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Poor-Led Social Movements and Global Justice

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Abstract

Political philosophers' prescriptions for poverty alleviation have overlooked the importance of social movements led by, and for, the poor in the global South. I argue that these movements are normatively and politically significant for poverty reduction strategies and global justice generally. While often excluded from formal political processes, organized poor communities nonetheless lay the groundwork for more radical, pro-poor forms of change through their grassroots resistance and organizing. Poor-led social movements politicize poverty by insisting that, fundamentally, it is caused by social relations of power that exploit and subordinate poor populations. These movements and their organizations also develop the collective capabilities of poor communities in ways that help them to contest the structures and processes that perpetuate their needs deprivation. I illustrate these contributions through a discussion of the Landless Rural Worker's Movement in Brazil (the MST), a poor mobilization organization in Bangladesh (Nijera Kori), and the slum and pavement dweller movement in India. Global justice theorizing about poverty cannot just "add on" the contributions of such struggles to existing analyses of, and remedies for, poverty, however; rather, we will need to shift to a relational approach to poverty in order to see the vital importance of organized poor communities to transformative, poor-centered poverty reduction.

Keywords

global poverty, global justice, social movements, slum dwellers, Landless Workers' Movement, domination

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Justice has to be *realised*, even wrested from, imperfectly just states through forms of collective action.

—Neera Chandhoke[1]

Normative ethicists and political theorists generally propose solutions to global poverty that are redistributive in their aim: more development aid from rich states, increased philanthropy, and the reform of international trade, tariff, taxation, and debt policies that disadvantage poor countries. But as a growing number of thinkers come to see poverty as bound up with the subordination, exploitation, and domination of the poor, more "political" solutions have begun to emerge. The recognition that needs scarcity cannot be grasped in abstraction from the social relations and structures of power that sustain it echoes the insights of critical poverty and post-development thinkers.[2] Yet whereas the latter see grassroots, poor-led collectives and social movements as essential to overcoming the subordination of the poor, theorists with a similarly structural view of poverty have accorded little significance to impoverished communities' struggles to simultaneously reduce their deprivation and powerlessness.[3] Focused instead on transnational, institutional democratic reforms as a means to enfranchise poor populations, they overlook the importance of popular, place-based struggles from below. In so doing, they unwittingly reinforce normative approaches to poverty alleviation that fail to treat those living in poverty—as Sen writes—"as active agents of change, rather than as passive recipients of dispensed benefits."[4]

In what follows, I argue that proponents of transformative, poor-centered approaches to chronic and severe poverty have much to learn from poor-led social movements and organizations in the global South. In particular, critical theorists, deliberative democrats, and neo-republicans who argue that global justice requires the political inclusion of marginalized, impoverished populations should be deeply interested in the ways that their movements view poverty and its remedies. Grassroots poor collectives and struggles are uniquely placed— epistemically, ethically, and politically—to identify and challenge oppressive, poverty-perpetuating social relations. While excluded from formal institutions of power, poor movements politicize the underlying causes of needs deprivation and put more radical, pro-poor prescriptions onto the public agenda. Theorists could help to advance these solutions by delineating solidarity-based political responsibilities for individuals and institutions with resources and influence to actively support and assist progressive, poor-led social movements.

Although organized poor struggles potentially contribute in several ways to the development of transformative, poor-centered approaches to poverty

reduction, I focus here on only two; both of these, I argue, lie outside of the (current) scope of action of other agents of global justice, such as states, affluent individuals, transnational financial institutions and corporations, and non-grassroots organizations. First, self-organizing poor collectives and social movements politicize poverty by raising poor members' critical aware-ness of the underlying causes of their deprivation, and harnessing it to mobi-lize poor communities to protest practices and policies that disadvantage and impoverish them. This activism can shift public opinion and pressure policy-makers to introduce genuinely pro-poor measures. To illustrate, I discuss one of the most successful movements of the rural poor, Brazil's Landless Workers Movement (MST), as well as Via Campesina, the transnational peasant movement that the MST helped to form. Second, self-organizing col-lectives and movements build the collective capabilities of the poor using horizontal, solidarity-focused forms of knowledge-sharing and skill develop-ment. These capabilities enable communities to demand accountability from power-holders, claim social entitlements, and engage in a variety of direct actions to secure access to vital resources or services.[5] A grassroots poor-empowerment organization in Bangladesh (Nijera Kori), and the Indian slum dweller movement, exemplify this collective capability-building function of poor groups.

Poor social movements are not confined to the global South, but because ethicists' and theorists' discussions of poverty have focused on the develop-ing world, I follow suit. There are, however, important parallels (which I do not take up here) between poor social movements in low and middle income countries, and anti-poverty/welfare rights struggles and anti- or alternative globalization movements in rich countries—such as the Settlement Movement, the Industrial Areas Foundation, ACORN, the Campaign for a Living Wage, the Peoples' Social Forum, the European Anti-Poverty Network, and Occupy. Moreover, my contention that poor mobilization contributes vitally to pro-poor social change echoes the claim by global North poverty activists that progressive poverty reduction depends upon the existence of effective advocacy movements intent on dismantling policies that disem-power and oppress poor people.[6]

Why So Little Attention to Poor-Led Social Movements?

According to James Bohman, John Dryzek, Rainer Forst, and Nancy Fraser, the democratic inclusion of poor and marginalized populations is a constitu-tive feature, rather than a distant outcome, of global justice.[7] Rejecting apo-litical accounts of poverty that emphasize resource and needs scarcity, these

thinkers see severe deprivation as the outcome of relations that create and sustain the inequality and powerlessness of the global poor. Token inclusion of the global poor—or the "transnational precariat"[8]—in existing institutions will not suffice to dismantle the unjust structures that perpetuate their exploitation and domination; marginalized populations will instead need to acquire real power to help define, within transparent and democratic processes, what justice requires and how to achieve it. This approach to global poverty and inequality is captured by Forst's view that "justice is not only a matter of which goods, for which reasons, and in what amounts should legitimately be allocated to whom, but . . . *how* these goods come into the world . . . *who* decides on their allocation, and *how* this allocation is made." It is also reflected in Bohman's assertion that "severe poverty is a form of silent citizenship"; in Fraser's claim that there can be "no redistribution or recognition without representation"; and in Dryzek's conclusion that there is "no justice without agents of justice, no effective agents of justice without democracy . . . no global justice without global democracy."[9]

Given their insistence that poor and marginalized populations need to have democratic control over the matters that most affect them, it is surprising that these theorists have said little about poor-led social movements that seek to empower impoverished communities. In part, this reflects their pessimism about the ability of the poor to mobilize effectively in advance of some measure of redistribution: "current global economic arrangements promote domination in the form of capability failure; that is, the lack of opportunity to develop basic powers and capabilities necessary for non-domination . . . [including] the political capability to participate in political life"[10]; as a consequence, the poor "often lack the capacity to exercise agency, which would require more in the way of linguistic skills, free time, education, and places where their voice might be expressed and heard."[11] Yet dispossession from land and essential services often propels poor communities to mobilize; as an activist-scholar reflects in connection with the South African slum dwellers' movement, "the intensity of the shack settlement as a site of contestation . . . is clearly linked to the pressing and at times life-threatening material realities in the settlement . . . and to the contestation over whether or not the market and the state . . . should have a monopoly over the allocation of urban land."[12]

Related to the belief that a lack of resources necessarily prevents the poor from engaging politically, many theorists doubt whether the poor have the requisite characteristics and powers to function as "agents of global justice."[13] According to Onora O'Neill's influential definition, primary agents of justice in the global context possess "capacities to determine how principles of justice are to be institutionalized within a certain domain . . . [and]

typically have some means of coercion." Because they must have "*effectively resourced capacities which they can deploy in actual circumstances*,"[14] primary agents will most often be states—though states can and do fail in this role. O'Neill readily allows that, especially in developing and weak states, "various nonstate actors may also contribute significantly to the construction of justice," depending upon their specific powers. But importantly, she denies that they may ever function as primary agents of justice.[15] O'Neill's view of possible agents of justice may explain the reluctance of certain democratic theorists to credit the agency of actually existing poor movements: building on O'Neill's definition, Dryzek writes that "given obstacles to their exercise of primary and secondary agency, recognition of the moral agency of the poor really only makes sense to the degree that they participate in determining what conception of justice should be adopted in particular contexts"—that is, "formative agency."[16]

Poor individuals who aspire to act as agents of justice face a dilemma, according to Dryzek. To act as formative agents that represent the will of the poor, their actions must "take [a] democratic form." Yet, lacking access to political institutions and the resources they need to organize effectively, the poor may need to be provided "with the material conditions . . . that would enable their agency"; however, "such material redistribution means that the poor revert to being recipients of justice that will render them no longer poor, and so their lack of agency is confirmed." Alternatively, the poor can accept the assistance of more capable advocacy groups, but as these "are unelected and often self-appointed," their claims to represent the poor are suspect. Dryzek's twofold solution to this predicament is to design "democratic forums . . . to give more effective voice to [the poor's] concerns," and/or to use "the theory of democratic representation . . . to scrutinize the potentially problematic claims of advocacy groups and activists acting as formative agents of justice."[17] Dryzek's supposition that the agency of the poor is fraught with contradictions, and the remedies he proposes, underestimate the scope and legitimacy of actually existing poor-led activism. Focusing on organizations that advocate *on behalf of* the poor, Dryzek misses the many movements and organizations that are composed of and led by the poor. Poor collectives and movements, which Dryzek does not discuss, are (as we shall see) are among the most democratic entities to be found anywhere.[18] This is partly because, as Srilatha Batliwala observes, self-organizing poor groups are composed of "direct stakeholders, and so "enjoy high levels of legitimacy and [the] right to representation. These are not movements that need to establish their credentials or mass base. As organizations, they did not mobilize a constituency, their constituents created them."[19] Self-organizing, self-reliant poor collectives and movements differ enormously from INGO-type advocacy groups.

The dilemma that Dryzek sketches leads him to suppose that the poor do not presently exercise democratic formative agency in the sense of shaping "the normative principles of justice that should be adopted in a particular situation." Yet pace this assessment, poor collectives and social movements do (as we shall see) contribute to shaping norms of justice by protesting the subordination of poor communities and claiming rights and social entitlements. Dryzek's claim that the value of advocacy groups depends on their ability "to influence primary agents of justice such as the state and international organizations to good effect"[20] arguably sets the bar too high insofar as poor movements engage in important activities—such as developing the poor's critical consciousness about the causes of their deprivation—that do not immediately impact the state. Dryzek's assessment that poor groups need the assistance of non-grassroots advocacy groups or else special democratic forums in order to exercise effective agency also fails to credit the ways in which existing poor groups develop the collective capabilities of their members. Poor-led movements often employ these capabilities to secure land, housing and essential services from local and state authorities, as the examples of landless movements and slum/shack dwellers' organizations evince. They also use their capabilities to impact policy and governance at the transnational level: for example, years of dedicated organizing and activism by the global peasant movement, La Via Campesina, culminated in the (2013) Draft United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Peasants.

Finally, theorists who view poverty in structural terms may nonetheless fail to recognize the significance of informal, place-based struggles insofar as they believe that only formal political institutions that are "democratically organized and legitimized"[21] can emancipate marginalized populations. Worryingly, this view aligns with a real-world backlash against poor activists in places like South Africa, where even left academics and public figures frequently denounce informal settlement activism as "pre-political or criminal" and so outside of the bounds of legitimate citizens' democratic activity.[22] Forst allows that, conceptually, a transnational *demos* of dominated persons emerges through global activism, but insists that the domination of the dispossessed can only be "overcome by establishing appropriately robust structures of justification that can curb . . . power asymmetries and realize basic forms of justice"—thereby subjecting "non-legitimized rule, be it political, legal, or economic . . . to the justificatory authority of those affected." Notably, he says this duty falls to "the political communities with corresponding means at their disposal."[23] Similarly, for Bohman, poverty and structural inequalities lead to a condition of domination—lack of normative status and communicative-political power—that is only redressable by the democratic state.[24] While he acknowledges the agency of "participants in

transnational public spheres and associations," Bohman has in mind activists whose aims align with a vision of formal, transnational (deliberative) democracy, and who already possess "the capability to initiate deliberation and thus participate in democratic decision-making processes."[25] Among these theorists, only Fraser accords significance to poor social movements, noting the importance of the Zapatistas. But beyond evincing "the merits of a three-dimensional theory of justice," it is unclear how poor "contestation" links up with what she deems the cornerstone of global justice: "formal-institutional channels of democratic transnational politics" that ensure parity of participation for all.[26]

In ignoring place-based struggles by the poor, many democratic theorists miss the crucial linkages between the development of radical political consciousness, collective resistance to social exclusion and domination, and the extension of citizenship rights and social entitlements to marginalized populations. They are not alone in doing so; as Pithouse, reflecting on the response to shack dweller struggles in South Africa, writes, "the systematic inability of elites to comprehend the political agency of the urban poor, or the reality that it has, on occasion, taken democratic and emancipatory forms . . . has been uncritically re-inscribed in the academy."[27] To understand how they can contribute to a pro-poor agenda, we need to better understand how some organized poor groups have managed to mobilize and advance their members' claims to social entitlements and political inclusion—despite a lack of resources, marginalization, and even state repression.

A Relational Approach to Poverty

The normative and political significance of poor social movements only becomes apparent when we shift from thinking about chronic poverty as merely about needs deprivation to understanding it in terms of powerlessness and subordination.[28] This shift is encapsulated by the "relational approach to poverty," which sees poverty as the effect of social relations and practices—often perpetuated by political and legal structures—that give rise to needs scarcity.[29] Rather than focusing simply on the material resources that poor populations lack, the relational view contends that "[power] accounts for how the interests of poor people are often excluded from the political agenda, from the mandates or institutions of public policy; how they are rarely the focus of explicit demands or direct conflicts, but remain inchoate. . . . Poverty persists because the concerns of poor people are invisible and their needs unpoliticised."[30] Chronic poverty cannot be understood by conventional poverty measurements alone (assets, income, and consumption), or by asking about individual choices and circumstances, but requires studying the "social

processes, structures, and relationships that give rise to poverty"—exploitation, discrimination, and social exclusion.[31] Importantly, this shift "from poverty as a state to poverty as a dynamic"[32] aligns with the view of poverty embraced by rural and urban poor–led social movements.[33]

Within political theory, Young's conception of structural injustice most closely approximates the relational approach to poverty. Emerging from her critique of the distributive paradigm of justice as insufficiently sensitive to class, gender, and race-based structural injustices within liberal democratic states,[34] structural injustice highlights the processes and structures that create conditions that render certain social groups vulnerable to harms like homelessness, precarious or un-employment, and low income. At the global level, unjust social-structural processes such as exploitative labor practices like sweatshop work are made possible both by myriad national and transnational policies and norms, and the actions of individuals near and far away.[35] For Young, those living in poverty or facing other systematic disadvantages often have unique insights based on their social location and lived experiences of injustice.[36] Poor-led social movements in developing countries similarly insist that the perspectives of those living in poverty must directly inform poverty reduction strategies, both because of what the poor live and know, and because their marginalization perpetuates their needs deprivation.[37] Critical poverty research, which focuses on harms irreducible to material deprivation—such as social exclusion, humiliation and misrecognition, and epistemic injustice[38]— similarly recognizes the importance of poor people's perspectives to anti-poverty policies. Participatory poverty assessments and studies of poor-led social movements give us a clearer picture of what genuinely pro-poor poverty reduction would look like. Yet with few exceptions, global justice theorists have not looked to critical poverty research or poor-led social movements' analyses of, and prescriptions for, chronic needs scarcity. The discourse ethical and neo-republican analyses discussed here are compatible with a relational approach to poverty, for they recognize that distributive injustices are intertwined with domination; but as we saw, their exponents doubt the capacity of poor populations to exercise agency under prevailing conditions of poverty and injustice.

Against this view, poor-led social movements see their struggles as indispensable for achieving real change: only the organized poor and their allies consistently contest poverty-producing relations of subordination. Importantly, these relations may be partly sustained by seemingly progressive entitles like labor unions, or even governments run by left-of-center political parties (like the Worker's Party in Brazil or the ANC in South Africa). Activist poor groups do not merely engage in resistance, however. Poor-led movements simultaneously struggle to transform relations of subordination and secure resources

and services to meet their members' basic needs; they thus engage concurrently in what Fraser calls struggles of recognition, political representation, and redistribution. Poor-led social organizations, and some grassroots collectives, pursue these goals using a variety of strategies: collective consumption movements, legal challenges against the state for violating the rights of the poor, advocacy for social protections, and direct actions ranging from public protests to land occupations and illegal municipal utility reconnections.[39] While movements hope to secure housing, food, or services through these activities, they see long-term gains around social entitlements as dependent upon asserting the political presence of the poor so as to eliminate policies and structures that impoverish them.

The poor empowerment organization Nijera Kori [NK] ("We do it ourselves") illustrates how poverty activists directly connect needs deprivation to social powerlessness and exclusion "from the collective structures of decision-making that governed the distribution of resources within their communities."[40] Formed in 1980 with the explicit goal of empowering the landless poor in rural Bangladesh, NK organizes landless poor into small groups of fifteen to thirty people and provides them with the means and training to engage in democratic, collective actions that strengthen their influence—especially at the local state level. As Kabeer and Sulaiman explain,

> Training provides group members with information about their rights and entitlements, with the opportunity to reflect on, and analyse, the injustices in their own lives and with the exposure to critical theories that located the roots of these problems in the deeper structures of class and patriarchy in their society. NK also teaches its members the practicalities of collective action: organizing meetings and campaigns, keeping records, collecting petitions, public speaking, registering complaints, framing demands as well as more direct forms of collective action such as demonstrations, marches and sit-ins.[41]

Once membership in these landless groups comprises two-thirds of the village population, they form a committee, and federate into the *Bhumiheen Samity* (Organization of the Landless).[42] Today consisting of more than 210,000 individuals (more than half of which are women), NK has significantly improved the livelihoods, and increased the power, of its members. In their study, Kabeer and Sulaiman found NK membership strongly correlated with a far better understanding of one's constitutional rights; likelihood of being consulted by the local (traditional) justice council and government officials; and involvement with local and national electoral politics (including voting and campaigning). Indeed, the comparison with landless poor not involved with NK is striking: whereas only 1 percent of nonmembers had

engaged in some form of collective political action (over five years), fully 70 percent of NK members "had participated in campaigns, protests, sit-ins petitions, legal action, collective bargaining and other forms of collective action."[43] Members also reported, in interviews, that their membership in NK augmented their collective voice and improved justice in their community overall.[44]

Conscientization and the Politicization of Poverty

Analyzing poverty as "a socio-political relationship rather than as a condition of assetless-ness"[45] brings into clearer view the importance of self-organizing poor collectives and movements as agents of transformative, "pro-poor political and social change."[46] Before discussing their distinctive functions, it is worth sketching some of their main characteristics. Mitlin describes movements of the poor as "politicised collective activities of and for the poor," encompassing not only organized groups but also more informal social mobilization and popular protest.[47] In low- and middle-income countries, poor-led social movements, both rural and urban, engage in a variety of activities aimed at reducing the subordination of poor communities and securing or extending access to the services and resources they lack. Noting that such movements "rarely emerge around poverty *per se*," Bebbington et al. distinguish between three types of movements (which often overlap).[48] The first, exemplified by landless movements, arises "in response to dynamics of accumulation," especially wage exploitation and land (or natural resource) dispossession. A second type, represented by urban slum dwellers' movements, "emerges around the distribution and provision of services and assets that are collectively consumed and provided by the state." A third kind are movements that respond to the poverty-inducing injustices faced by an identity groups—such as indigenous people's struggles in Latin America.[49] For assistance with the resources and expertise that they need to develop and advance their political perspective and program, poor-led movements often lean on social movement organizations and/or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).[50] Importantly, however, poor groups often resist NGO's attempts to shift their movement's radical and politically emancipatory aims toward the goal of mere service delivery.[51]

One of the most important things that poor collectives and social movements do is to contest and reframe norms and assumptions about poverty and its causes, as well as about property relations, assets, and social inequalities.[52] In effect, they place deprivation in "its broader context and [highlighting] ways in which poverty is related to structures of power."[53] Social movements of the poor attempt to change poverty discourse in several ways, such as

pressuring local, state, or national governments to adopt pro-poor policies or to make good on existing social or constitutional rights (e.g., to housing). The MST illustrates how pro-poor social movements can effectively change public debates about poverty, and achieve agrarian reforms and anti-poverty reforms. Formed in 1984 by members of rural trade unions, squatter camps, and the Catholic Church, the MST has since its inception sought to expose the injustice of Brazil's massive land and wealth inequalities. That 47 percent of all farmland was, in 2003, owned by a mere 1.6 percent of landowners[54] is a result not only of the country's particular pattern of settler colonialism—with its forced displacement of poor and indigenous peoples—but also a variety of longstanding land fraud practices.[55] MST's signature, highly successful tactic is to seize and occupy unused and private lands in actions known as "MST encampments," then transfer these as permanent holdings to the landless poor. In addition to land secured through these occupations by the MST and other peasant groups—affiliates of the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers as well as local land justice groups and squatters—this activism triggered government land redistribution policies yielding transfers (between 1985 and 2006) to peasants and rural workers of land parcels totaling the size of Sweden.[56]

The precursor to this mobilization is the politicization of poverty. This process begins, for the MST, with horizontal popular education both outside and inside the temporary encampments that makes plain the injustice of peasants' exploitation and impoverishment. As with other peasant-based movements, ideals of poor solidarity and liberation—especially those of Brazilian pedagogy theorist Paulo Freire and the Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez—shaped the MST from its inception.[57] The democratic, grassroots praxis-oriented approach of these thinkers, and of the Latin American tradition of liberation theology generally, continues to inform the movement. Of particular importance is Freire's notion of conscientization (*conscientização*)—"the development of the awakening of critical awareness"—through which those living in poverty become critically conscious of the relationships of domination that underpin their deprivation.[58] Through critical popular pedagogy, Freire argued, the most marginalized segments of society would come to understand the social and political causes of their impoverishment and subordination; Freire famously taught poor farmers and workers in Brazil to read using as his "texts" the documents that most oppressed them, such as exploitative, quasi-legal land tenancy agreements. This process of acquiring critical awareness of the underlying causes of one's poverty, and the injustice of those arrangements, is rightly perceived by elites as a threat to their hegemony, according to Freire: "if the people were to become critical, enter reality, increase their capacity to make choices (and therefore their capacity to

reject the prescriptions of others), the threat to privilege would increase . . .
The humanization of the Brazilian people loomed . . . as [a] subversive
action."[59]

Freire's insight that becoming critically conscious of social subordination
is part of the process of become authentic "subjects"—fully human, and
equal citizens—has profoundly shaped the MST's approach to fighting pov-
erty and dispossession. As Wolford explains, "the MST increasingly expressed
the struggle for land in universal terms: access to land became less a matter
of simple material acquisition and more a matter of the 'right to have rights'
and a dignified, culturally appropriate living."[60] The movement's success and
longevity is due in large part to its community-fostering and critical con-
sciousness-raising functions, which, according to Dunford, "transform peas-
ants from victims of accumulation via dispossession into activist citizens able
to enact and demand rights for themselves":

> The camps in particular and the settlements that follow promote the
> politicisation and mobilisation of members. "Previously isolated individuals"
> come together in "a new form of collective social organisation" in order to
> collectively learn about the broader structures that work to oppress them. The
> claiming of rights to food and land is thus tied to the development of a broader
> project of transforming structural injustices.[61]

As the MST's experience suggests, regardless of the practical goals they may
have, most poor movements begin by raising members' critical awareness of
their subordination, and of their social entitlements and rights as citizens and
as human beings.

Seeing inequality in highly structural and political terms has enabled the
MST to advance a more radical vision of the causes and solutions to rural
poverty.[62] Successive governments in Brazil have treated "agrarian reform as
an isolated problem" and refused to challenge the landowning status quo, with
the effect that reforms have "had a largely negligible effects on the nation's
land-tenure pattern."[63] By contrast, MST has consistently criticized oppres-
sive property relations and the ownership of certain industries and land by
wealthy foreign nationals;[64] it also opposes practices of "indiscriminate mar-
ket competition" and unsustainable growth fostered by neoliberal economic
institutions and ideology.[65] Beyond such critique, the MST, like other landless
movements, has also advanced alternative norms and concepts for develop-
ment, property relations and ownership, and poverty reduction.[66] The MST
has in effect come to advocate for a broader vision of social justice for
Brazilians—as encapsulated by its slogan of "land, democracy, and social jus-
tice"—that includes a trenchant critique of sexist and racist discrimination

(especially against indigenous peoples).[67] While huge socioeconomic inequalities persist in Brazil, the movement has indisputably built the political capabilities of the rural poor, harnessed these to secure land and services, and successfully demanded "downward redistribution policies" from the state. It has arguably achieved "the extension of basic citizenship rights" and fostered greater "inclusion of groups representing the most vulnerable strata of the population."[68]

The MST has also led the offensive against "the neoliberal agro-industrial model of agriculture," and developed sustainable local food production alternatives.[69] These demands for land redistribution and food sovereignty (as opposed to mere food security) have become the battle cry of the world's largest peasant's movement, La Via Campesina—of which the MST is a founder and central player. Founded in 1993, today this movement has 182 local and national member groups in 81 countries (across 4 continents), representing about 200 million farmers. Like the MST, La Via Campesina is dedicated to securing food sovereignty and the democratization of access to land and vital resources by demanding agrarian reform and peasants' collective rights. To this end, it supports peasant movements worldwide that engage in direct actions against land grabbing and also facilitates their solidarity through south–south knowledge exchanges. The organization is the key driver behind the Draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants, which includes rights to land, seeds, and food sovereignty as well as social, legal, and political rights needed to counter the domination of the rural poor.[70] But La Via Campesina sees the Declaration, and human rights instruments generally, as one tool among many, and in no way a replacement for peasant-led social movements. Given the failure of national governments and international financial institutions to undertake pro-poor reforms, the networks members' "strategies are increasingly focused on carrying out an agrarian reform that is driven by social movements . . . [including] direct actions, such as occupying land, marches and protests and other forms of civil disobedience; the praxis for change, such as building production systems that are compatible with the cycles of nature, solidarity trade relations, and supportive social relations; . . . .the democratization of knowledge and social relations free of oppression . . . ."[71]

While La Via Campesina is transnational in scope, many poor-led movements are local, place-based struggles: the reforms these groups seek often concern the local or national institutions, laws, and relations that directly oppress them, and which present tangible and accessible targets. The local and place-based character of poor social movements thus reflects, as Escobar notes, the poor's struggle to gain "greater autonomy over the decisions that affect their lives."[72] Joining forces with transnational activist networks can

strengthen, but not replace, these place-based struggles. In the case of slum and shack dweller movements, "local organization allows people to choose accessible and popular targets, to win the small concessions that build people's confidence in the value of struggle and, crucially, to organize in such a way that the stigma of oppression can be confronted . . . and courage nurtured."[73] But while the proximate, relational causes of subordination and impoverishment are well discussed within development ethics and the capability approach, global justice thinkers focus instead on unjust transnational economic and political processes.[74] This may explain why theorists who view poverty in structural terms, and who do address global justice activism, direct their attention almost exclusively to transnational INGO-led movements and solidarity networks, such as the World Social Forum.[75]

Social Movements and the Collective Capabilities of Poor Communities

Poor collectives and movements do not only develop impoverished communities' critical consciousness about the causes of their deprivation, and politicize public discourse about poverty; they also build and utilize the *collective capabilities* of the poor to engage in coordinated political action.[76] These functions are closely intertwined, as we saw in the case of Brazil's MST. NK, discussed earlier, also integrates these dual objectives. While Sen and Nussbaum argue that capabilities relate to individual functionings and should be measured and fostered accordingly, some capability theorists contend that collective capabilities are also an important type of capability, especially among the poor. Solava Ibrahim argues that some capabilities are collective in the sense that they are "only present through a process of collective action" and benefit "the collectivity at large . . . not simply a single individual."[77] Strengthening collective capabilities does not magically lead to increased political inclusion or representation, but it helps empower poor communities and establish them as rights-bearing political stakeholders. In building the collective capabilities of the poor, self-organizing collective movements often ground their work in a rights-based framework, as Kabeer and Sulaiman explain:

> NK . . . retains a commitment to the goal of social transformation through . . . .a radical capability approach: strengthening the individual capabilities of poor women and men—their knowledge, critical awareness, and analytical skills— so as to build their collective political capabilities to think and act like citizens. . . . NK's approach can be seen as building capabilities in order to claim basic human rights.[78]

Since the poor are often not seen as bona fide citizens in their society, however, there is a sense in which their movements must invoke new models of citizenship: an insurgent citizenship of the urban poor in the case of the slum and shack dwellers, or "agrarian citizenship" in the case of the rural struggles of landless peasants.[79]

For most poor collectives and movements, the overarching aim in building the collective capabilities of the poor is to empower marginalized communities. While some international development projects and INGOs also seek to empower and build the capacities of the poor *qua* individuals, only poor-led social movements and grassroots organizations develop the skills they need to mobilize *politically*. In Bangladesh, Kabeer writes, only "social mobilisation organisations" [like NK] and their movements seek "'political empowerment' through challenging power structures and promoting rights"; in contrast, the country's ubiquitous microfinance credit groups aim for economic empowerment alone, or else center on social service delivery.[80] Poor movements sometimes aim to increase members' access to resources—such as utilities, credit, and savings—at the same time as developing their political empowerment. The successful Mumbai-based group *Mahila Milan* ("Women Together"), for instance, enables women pavement dwellers at risk of eviction by the city to support one another through a credit and strategic assistance scheme. Similarly, production cooperatives and poor affinity groups—like "scavenger groups" that comb through garbage sites for salvageable waste to sell to industry—help to increase their members' income either by pooling scarce assets or coordinating to improve the efficiency of an income-generating activity;[81] but they also engage in collective protests and seek other means to increase the political voice of the poor.

Organizations and movements that focus on developing communities' collective capabilities to secure a particular resource—like housing, or municipal services like sanitation, electricity, and water—are known as "collective consumption movements." These must work with governments at different levels in their efforts to provide their constituency, such as slum dwellers, —with reliable access to these entitlements. Engaging with the state is not only necessary because of the capital investment in infrastructure that is needed,[82] but because the resources or services in question are public goods requiring regulation and governance. In their interactions with government over the provision of these goods, collective consumption movements expose and challenge discriminatory practices and other obstacles that prevent particular social groups (such as low-caste individuals, ethnic minorities, and the urban chronic poor) from securing access to social entitlements. In other words, they *politicize* access to public utilities and services, and by extension, poverty-producing social relations. In the case of slum dwellers, this starts

with community mappings and enumerations and leads to negotiations and co-production initiatives with local government, or direct political actions like illegally reconnecting utilities in slums. That poor groups work alongside (mainly local) government does not mean they have abandoned hope of far-reaching change, but suggests a pragmatic shift towards securing resources and services from the state. Studies of collective-consumption type movements of informal settlements in South Africa, the Philippines, Pakistan and India suggests that "residents follow active strategies to increase their options, moving between clientelist relations and a rights or entitlements-based discourse as the occasion demands. Confrontation is tempered with negotiations as movements accept the need for reforms within the existing political framework rather than revolution and regime change."[83]

The Indian Alliance is a leading example of a social movement simultaneously working to secure access to entitlements and bring about pro-poor social and economic policy reform. Formed in 1987, the Alliance is composed of three organizations: the National Slum Dwellers Federation of India (NSDF), founded in 1974; the Society for the Protection of Area Resources Centres (SPARC), a grassroots group started up in 1984 to help women pavement dwellers in Mumbai to organize themselves; and *Mahila Milan*, launched by SPARC in 1986. The Alliance eventually went on to found (in 1996) Slum Dwellers International, an influential global network of national slum/pavement dweller federations active in 35 countries. Within the Alliance, the NSDF has focused on providing concrete support to poor urban communities fighting evictions from informal settlements, especially by supplying them with legal and tactical support against shack demolition. *Mahila Milan* was founded to link together hundreds of women's collectives that help women pavement and slum dwellers to create income and savings so as to better weather the various crises that punctuate their precarious living situations;[84] by 2011, it comprised more than 750,000 savers in sixty-five cities in India.[85]

All three members of the Alliance aim to politically empower the urban poor by developing their collective capabilities, broadly speaking. In their anti-hierarchical model of learning, members are engaged in ongoing efforts to teach one another the skills of analyzing collective problems and devising strategic, community-empowering solutions to them. Mitlin reports that in extensive interviews with poor activists in the global South, the most frequently cited political capability was that of "learning, analyzing and thinking strategically, that is the capacity to make effective judgements that advance the needs and interests of the movement and its members."[86] Members of poor organizations and movements need to be able to make ongoing decisions about "when to protest and when to negotiate, the specific forms of entitlements that are most likely to address their needs, which skills

and expertise are needed for co-production, and how underlying structural constraints might be addressed."[87] To develop the alternative frameworks and ideas that can shift the national discourse on poverty and poverty policy, it is often necessary to step back from direct political action and focus on developing the movement's "strategic thinking capacity," often in cooperation with NGOs and research centers.[88]

Much of the education and capability building that the Indian Alliance is engaged in blends the practical and the political, reflecting the fact that the skills and practices needed to secure access to entitlements are also the ones that bring poor citizens into political spaces. As noted above, poor-led movements and movement organizations often build up their members' capabilities as part of the process of securing access to public services like public sanitation and housing. Using a capabilities approach analysis, Mitlin describes the "positive feedback loops" that exist between collective capabilities, citizens' functionings, "improved entitlements," and greater political voice: among urban poor settlement movements, she notes that "the communities that have succeeded in being treated seriously by local governments are consulted about evictions. If the entitlement to resettlement is managed by a community process, then it is less likely that resources are lost through corruption . . . [and] entitlements are maximized."[89] SPARC and NSDF have also engaged pavement and slum dwelling members in collaboratively designing and constructing basic housing, the prototypes of which are displayed in housing exhibitions; and in designing community-managed toilets, which are then celebrated through "toilet festivals" through India, organized by the Alliance to promote the use of public sanitation facilities in slum communities.[90] Several different facets of this process build the critical skills and capacities for citizenship needed by the urban poor, as Appadurai explains:

> Not only have these exhibitions enabled the poor, especially poor women, to discuss and debate designs for housing that suit their own needs, they have also allowed the poor to enter into conversations with various professionals about housing materials, construction costs, and urban services. Through this process, slum dwellers' own ideas of the good life, of adequate space, and of realistic costs were foregrounded, and they began to see that professional housing construction was only a logical extension of their own area of greatest expertise—namely, building adequate housing out of the flimsiest of materials and in the most insecure of circumstances. . . . [T]he exhibitions have been political events bringing together poor families and activists from different cities. . . . As with other key practices of the Alliance, housing exhibitions are deep exercises in subverting the existing class cultures of India. . . . At work here is a politics of visibility that inverts the harmful default condition of civic invisibility that characterizes the urban poor.[91]

The Alliance has also taught slum dwellers how to do community-based enumerations so as to supply much-needed information about the lack of services and proof of the (undercounted) vast number of residents of informal settlements.[92] Slum and pavement dwellers gather information from their neighbors about their dwellings and needs: "Through enumerations they survey and map themselves, and build the skills and knowledge to represent themselves and their needs to government. . . . They develop a critical collective identity that helps form the political basis for their engagement with government."[93] On their face, enumerations are a kind of census; but in reality, they are part of a political "mobilizing strategy, drawing in residents who want to participate in a locally managed identification and verification of their shacks and plot boundaries," and bringing residents together to decide their political aims and strategies.[94]

Many poor-led social movements focus on the development of women's capabilities in particular, for a range of reasons. The NSDF identified women's particular disadvantages as key to understanding the entrenched vulnerability of slum and pavement dwellers, and set the development of women's leadership as a central goal. Advancing *Mahila Milan* within the Alliance and training women to become leaders and organizers in the slum and pavement dweller settlements has been crucial to the Alliance's political success, not least because it has enabled these communities to contest patterns of discrimination and subordination.[95] Within the Alliance, *Mahila Milan* took the lead in surveying the different needs of children, men, and women in slum communities, and undertook to design neighborhood toilet blocks that were subsequently replicated across Mumbai.[96] Women members of SPARC also initiated, and have led, the community enumeration process.

From a capabilities approach, we can see how these collective capabilities of the poor are both instrumentally and intrinsically valuable (in Sen's sense).[97] Pro-poor social movements and their organizations seek to develop the collective capabilities of poor individuals and communities both to support the process of securing access to social endowments and as way of asserting their entitlement to these as citizens. The political practices around securing public goods and services depend upon the cultivation and exercise of a complex set of practical and political capacities and skills needed to effectively demand and secure social entitlements.[98]

Conclusion

From a relational poverty perspective, eradicating chronic and severe poverty requires dismantling the structures and relations that subordinate impoverished populations. Organized poor movements are vitally important to this process because they politicize poverty, challenge the poor's social

exclusion, and demand the fulfillment of their rights. The poor movements discussed here have had some success in bringing about land redistribution and agrarian reform; securing essential goods and services for urban slum dwellers; reforming policies governing informal housing; and even in achieving redistributive social protections (such as Brazil's direct cash transfer to poor families, *Bolsa Família*). Urban and rural poor-led social movements thus pursue both "transformative" and "affirmative" remedies;[99] but pace Fraser, activities that aim at the latter, such as slum dwellers' housing and sanitation co-production initiatives, pose real challenges to the status quo. They do so using the language of human rights, citizenship rights, and social entitlements, and by building the collective capabilities of the poor. In short, organized groups and movements of the poor act both as formative agents (in Dryzek's sense) and primary agents (in O'Neill's sense) of justice.[100]

To appreciate the distinctive importance of self-organizing poor collectives and social movements, theorists must look beyond individuals and institutions in the global North as agents of global justice—and move past tired debates about the "moral demands of affluence."[101] Empirical and ethnographic studies of poor-led social movements belie the assumption that those who are impoverished are incapable of social action. While a more comprehensive assessment of poor-led movements' value requires careful study of the structural limitations they also face—and the differences between and among movements with respect to their beliefs, strategies, tactics, and policies[102]—the potential importance of such movements to transforming structural poverty should be clear. This is not to suggest that poor activism represents the only valid route to poverty alleviation. The wide array of poverty reduction approaches that exist—state-directed, market-based, as well as social movement based—all have important strengths and weaknesses.[103] Nor do social movements necessarily provide the only or surest route to the political empowerment of the poor; state-directed (especially rights-based and participatory governance) approaches to poverty reduction may also empower the poor to some degree. Relatedly, the relationship of poor-led movements to democratic norms and goals, while seemingly quite strong, needs further study.

My argument that poor-led movements are well placed to challenge the relations that disempower and impoverish them may seem to imply that the poor have a moral duty to actively mobilize against poverty. This is an important topic that deserves more attention than I can give it here, but it does not seem to me that the poor can have morally binding obligations to struggle against the structures that impoverish them. Young is surely right that oppressed individuals possess valuable insights about the subordination they endure, but more uncertain is her conclusion that "victims of structural injustice . . . can be called to a responsibility they share with others to engage in

actions directed at transforming those structures" in light of their "unique understanding" and "because their interests . . . are most acutely at stake."[104] It may be better to speak of responsibilities of solidarity that may arise in contexts where poor movements have gained a footing: residents of slums in which there is an active group defending slum dwellers' rights, or peasants in areas where a landless movement has arisen, may have such duties. These responsibilities of solidarity would need to be predicated on certain minimal conditions and capabilities obtaining: we ought not to assign political responsibilities to those whose daily lives are a struggle for survival and whose caregiving roles make political activity onerous. Nor should those living in poverty be expected to put themselves in direct danger, risking retaliation from corporations' security forces or the state police.

Crucially, recognizing the significance of poor-led change in no way relieves the affluent of their moral and political responsibilities to work toward poverty alleviation. Those who benefit from the inequalities shored up by global and national financial institutions and practices surely have a responsibility to reform these structures to the extent that they can.[105] If poverty is driven by relational power inequalities, then profound challenges to norms and patterns that perpetuate these are also essential: "if we are to change the relations between the more and less privileged, we need to change the privileged too: we need to change the way in which the more privileged regard their own privilege and the poverty of others."[106] A more political view of poverty will therefore not reduce the poverty alleviation responsibilities of the non-poor, but rather, give rise to additional, and different, responsibilities. Most obviously, those with resources and political freedoms should help to support and stand in solidarity with poor social activists in the global South.[107] This need not imply a passive solidarity but could include providing material and legal assistance to poor movements seeking to dismantle unjust (local, national, and global) structures and processess that perpetuate their powerlessness and deprivation. Giving financial support to poor-led organizations, or assisting them in their struggles for legal reforms around housing, development, and land ownership, are a few examples of the kind of support the non-poor can offer to poor social movements.[108] Global North citizens can also oppose the shift in government and international development aid policy toward funding financial (microcredit and savings) and social services organizations, and defunding groups that seek to politically empower the poor. Might the act of selectively supporting some poor advocacy groups reinforce troubling power dynamics and undermine grassroots praxis? If the affluent are guided by principles of solidarity rather than paternalism, and are willing to enter into a genuine dialogue with self-organizing poor movements, then arguably these risks—while ever-present—can be minimized.[109]

Finally, taking seriously the importance of poor-led social movements does not require jettisoning redistributive aims, but we should heed poor activists' insight that distributive goals are achievable (and sustainable) only in the context of greater political voice and power for poor communities. It is also worth recalling Young's observation that while power is sometimes included as a good in conceptions of (domestic) distributive justice, the "logic of distribution" obscures the structural and relational character of much inequality and domination—and so also the many nonmaterial aspects of relations of oppression, such as misrecognition and lack of rights.[110] Poor movements often oppose merely distributive solutions like charity and development aid, or market-based approaches like microcredit, precisely because they see them as ignoring the fundamental subordination of the poor—that is, as targeting the economic well-being, but not the social or political empowerment, of those living in poverty. And while some defenders of conventional poverty reduction approaches insist that no conflict exists between a redistributive approach and one that pursues "systemic, political change" on the grounds that there are enough funds for both,[111] this response misses its mark. Organized poor groups aim to transform social relations and structures of domination because these marginalize and exploit the poor, leaving them vulnerable to processes that give rise to needs deprivation. While they seek a redistribution of their society's, and the world's, resources, they understand that this can only come about by transforming the structures and relations that subordinate the poor—and that this in turn depends on mobilizing the poor to action.

Notes

1. Neera Chandhoke, "Realising Justice," *Third World Quarterly* 34 (2013): 312.
2. Influential post-development thinkers who see poverty in terms of relations of structural subordination include Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); James Ferguson, *The Anti-politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticisation and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); and Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development*, 3rd edition, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Zed Books, 1997). Key critical poverty texts include Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Maia Green and David Hulme, "From Correlates and Characteristics to Causes: Thinking about Poverty from a Chronic Poverty Perspective," *World Development* 33, no. 6 (2005): 867–89; John Harriss, "Bringing Politics Back into Poverty Analysis," in *Poverty Dynamics*, ed. Tony Addison, David Hulme, and Ravi Kanbur (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 205–24; Sam Hickey and Sarah Bracking, "Exploring the Politics of Chronic Poverty: From Representation to a Politics of Justice?," *World Development* 33, no. 6 (2005): 851–65; and David Mosse, "A Relational Approach to Durable Poverty, Inequality and Power," *Journal of Development Studies* 46, no. 7 (2010): 1156–78.
3. An exception is Simon Caney, who discusses poor movements that engage in land occupations, sabotage, riots, rebellion, and debt refusal, in "The Right to Resist Global Injustice," *The Oxford Handbook of Global Justice*, ed. Thom Brooks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).
4. Sen, Development as Freedom (New York: Anchor Books, 1999), xiii.
5. Naila Kabeer and Munshi Sulaiman, "Assessing the Impact of Social Mobilization: Nijera Kori and the Construction of Collective Capabilities in Rural Bangladesh," *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 16, no. 1 (2015): 47–68; and Diana Mitlin, "Endowments, Entitlements and Capabilities—What Urban Social Movements Offer to Poverty Reduction," *European Journal of Development Research* 25, no. 1 (2013): 44–59.
6. See Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor Peoples' Movements: Why They Succeed, and How They Fail* (New York: Pantheon, 1977); Stephanie Luce, *Fighting for a Living Wage* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); and Alyosha Goldstein, *Poverty in Common: The Politics of Community Action during the American Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
7. Bohman, "Domination, Global Harms, and the Problem of Silent Citizenship: Toward a Republican Theory of Global Justice," *Citizenship Studies* 19, no. 5 (2015): 520–34; Dryzek, "Democratic Agents of Justice," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 23, no. 4 (2015): 361–84; Bohman, "Domination, Global Harms,

and the Priority of Injustice," and Forst, "Transnational Justice and Non-Domination," both in *Domination and Global Political Justice*, ed. Barbara Buckinx, Jonathan Trejo-Mathys, and Timothy Waligore (New York: Routledge 2015); and Fraser, *Scales of Justice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

8. Fraser, "Injustice at Intersecting Scales: On 'Social Exclusion' and the 'Global Poor,'" *European Journal of Social Theory* 13, vol. 3 (2010): 370.

9. Forst, "Transnational Justice," 92; Bohman, "Domination, Global Harms, and the Problem of Silent Citizenship," 529; Fraser, *Scales of Justice*, 27; and Dryzek, "Democratic Agents," 382.

10. Bohman, "Domination, Global Harms, and the Priority of Injustice," 81.

11. Dryzek, "Democratic Agents," 372.

12. Richard Pithouse, "Conjunctural Remarks on the Significance of "the Local," *Thesis Eleven* 115, no. 1 (2013): 100.

13. On this question, see Simon Caney, "Agents of Global Justice," in *Reading Onora O'Neill*, ed. David Archard, Neil Manson, Monique Deveaux, and Daniel Weinstock (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); and Monique Deveaux, "The Global Poor as Agents of Justice," *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 12, no. 1 (2015): 125–50.

14. Onora O'Neill, "Agents of Justice," *Metaphilosophy* 32 (1/2): 182 and 189, emphasis in original.

15. Ibid., 189 and 191–92. O'Neill cautions that the distinction between primary and secondary agents of justice is invalid in the case of weak states.

16. Dryzek, "Democratic Agents," 366.

17. Ibid., 372, 374, 380, and 374.

18. One researcher calls South Africa's shack settler movement "neurotically democratic"; see Patrick Kingsley, "South Africa's Shack-Dwellers Fight Back," *The Guardian*, September 24, 2012: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/24/south-africa-shack-bahlali-basejondolo.

19. Batliwala, "Grassroots Movements as Transnational Actors: Implications for Global Civil Society," *Voluntas* 13, no. 4 (2002): 404. She focuses on the transnational poor-advocacy networks, SDI and Women in Informal Economy Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO).

20. Dryzek, "Democratic Agents," 366 and 381.

21. Forst, "Radical Justice," *Constellations* 14, no. 2 (2007): 264.

22. Richard Pithouse, "The Shack Settlement as a Site of Politics: Reflections from South Africa," *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy* 3, no. 2 (2014): 195.

23. Forst, "Transnational Justice," 108, 106, and 104.

24. Bohman, "Domination, Global Harms, and the Problem of Silent Citizenship," 526.

25. James Bohman, "The Democratic Minimum: Is Democracy a Means to Global Justice?" *Ethics and International Affairs* 19, no. 1 (2005): 102.

26. Fraser, "Injustice at Intersecting Scales," 369, 368, and 365.

27. Pithouse, "The Shack Settlement," 180.

28. The reduction of poverty to mere needs deprivation is especially characteristic of "shallow pond" thinking about poverty—exemplified by Utilitarian thinkers like Peter Singer— which posits a moral equivalency between an affluent person who fails to do anything to reduce global poverty and a bystander who refuses to help a drowning child in a shallow pond. See Singer, *The Life You Can Save: Acting Now to End World Poverty* (New York: Random House, 2009).

29. Green and Hulme, "From Correlates and Characteristics," p. 871.

30. Mosse, "A Relational Approach," 1165.

31. Harriss, "Bringing Politics," 218.

32. Green and Hulme, "From Correlates," 873.

33. See Anthony Bebbington, "Social Movements and the Politicization of Chronic Poverty," *Development and Change* 38, no. 5 (2007): 796; Anthony Bebbington, Diana Mitlin, Jan Mogaladi, Martin Scurrah, and C. Bielich, "Decentring Poverty, Reworking Government: Social Movements and States in the Government of Poverty," *Journal of Development Studies* 46, no. 7 (2010): 1304–26; Diana Mitlin, "Endowments, Entitlements and Capabilities"; and Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite, *Reducing Urban Poverty in the Global South* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2014).

34. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), ch. 1.

35. See Iris Young, *Global Challenges* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007), esp. ch. 9; and *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

36. Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, 113.

37. See, e.g., the founding statement of Abahlali baseMjondolo, South Africa's highly politically active shack settlement movement, with forty-seven branches nationwide. S'bu Zikode, "We Are the Third Force," http://abahlali.org/node/17/.

38. Sam Hickey and Andries du Toit, "Adverse Incorporation, Social Exclusion, and Chronic Poverty," *University of Manchester Chronic Poverty Research Centre*, Working Paper 81 (Manchester, UK: University of Manchester Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2007); Naila Kabeer, "Social Exclusion, Poverty, and Discrimination," *IDS Bulletin* 31 no. 4 (2000): 83–97; Gottfried Schweiger, "Recognition Theory and Global Poverty," *Journal of Global Ethics* 10 (2014): 267–73; and Gottfried Schweiger, "Epistemic Injustice and Powerlessness in the Context of Global Justice," *Wagadu* 15 (2016), http://webhost1.cortland.edu/wagadu/v-15-2016-special-issue/.

39. Mitlin, "Endowments, Entitlements and Capabilities," 50.

40. Kabeer and Sulaiman, "Assessing the Impact of Social Mobilization," 50.

41. Ibid., p. 50.

42. Ibid., and http://nijerakori.org

43. Kabeer and Sulaiman, "Assessing the Impact of Social Mobilization," p.p. 54-55.

44. Ibid., p. 56.

45. Bebbington, "Social Movements and the Politicization of Chronic Poverty," 813.

46. Bebbington et al., "Decentring Poverty,"1304.
47. Mitlin, "Endowments, Entitlements and Capabilities," 47.
48. Bebbington al., "Decentring Poverty," 1306.
49. Ibid., 1306.
50. Ibid., 1320.
51. See Nigel Gibson, "A New Politics of the Poor Emerges from South Africa's Shantytowns," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2008): 5–17; and Kabeer and Sulaiman, "Assessing the Impact of Social Mobilization."
52. Bebbington, "Social Movements and the Politicization of Chronic Poverty."
53. Anthony Bebbington, "Social Movements and Poverty in Developing Countries." *Programme paper, Civil Society and Social Movements*—paper No. 32 (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2010), 3.
54. Miguel Carter, "The Landless Rural Workers Movement and Democracy in Brazil," *Latin American Research Review 45, special issue* (2010): 189.
55. Angus Wright and Wendy Wolford, *To Inherit the Earth: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for a New Brazil* (Oakland, CA: Food First Books, 2003), 19–24.
56. Carter, "Landless Rural Workers Movement," 191.
57. Wilder Robles, "The Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) in Brazil," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 28, no. 2 (2001): 148.
58. Paolo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (London: Continuum, 2005), 15.
59. Ibid., 16.
60. Wendy Wolford, *This Land Is Ours Now: Social Mobilization and the Meanings of Land in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 95.
61. Robin Dunford, *The Politics of Transnational Peasant Struggle: Resistance, Rights and Democracy* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016), 94–95.
62. Jeff Garmany and Flávia Bessa Maia, "Considering Space, Politics, and Social Movements," *Antipode* 40, no. 2 (2008): 190.
63. Carter, "Landless Rural Workers," 192.
64. Wolford, *This Land Is Ours Now*, 47.
65. Robles, "The Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST) in Brazil," 156–57.
66. Bebbington, "Social Movements and Poverty in Developing Countries."
67. Wolford, *This Land Is Ours Now*.
68. Carter, "Landless Rural Workers," 188–89.
69. Dunford, *Politics of Transnational Peasant Struggle*, 95.
70. http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/WGPleasants/A-HRC-WG-15-1-2_En.pdf.
71. *Struggles of La Via Campesina for Agrarian Reform and the Defense of Life, Land and Territories* (Harare: La Via Campesina imprint, 2017), p. 5.
72. Arturo Escobar, "Reflections on Development: Grassroots Approaches and Alternative Politics in the Third World." *Futures* (June 1992): 421.

73. Pithouse, "Conjunctural Remarks," 102.
74. Some philosophers are averse to examining local and national structures that contribute to poverty on the grounds that it will draw our attention away from the much more significant harms of global processes: Thomas Pogge warns of the poverty fallacy of "explanatory nationalism," and Alison Jaggar is wary of (local) cultural explanations of poverty. Jaggar, "'Saving Amina': Global Justice for Women and Intercultural Dialogue," *Ethics & International Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2005): 55-75 and "Transnational Cycles of Gendered Vulnerability," *Philosophical Topics* 37, no. 2 (2009): 33-52; and Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 17.
75. See O'Neill, "Agents of Justice," and Jennifer C. Rubenstein, *Between Samaritans and States: the Political Ethics of Humanitarian INGOs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) for discussions of INGOs as agents of justice. Theorists who address the role of transnational networks (like the World Social Forum) include Fraser, *Scales of Justice*; Carol C. Gould, *Interactive Democracy: the Social Roots of Global Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and Lea Ypi, *Global Justice & Avant-Garde Political Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
76. Mitlin, "Endowments, Entitlements and Capabilities," 54. Sidney Tarrow also notes: "movement participation is not only politicizing; it is empowering, not only in the psychological sense of increasingly people's willingness to take risks, but in affording them new skills and broadened perspectives"; see his *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 221
77. Solava S. Ibrahim, "From Individual to Collective Capabilities: The Capability Approach as a Conceptual Framework for Self-help," *Journal of Human Development* 7, no. 3 (2006): 398.
78. Kabeer and Sulaiman, "Assessing the Impact of Social Mobilization," 48.
79. Hannah Wittman, "Mobilizing Agrarian Citizenship: A New Rural Paradigm for Brazil," in *Contesting development: Critical Struggles for Social Change*, ed. Philip McMichael (New York: Routledge, 2010), 164–81.
80. Naila Kabeer, "Making Rights Work For the Poor: Nijera Kori and the Construction of 'Collective Capabilities' in Rural Bangledesh," *IDS Working Paper 200* (Brighton 2003), 1–2.
81. Frances Stewart, "Groups and Capabilities," *Journal of Human Development* 6, no. 2 (2005): 185-204.
82. Mitlin, "Endowments, Entitlements and Capabilities," 44.
83. Diana Mitlin and Sheela Patel, "The Urban Poor and Strategies for a Pro-Poor Politics," in *The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South*, ed. Susan Parnell and Sophie Oldfield (London and New York: Routledge, 2014): 298.
84. Diana Mitlin and Sheela Patel, "Grassroots-Driven Development: The Alliance of SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan*," in *Empowering Squatter Citizens*, eds. Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite (London: Earthscan, 2004), 216–25.
85. Mitlin and Satterthwaite, *Reducing Urban Poverty*, 140.

86. Mitlin, "Endowments, Entitlements and Capabilities," 55.
87. Ibid., 54.
88. Bebbington, "Social Movements and Poverty in Developing Countries," 10.
89. Mitlin, "Endowments, Entitlements and Capabilities," 55.
90. Mitlin and Satterthwaite, *Reducing Urban Poverty*, 141.
91. Arjun Appadurai, "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics." *Public Culture* 14 (2002): 37–38.
92. Mitlin and Patel, "Grassroots-Driven Development."
93. Sheela Patel, Carrie Baptist, and Celine D'Cruz, "Knowledge Is Power: Informal Communities Assert Their Right to the City through SDI and Community-Led Enumerations," *Environment and Urbanization* 24 (2012): 14.
94. Mitlin and Satterthwaite, *Reducing Urban Poverty*, 163.
95. Ibid., 162.
96. Ibid.
97. Sen, *Development as Freedom*.
98. Mitlin, "Endowments, Entitlements and Capabilities," 48.
99. Nancy Fraser, Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the 'Post-socialist' Condition (London: Routledge, 1997).
100. Poor individuals and communities also contribute to poverty alleviation in ways not discussed here, such as by participating in community-focused development interventions and by forming highly local self-help groups (not connected to broader movements) to access to essential resources and services. See Miltin and Satterthwaite, *Reducing Urban Poverty*.
101. Garrett Cullity, *The Moral Demands of Affluence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).
102. My thanks to one of the anonymous reviewers for this point.
103. Mitlin and Satterthwaite, *Reducing Urban Poverty*, 13.
104. Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, 113.
105. Young, *Responsibility for Justice*; Jaggar, "'Saving Amina" and "Transnational Cycles."
106. Sally Matthews, "The Role of the Privileged in Responding to Poverty: Perspectives from the Post-development Debate," *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 6 (2008): 1045.
107. See also Gould, *Interactive Democracy*.
108. Rosemary Thorp, Frances Stewart, and Amrik Heyer, "When and How Far Is Group Formation a Route Out of Chronic Poverty?" *World Development* 33, no. 6 (2005): 917–18.
109. For a discussion of the moral and political dangers that attend (institutional-change) advocacy approaches to poverty reduction, see Ted Lechterman, "The Effective Altruist's Political Problem," unpublished manuscript, 2017.
110. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 16, 31.
111. Søren Sofus Wichmann and Thomas Søbirk Petersen, "Poverty Relief: Philanthropy Versus Changing the System," *The Journal of Global Ethics* 9, no. 1 (2015): 10.

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