainable way and are often forced by circumstances to 'mine their environment'. In my *Entitlements* book, though, I emphasise the fact that many environmental agencies behave in ways which threaten the livelihoods of the poor and that environmental argumentations are often misused in political arenas, to the detriment of the poor.

<sup>34</sup> Balungu-lungu was chosen as an example of an isolated village, relatively far from the regional capital (Bolgatanga) and from the district capital (Bongo). Government activities have always been rather marginal, but recently the Catholic Diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga has been actively organising the villagers as part of its Bongo Agro-Forestry Programme, which was supported by CORDAID, one of the Dutch co-financing agencies.

<sup>35</sup> In total more than 80 indicators were chosen, giving a broad assessment of the six capability domains. The study was also done in three other villages in North-Eastern Ghana.

<sup>36</sup> E.g. see Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken/Ontwikkelingssamenwerking: *Poverty reduction: Dutch policy in brief, and background document* on [www.minbuza.nl](http://www.minbuza.nl) (2000).

<sup>37</sup> At CERES a few researchers are presently trying to operationalise this idea of longitudinal research, partly making use of the few existing panel data bases, partly reconstructing people's livelihood pathways and partly organising a few rounds of data collection in years with very different environmental conditions. A very interesting example of the last approach is a PhD research project that is almost ready by Adano Wario Roba and Karen Witsenburg: "Dynamics in Pastoral Livelihoods. Sedentarisation, agro-pastoralism and changes in natural resource management in Northern Kenya", Amsterdam: forthcoming. Comparing the post-El Niño (flood) year 1998, with the drought year 2000 a combination of data on harvests, livestock assets and cash earnings showed that out of a sample of 123 households on Mount Marsabit, and using three categories, poor, moderate, and (relatively) rich, only 68 households remained in their wealth category in the 1998-2000 period, 24 households moved up one category and 4 households moved from poor to rich, while 19 households moved down one category and 8 dropped from rich to poor. Positions of poverty and wealth can be very unstable in drylands like Marsabit, as in many other parts of the world as well. One-year survey data about poverty situations is not very useful.

<sup>38</sup> I have already mentioned two of its products (the livelihood and the transnationalism paper). Others are on globalisation ('Globalization: the contentious issues', Kalb, D. & F. Schuurman), identity ('Identity formation: issues, challenges and tools', Siebers, H. et al.), governance ('Governance in action. Theoretical and methodological discussions around a key concept', Nuijten, M. et al.) and knowledge construction ('Unpacking and re-packing knowledge interventions', Jansen, K. et al.). All: Utrecht: CERES, 2003. The pioneer document was: Wil Pansters and Hans Siebers, 2002, *In search of common*

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ground. Reflections on articulating concepts and theoretical orientations in CERES. Utrecht: CERES (also see <http://ceres.fss.uu.nl>; publications).

<sup>39</sup> The CERES summer school of 2003 is about “Faces of poverty, capabilities, mobilisation and institutional transformation” and is to take place in Amsterdam, at the Royal Tropical Institute, June 23-26.

<sup>40</sup> CERES started in 1993 and acquired its KNAW accreditation for the first time in 1994 and for the second time in 1999. The University of Utrecht is the host university for CERES and also provides facilities for the CERES directorate and an office/secretariat. CERES has six founding members: Utrecht University, University of Amsterdam, Free University of Amsterdam, The Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, the University of Nijmegen, and Wageningen University and Research Centre. In the course of time other members joined as associated members: African Studies Centre (Leiden), Centre for Development Studies (Groningen), Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation (Amsterdam), Centre for Environmental Science (Leiden), Institute Clingendael (The Hague), Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (Rotterdam), Institute for New Technologies of the United Nations University (Maastricht), Royal Tropical Institute (Amsterdam), Sanders Institute (Erasmus University Rotterdam), and the Technology and Development Group (University Twente). Recently, the Institute of Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES; Amsterdam) also joined CERES.

<sup>41</sup> I also want to thank Howard of Turner Translations for language assistance.