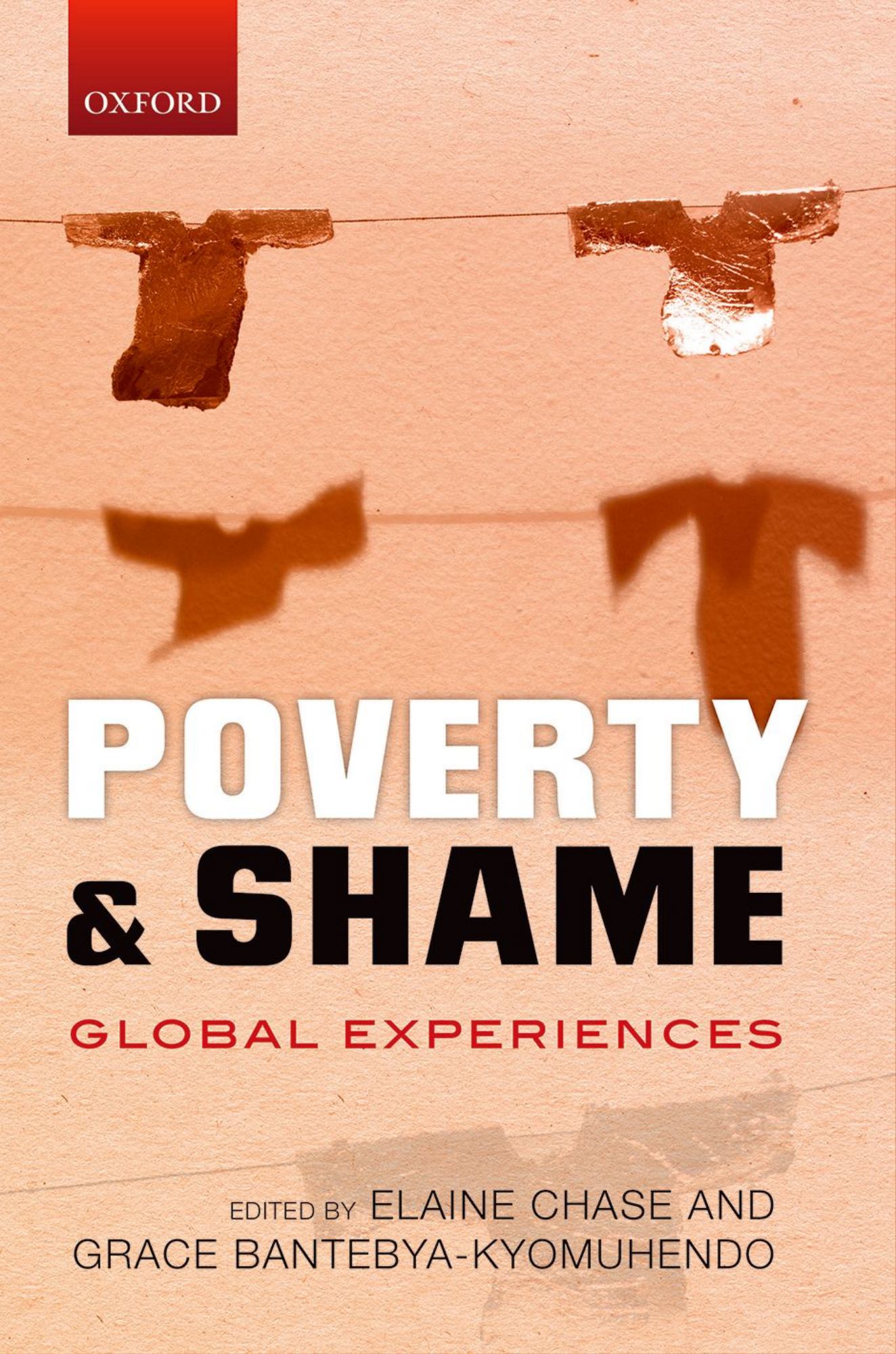
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GLOBAL EXPERIENCES
EDITED BY ELAINE CHASE AND
GRACE BANTEBYA-KYOMUHENDO

Poverty and Shame

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Gaffney, Xavier Godinot David Gordon, Chris Goulden, Julia Griggs, HAN Xiao, Mary Hardwick, Dann Kenningham, Kate Legge, Sophie Lendon, David Levy, Ruth Lister, Mattias Lundberg, Carol Matiko, Simon Pembleton, Maria Ogando Portela, Kei Takahashi, Katherine Trebeck, Thierry Viard, and YAN Haiying. Finally, it goes without saying that our huge thanks go to Robert Walker who led this project from the outset and steered it to its fruition.

Contents

Preface

Poverty is not just a lack of income, wealth, and assets. Rather it is the multiple consequences of this lack that are experienced simultaneously by people in poverty. Moreover, some of these consequences in later times serve to prolong poverty and thus become the causes, if not of poverty per se, then of its perpetuation.

One such consequence of poverty is shame. The Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen, has argued that shame lies at the absolutist core of poverty; by implication it is an attribute of poverty that is experienced by individuals, families, and communities everywhere. While the research presented in this book does not provide definitive proof of Sen's universalistic assertion, it offers strong evidence that is consistent with it. Shame is shown to be part of the lived experience of poverty, albeit culturally nuanced, in settings as different in terms of economic development and cultural legacy as rural Uganda and India; urban China, Pakistan, South Korea, and the United Kingdom; and small-town and urban Norway. And the suggestion is that this may long have been so. Oral traditions in Uganda and India reveal traces of shame that are similarly reflected in the classic literatures of each country and more recently in the medium of film. It is also possible that the shame associated with poverty is increasingly intensifying as cultures worldwide become more individualistic, and conspicuous consumerism comes to be the dominant expression of social status.

But why is shame important? First, because it is painful and persistent. Everybody has felt ashamed on occasion and knows how hurtful it can be. Psychologists have talked of a psychic scar that refuses to heal. Imagine what shame must be like if it is experienced every day and is caused by something over which one has little or no control. In this, shame differs profoundly from guilt. Guilt arises from things one has done and can be assuaged by a change of behaviour. Shame, on the other hand, appertains to who one is and to what one has become. Moreover, shame, while internally felt, is externally imposed by others: by the people one knows; the officials that one encounters; and by the politicians one hears who help to shape public opinion.

Shame is important because of its medium- and longer-term consequences. Individuals respond to the shame associated with poverty in various ways.

They keep up appearances and pretend that everything is normal, which means living with the fear of being found out or shown up; it risks, too, overextending on finances and incurring bad debts. People in poverty typically reduce social contact to avoid experiencing situations in which they are exposed to shame, but as a result lose the protection borne from the potential for reciprocity when times are particularly harsh. Sometimes shame drives people into clinical depression, to substance abuse, and even to suicide. Shame divides society, the public rhetoric of deserving and undeserving reinforcing the gaps between rich and poor and causing people in poverty to suspect their equals of dishonesty and depravity. Shame saps self-esteem, erodes social capital, and diminishes personal efficacy, raising the possibility that it serves also to perpetuate poverty by reducing individuals' ability to help themselves.

This volume demonstrates that the same experiences of shame are associated with poverty in very disparate settings, despite using diverse local definitions of poverty with different material consequences. This observation points to the validity of relative notions of poverty in which poverty lines are set in relation to local living standards. It also offers the prospect of engaging in a meaningful global debate about poverty that simultaneously embraces people affected by poverty in the rich global North and in much less prosperous countries clustered in the global South. Poverty feels the same to people experiencing it irrespective of its material manifestations. Moreover, the shame associated with poverty brings with it many of the same deleterious consequences.

Yet the shame experienced as a result of being in poverty is not solely an individual problem. It is imposed by society, with overwhelmingly detrimental personal and social consequences. But, importantly, given the political will, it can also be readily addressed by society at minimal expense. The third section of this volume establishes the validity of reports by people in poverty that they are made to feel ashamed by those who are more affluent. This happens because individuals who are more prosperous dismiss people in poverty as being worthless and lazy. The latter are casually exploited as cheap labour and consistently blamed for the failures of the state and the weakness of the economy. The affluent have a vested interest in perpetuating poverty to the extent that it reduces living costs, while a strong attachment to the work ethic and the value of meritocracy, often echoed by popular press and politicians, provides apparent justification for their own material success.

Shame is evident in the framing, structure, and delivery of anti-poverty programmes in each of the seven study countries, albeit manifest in a variety of ways. (The evidence for this is provided by Gubrium, Pellissery and Lødemel, 2013.) Sometimes the imposition of shame in the form of stigma is justified by policymakers and supported by popular opinion. Both naming

and shaming, and blaming and shaming are commonly thought to be effective ways of policing access to welfare benefits and changing and regulating anti-social and self-destructive behaviour. However, such beliefs are based on two false assumptions, as is discussed in the companion volume *The Poverty of Shame*, also published by Oxford University Press. Firstly, poverty is overwhelmingly a structural phenomenon caused by factors beyond individual control relating to the workings of the economy, the mix of factors of production, and the outcome of primary and secondary resource allocation. It is not primarily the result of individual inadequacy or personal failings. Secondly, the scientific evidence powerfully demonstrates that shaming generally does not lead to constructive behavioural change even in situations where change would be possible. Rather, shame merely imposes personal pain that triggers the counterproductive individual and social consequences noted above and explained in detail in this groundbreaking volume.

So why has so little attention been paid to shame associated with poverty if it is so important? One possible reason is that shame is itself elusive. It masquerades under different names: embarrassment; loss of face; feeling flustered; stigma; humiliation; and, even, guilt. To admit to feeling ashamed is often itself shameful. Furthermore, various academic disciplines have prioritized different names and expressions of shame, and few scholars, even in psychology and sociology, have sought to provide a comprehensive overview. Albeit focused on poverty-related shame, an important contribution of the current volume is that it systematically documents the expression and personal and social consequences of shame in contrasting cultural settings.

Another reason why poverty-related shame has been neglected is that global scientific and policy attention has been focused elsewhere. The Millennium Development Goals drew attention to the importance of tackling poverty globally and to the importance of being able to measure progress. Measures based on income and expenditure were comparatively simple to implement and only latterly has the multidimensional nature of poverty come to be appreciated and the importance of the so-called 'subjective' dimensions been recognized. While this volume does not offer direct measures of poverty-related shame, it provides the strongest possible case for developing them and, indeed, such measures have already been developed based on the research and used effectively to demonstrate its prevalence in the United Kingdom (Bailey et al., 2013).

But while policymakers and researchers may hitherto have underplayed the salience of shame, people with direct experience of poverty have repeatedly underlined its importance when given the opportunity to do so. ATD Fourth World is an international, non-governmental organization committed to facilitating the voices of people in poverty being heard. Global participation by people with direct experience of poverty caused the organization to recognize

poverty as violence (ATD Fourth World, 2013a). One participant, a mother from Peru, spoke for many when she said that 'the worst thing about living in extreme poverty is the contempt . . . experienced . . . every day; it hurts us, humiliates us and makes us live in fear and shame' (ATD Fourth World, 2013b, p. 6). Another, Jose Nuñez (2014), a father living with his wife and two children in a homeless hostel in New York, speaking before the United Nations' Commission for Social Development in February 2014, first illustrated the stigmatizing nature of welfare policies in the United States: obtaining shelter is 'literally like you are walking into prison'. He then outlined an appropriate policy response:

> Good programs need to treat people like human beings. They need to treat people with empathy. The offices and the staff should put themselves in other people's shoes. They should take the time to ask how you are, to build a personal relationship, and treat you with kindness. We don't need to be babied or carried, much less demeaned. We just need a push and some support. Somebody persistent and committed, who's going to remember your name and pick up your calls. People need meaning in their lives. That's part of the problem in communities of poverty—people feel like they don't matter, that they don't have a voice. We have to find ways to build meaning for people if they are going to have success in life. (Nuñez, 2014)

This volume systemically demonstrates that such experiences and views are not exceptional but, largely irrespective of culture, constitute what it means to live in poverty. It illustrates, too, how even small changes in policy could result in disproportionate improvements in people's lives. This is not to say that treating people with respect is all that needs to be done. Rather it is the very least that should be done.

Research is a collective venture. The contributors to this volume are members of a research team that it has been my privilege to lead. They have, in turn, drawn on the work of hundreds of scholars and, as importantly, listened to the voices of hundreds of adults and children with direct experience of poverty and others prepared to give of their time to share their views on the nature and causes of poverty. The resultant findings, skilfully assembled by the editors, previewed above and synthesized in the companion volume *The Shame of Poverty*, take the reader into the lives of real people and expose poverty for what it is, a shameful and festering wound that scars lives and entire societies. Moreover, it is a wound that each of us deepens day by day with careless and cruel words and through thoughtless and self-serving behaviour.

Robert Walker
New York
February 2014

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1

Introduction

Elaine Chase and Grace Bantebya-Kyomuhendo

Poverty and Shame: Global Experiences draws on substantive empirical evidence to demonstrate how paying greater attention to the psychological and social consequences of poverty provides new insights into how poverty is perpetuated. It reveals how, irrespective of whether people live above or below a designated poverty line, in cultures as diverse as rural India and Uganda and Pakistan, urban/suburban UK, Pakistan, China, and South Korea, or small-town Norway, the ability to participate in society as a full and recognized citizen is largely contingent on having the material resources deemed normal for that society. When such means are not available, the common response is to save face by withdrawing from society, thus limiting opportunities to exit poverty and helping to perpetuate its cycle. Yet society in turn plays its role in persistently evaluating others against dominant norms and expectations and prioritizing certain explanations of poverty over others. Hence shame in relation to poverty is co-constructed (Chase and Walker, 2013), a dynamic interaction of internally felt inadequacies and externally inflicted judgements.

Collectively, the volume offers the building blocks for the analysis presented in *The Shame of Poverty,* the sister volume to the current one in which Robert Walker (2014) maps the cultural, historical, political, and spiritual pathways over several millennia which have fundamentally shaped modern day conceptualizations and experiences of poverty across the globe. *Poverty and Shame: Global Experiences*, while briefly scoping out the conceptual bases of poverty and shame, is more concerned with examining the by-products of such trajectories; the emergent poverty discourses and debates which occupy much social, political, rhetorical, and media space in contemporary societies and which directly impact on the day-to-day lives of those living in poverty. The chapters in this volume provide rich evidence of how the poverty–shame nexus has emerged and is maintained in vastly different cultural contexts, and

of the intricate web which binds poverty and shame with other complex social constructions such as class, caste, gender, and ethnicity.

Four contrasts which tend to drive and often polarize poverty debates lie at the heart of the poverty–shame nexus. They include: the distinction between absolute and relative poverty; its uni- or multidimensionality (and the subsidiary question concerning what should make up the constituent parts of such multidimensionality); the persistent notion of the deserving and undeserving 'poor'—typically played out through practices of conditionality and public scrutiny; and whether poverty is perceived as being the result of individual failings and inadequacies or of wider structural inequalities. These same themes, in their various guises, frame responses to poverty at community, national, and global levels and repeatedly surface in each of the different contexts within which research took place.

Poverty and Shame Conceptually

Poverty

The matter of defining and measuring poverty is a science that has been evolving over the past hundred or more years. Measures provide a baseline, a sense of how 'bad' things are for people in certain circumstances compared to others. Thresholds and imaginary lines punctuate academic and political debates on poverty across the globe—the numbers of people with resources below or above such lines at successive points in time providing some proxy measure of economic or social 'development' in relative terms. In introducing the countries of the current study to the reader of this volume, such measures are equally applied (Table 1.1), offering important points of comparison between the various contexts within which the research took place.

Discourses and debates about poverty are replete with concepts such as 'absolute' and 'relative'. These are not detailed here but can be read in the accompanying volume to this one (see Walker, 2014) and the important works of Peter Townsend (1979) and Amartya Sen (1983) and many others. More generally, the presence or absence of poverty tends to be defined by local standards and protocols at any given point in time. These are not considered in any depth in the current volume since they are somewhat tangential to the argument. Suffice here to emphasize that throughout the volume, poverty is understood not solely in terms of whether there is enough food to eat or clothes to wear, but whether people have the resources to adequately function within a society, to play the roles of mother, father, community member, and citizen. It is within the vacuum created by the lack of such resources that the fecundity for shame and shaming is likely to emerge.

Shame

Shame, along with embarrassment, pride, and guilt, is widely understood as a 'self-conscious' rather than a basic emotion such as anger or fear. Essentially it entails a negative assessment of the self, made with reference to one's own aspirations and the perceived expectations of others (Tangney et al., 2007). While the literature on human psychology has engaged extensively with shame as a social emotion (Tangney and Fischer, 1995; Gilbert, 1997; Tracy and Robbins, 2007), it has tended to explore its dynamics outside of the social matrix (Scheff, 2000; 2003; Chase and Walker, 2013). And while the literature generally characterizes shame as inherently negative, having damaging effects, it has also been argued that it can play an important role in binding communities and societies and ensuring that its members remain integrated and valued (Mencious as cited in Wong and Tsai, 2007).

Overwhelmingly, however, the social psychological literature strongly suggests that shame causes a painfully negative self-evaluation (Tangney et al., 1992) leading to a sense of being exposed and an urge to withdraw from the social environment (Lewis, 1992). Its effects can be debilitating since it can limit people's ability to take action (Lynd, 1961) and may lead to their alienation from the broader society (Oravecz, Hárdi, and Lajtai, 2004). Importantly however, shame in any social context is co-constructed, it combines an internal sense of inadequacy and an imposed or imagined external judgement by others (Cooley, 1922; Mead, 1934; Goffman, 1967). Shame has multiple manifestations across cultures and time and carries with it its own taboo (Scheff, 2000; 2003) meaning that its existence is silenced or disguised under a cloak of euphemisms or what have been described elsewhere as the 'colloquialisms' of shame (Chase and Walker, 2013).

Important distinctions have been made between shame and guilt (Lewis, 1971; Lindsay-Hertz, 1984; Tangney et al., 2007; Tracy and Robbins, 2007), the most fundamental being that concerning the locus of control. While shame is attributed to a negative evaluation of the global self, or sense of failure, over which one has little or no control; guilt, on the other hand, is associated with an internal negative assessment of behaviour which is controllable or could have been avoided. Guilt implies that such behaviour was executed as a result of free will—conscience dictating that it was wrong or inappropriate, that one feels the need to take restorative action and that they have the power, opportunity, and choice as to whether or not to make amends for what they have done or failed to do. Shame on the other hand is an emotion stemming from a sense of acute inadequacy and inability to have been able to do things differently—it is indicative of a lack of power, control, or choice to behave differently or to change anything. While at the individual level these may be unarticulated differences, for instance, people are shown to

use the words 'guilt' and 'shame' interchangeably (Scheff, 2000; 2002; Chase and Walker, 2013); they are nonetheless important and here the focus is on the emotion of 'shame' and not that of 'guilt', even if the former is vocally disguised by the latter. The real difference, it is argued, is context bound; emerging from the circumstances within which shame (or guilt) is insinuated or communicated.

A further important semantic distinction which is important to clarify early on in this text and one that is rarely made (see Walker, 2014) is between shame and stigma. The basis of such a distinction is evident in its intention. While, as noted earlier, shaming may have a laudable goal in certain circumstances (guiding others, for example, or bringing them back into the societal or cultural fold); stigma and the active process of stigmatizing has no such redeeming features—it is tantamount to discrimination, labelling, and psychologically branding individuals or communities in ways which dehumanize, and as such it never has a worthy objective. When shaming is carried out with these same intentions, then it is indistinguishable from such stigmatization. Moreover, when it is carried out at the level of the establishment, it is transformed into systemic institutionalized discrimination—perhaps most notably evidenced in the framing, shaping, and delivery of policies (see Gubrium et al., 2013).

Poverty and Shame Together

In an attempt to question the material deprivation-based conception of poverty and to distinguish between absolute and relative definitions, Amartya Sen (1983) delineates between capabilities, the potential individuals possess to lead satisfying lives; and functionings, the material resources available to facilitate individuals to attain their capabilities (Sen, 1999; 2005). Whereas capabilities are universally invariant across cultures, functionings are socioculturally determined and mainly influenced by the availability of resources. According to (Sen, 1999) individuals fall into poverty when they do not have the means to attain their capabilities, or attain what is socially and/or economically expected of them in their society.

Sen (1983) and Alkire (2002) identified the 'ability to go about without shame' as a fundamentally important capability which was situated at the 'irreducible absolutist core in the construction of poverty'. Sen argues that whereas the material resources needed to prevent one from feeling ashamed vary across cultures and level of socio-economic development, the actual experience of poverty-induced shame and its impacts are universal and invariant. Although some previous work has strengthened the circumstantial evidence of the shame associated with poverty (Schwarz, 1997; Clasen et al., 1998; Beresford et al., 1999; Edin et al., 2000; Narayan et al., 2000; Castell and

Thompson, 2007), this has never previously been systematically examined and the universality of the association has remained empirically untested.

Drawing from the above context, the international, cross cultural, and comparative study, on which this volume is based, sought to examine the theoretical proposition that shame is universally associated with poverty. Nonetheless, the approach adopted was investigative, or inductive, as not much is known about the poverty–shame nexus across cultures. The analysis utilized a maximum difference framework arguing that, if shame and poverty are intimately connected, albeit culturally nuanced, in the diverse milieux selected, the relationship is likely to be robust. If it is, then it may provide a sound basis for re-thinking both how poverty is understood and how policy might be best framed, structured and delivered in order to take account of this association and its psycho- social consequences (Gubrium et al., 2013).

The Contexts

The countries examined here are not those which routinely lend themselves to international comparisons. The maximum difference framework purposefully engaged countries with highly different historical, social, economic, and developmental trajectories. Table 1.1 (below) illustrates these differences according to the United Nations Human Development Index (UNDP, 2013). The underlying premise was that the greater differences between the contexts included in the research, the stronger the emerging evidence would be if a close association was drawn between poverty and shame in each of them. The seven countries include Christian, Islamic, and Confucian traditions; profoundly individualistic cultures and those adhering more to familial and collectivist beliefs; established parliamentary democracies, fragile political systems, and communist regimes; and advanced and highly developed market economies, former command regimes, and others committed to state-led developmentalist strategies together with largely rural economies with

Table 1.1. Human Development Index of study countries

Country	HDI Ranking (187) 2012	Life expectancy at birth	Mean years of schooling	Gender inequality Index ranking (148)	Poverty index (MPI)
Uganda	161	54.5	4.7	110	0.367
Pakistan	146	65.7	4.9	123	0.264
India	136	65.8	4.4	132	0.283
China	101	73.7	7.5	35	0.056
UK	26	80.3	9.4	34	N/A
South Korea	12	80.7	11.6	27	N/A
Norway	1	81.3	12.6	5	N/A

Source: (UNDP, 2013)

extreme levels of abject poverty. The following section sketches out the political, social, and economic landscape with respect to poverty in each of the seven countries (covered in order of ascending overall HDI) to provide some context to the subsequent country chapters in each section.

Uganda

Uganda has a population of some 30.7 million people, half of whom are aged under 15 years. Eighty five per cent of households reside in rural areas and 24.5 per cent of Ugandans are estimated to be living in poverty, corresponding to nearly 7.5 million persons in 1.2 million households. The incidence of poverty remains higher in rural areas than in urban areas (Republic of Uganda, 2010b).

Approaches to addressing poverty in Uganda have shifted substantially over time, influenced by both national and international agendas. The mixed economy approach which largely characterized Uganda's economic development from 1962 to 1971 was ended in the 1970s by Idi Amin's so called 'economic war' campaign. After his demise (in 1979) International Monetary Fund (IMF) Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were pursued until the instigation of the *Economic Recovery Programme* (ERP) of 1987. Since 1997, the *Poverty Eradication Action Plan* (PEAP) has provided a strategic framework under which coordinated actions are taken to ensure that Uganda, in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reduces poverty by 2014. Currently, Uganda's development agenda is guided by the *National Development Plan* (Republic of Uganda, 2010a).

Key strategies to address poverty have included: the introduction of *Universal Primary Education* (UPE) in 1996 which has had mixed results (Kasaija, 2008); *Universal Secondary Education* (USE) in 2007 which increased secondary school enrolment by 25 per cent (UBOS, 2007; Republic of Uganda, 2010a); the *Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture* (PMA)—a multi-sectoral policy framework for agriculture and rural development with a vision for poverty eradication; and *Prosperity for All* (PFA), a rural development strategy established in 2005 and its subsequent wider version of holistic life improvement for all Ugandans in 2006. The *Expanding Social Protection Programme*, which to date has been piloted in three districts, will eventually target 600,000 people via a combination of non-contributory social assistance cash transfers; contributory social insurance schemes; social equity provisions which protect against discrimination of vulnerable groups in the workplace; and social welfare services providing care for people unable to provide for themselves.

As elsewhere, defining and measuring poverty in Uganda has posed a challenge to policymakers. However, since 2004, the PEAP has increasingly recognized its multidimensionality, settling on a broadly inclusive definition which

recognizes lack of 'voice', social exclusion, and lack of information as important components of the experience of poverty. This perhaps signals a policy agenda which is becoming sensitized to some of the psychosocial impacts of poverty. Equally, however, with respect to the poverty–shame nexus, there have been some notable unintended consequences of anti-poverty policies which are described elsewhere (see Bantebya-Kyomuhendo and Mwiine 2013). The chapters in this volume provide depth and nuance to the experience of poverty and its associated shame in Uganda.

Pakistan

Despite having the sixth largest population and twenty-seventh largest GDP in the world (IMF, 2012), Pakistan's multidimensional poverty headcount stands at 49.4 per cent and it ranks 146th on the Human Development Index (OPHI, 2011; UNDP, 2013). The traditional systemic response to poverty has been to rely upon macroeconomic development and structural adjustment, approaches regularly conceived of and implemented with the financial and technical assistance of international monetary and development organizations. The last two decades have seen the execution of the World Bank assisted *Social Action Programme* of the 1990s, set up to improve access to education, health, water, and sanitation and, more recently, the ongoing *Benazir Income Support Programme* (BISP) started in 2008 which, recognizing the specific economic difficulties faced by women (PBS, 2013), provides several forms of social assistance to low-income female-headed households.

The BISP began in the aftermath of the global economic recession and was originally intended to mitigate the effects of high inflation by providing unconditional cash assistance. Since then, with improvements in design, identification, and delivery mechanisms, it has gradually evolved to include co-responsibility cash transfer schemes, micro-financing, vocational training, and conditional cash transfers (CCTs) in health and education. Despite its relatively large scale, this programme only covers an estimated 40 per cent of the population below the poverty line and 18 per cent of the total population (BISP, 2013).

Alongside other governmental social assistance provisions, *Zakat*, which started in the 1980s, has remained one of the most important programmes of social protection over the last three decades. Originally, a private charity in Pakistan, the *Zakat and Ushr Ordinance* of 1980 made *Zakat* one of the official safety nets of the country through introducing at-source deductions from the incomes of wealthy Muslims. Gradually, a shrinking resource base on account of ideological and structural impediments, has meant that the official *Zakat* programme, along with its sister programme *Bait-ul-Maal,* have been unable to

keep up with the new social protection demands of twenty-first century Pakistan, thus necessitating the inception of BISP.

Pakistan's social protection policy lacks an over-arching welfare philosophy, identity, and structure and instead is made up of a number of ad hoc and often uncoordinated initiatives which have been criticized for not always providing support and assistance where they are most needed (Pasha et al., 2000). Usually area specific, these tend to comprise a mix of cash and in-kind provisions for the short-term and rehabilitation assistance for the long-term. Such initiatives are supplemented by a large-scale emergency assistance programme which is activated in times of natural and human calamities. The extent to which poverty and state responses to it in Pakistan alleviate or exacerbate the psychosocial impacts of economic adversity is explored in detail throughout the relevant chapters.

India

Home to more than 1.2 billion people, India is a complex and vastly diverse nation, comprising twenty-eight federal states and seven union territories and made up of people speaking 1500 different languages. Some 27.8 per cent of the total population is estimated to live below the income-based poverty line set by the Indian government (Planning Commission, 2012). The day-to-day reality of poverty is evidenced by the fact than 50 per cent of the population has no access to sanitation facilities; many live in poor housing, are malnourished, and have limited access to education and other public services.

Rapid economic growth in India in recent years has been unequal across different federal states, largely confined to urban centres and not mirrored in rural areas where some 68 per cent of the population live and work. Rural development is hampered by limited mechanization and resultant poor agricultural productivity (accounting for only 15 per cent GDP) and restricted access to education. Urban poverty, on the other hand, arguably runs deeper and is rapidly increasing, affecting some 81 million people living in urban informal settlements with little or no access to basic services such as water and sanitation (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and UNDP, 2009). Moreover, a total of 40 per cent of the workforce in India in both urban and rural areas is confined to the vagaries of casual and insecure daily wage labour in the informal sector, only 10 per cent of the population having access to full social security coverage guaranteed under formal contractual work arrangements (Pellissery and Walker, 2007).

Indian society is also characterized by its complex social stratification and imposed hierarchies according to caste, gender, and geographical areas which interact in complex ways with poverty and social exclusion. Four states in particular—Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh—face

persistently high levels of poverty and people from these areas are known to experience discrimination on the basis of their origins when they move to cities to seek work (CSP, 2001). Most profoundly stigmatizing, however, is the caste system in India which, despite widespread legislative and policy changes, remains a major contributor towards the disproportionately high poverty rates among people classified as *outcasts* (or formerly untouchables) and tribes people.

Combined, these groups constitute 24 per cent of the total population 'scheduled' within the Indian constitution for affirmative action and special protective measures; measures which seem, in effect, to have limited impact and are thought to be in and of themselves highly stigmatizing. The extent of the feminization of poverty in India is profound and stems from a combination of deep-set patriarchal and cultural traditions and unequal distribution of wealth and status among men and women across household, informal, and formal economies. The preference for male children is strong, female infanticide is common, and ostracizing of widows widespread. More broadly, the concept of *Izzat* ('honour') provides a powerful mechanism of social control of women. *Izzat* is easily compromised by poverty, frequently exposing women facing the worst economic hardships to the full brunt of poverty-related shame. The chapters throughout the volume illustrate the ways in which poverty and shame interact within an innately stratified modern-day India.

China

The conceptualization of poverty in China, as in other countries, has had its own unique history and development. Following the rise of communism after 1949, poverty was touted as the malicious face of capitalism. Abolishing private ownership and establishing a new classless socialist society became political imperatives, ultimately 'liberating' those in poverty to live happy and dignified lives. Full employment and comprehensive welfare provision were made possible under state socialism and the planned economy. Although the general living standard was low, poverty did not appear in public discourse and there was relatively little economic disparity between people's circumstances, at least in urban China.

The mid-1950s to the late 1980s saw the emergence of the idea of 'households in difficulty', although 'poverty' was still not part of the political discourse (Guan, 1999: 137–9). Such households were perceived as those families where adults were working but had too many dependents; or were defined within the category of the 'three nos' (those who had no reliable source of income, no ability to work, and no family support). By the end of the 1970s, China's ideological position had fundamentally shifted towards

economic development and, in its pursuit, the compromise of 'allowing some to get rich first'.

The early economic reform period (1979–1980s) saw the ending of the commune and permission for private entrepreneurship accompanied by widespread poverty alleviation programmes in rural areas, implemented throughout the 1980s. While these measures led to a drastic reduction in rural poverty, urban poverty became increasingly severe following the urban economic reform in 1984 and especially from the mid-1990s onwards when marketization really took hold. The policy direction shifted from state security to social security and the gradual retreat of government from the provision of health care, education, and housing. It saw the steady closure of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and the emergence of labour contracts, tax and wage reforms, and private insurances for old-age and unemployment. During this time, many enterprises closed down or became bankrupt, resulting in massive numbers of 'redundant' labourers who became the bulk of the 'urban poor', reaching an estimated 10 million in 1998 and rising to some 28 million by the early 2000s (Liu, 2004: 218; He and Hua, 2006: 5). It has been estimated that urban poverty in China affects anywhere between 14 and 37 million people (Zhu, 1997; Hussain 2003, Tang, 2003). This 'new urban poverty' has emerged in tandem with rising inequality in urban areas, the contrast between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' being starker than ever before in the history of the People's Republic of China.

The policy response in China to rapidly rising poverty from unemployment has been a new institutional mechanism, the Minimum Standard of Living Scheme (MSLS), intended to provide security while people search for work (Yan, 2013). The circumstances of people accessing MSLS however are confounded by access to few, insecure, and poorly paid work opportunities and the difficulties they face in adapting to a fall from the high social standing they enjoyed within SOEs prior to the economic reforms to becoming recipients of social assistance. Overall, these significant ideological, political, and economic transformations in China have created conditions of inequality which may be ripe for the poverty–shame nexus to emerge. Whether and in what ways this has been the case are themes covered throughout the chapters from China in this volume.

Britain

In 2011/2012 an estimated 13 million people in Britain (21 per cent) were living in poverty, defined as having incomes less than 60 per cent of the median, and more than half of them resided in households in which at least one adult was employed (MacInnes et al., 2013). Moreover, since average incomes in Britain have fallen by 8 per cent since 2008, an estimated further

2 million people have incomes in real terms which are below the 2008 poverty line but are not currently counted as being in poverty. Despite some indication of slow recovery in the economy following the 2007 recession, youth unemployment has continued to rise and the number of people in low-paid insecure jobs has reached an unprecedented 5 million (MacInnes et al., 2013). There also remain considerable regional differences in how well people fair with respect to health, education, and life expectancy in Britain, which are strongly correlated with levels of deprivation (ONS, 2013), and evidence that inequalities in wealth and income continue to rise.

Hence, despite its relative wealth by the standards of most of the other countries in our comparative frame, Britain has arguably created a surprisingly large space for the enactment of poverty-related shame. Since the inception of the Elizabethan Poor Laws, Britain has sustained a regimented history of categorizing people requiring welfare provisions and support into 'deserving' and 'undeserving' camps (Walker and Chase, 2013). Successive governments spanning the political spectrum have, with only slight shifts in tone, repeatedly claimed that social protection constitutes a burden on the state and 'tax payers' and that 'rolling back the state' is a political imperative. Policies have been underpinned by the assumption that welfare provisions create dependency, that those in receipt of them would, if left to their own devices, choose not to work, abuse the system, and require carefully metered 'tough love' to get them back on the right track towards economic activity. As will be recognized in the chapters relating to Britain, these assumptions bear little resemblance to the actualities of living in poverty in the British context, but play a profoundly important role in defining the day-to-day experience of economic hardship.

South Korea

The Republic of Korea currently has a population of 48.9 million people, with around 25 per cent of the population residing in the capital city of Seoul which has been at the forefront of the country's economic and social development since the 1960s. The Korean peninsula was colonized by Japan for a period of 35 years until 1945 and soon after experienced a devastating war between North and South Korea (1950–53) by the end of which an estimated 60 to 70 per cent of the population of South Korea was living in abject poverty (PSPD/UNDP, 2000). South Korea's separation from North Korea was accompanied by political claims to democracy, although in practice the country entered forty years of dictatorship until around the late 1990s.

During that time South Korea experienced extraordinarily rapid economic growth, a period from the 1960s to the 1990s referred to as 'the Miracle of the Han River' (the name of the river running through the heart of Seoul) and

during which the country experienced annual growth rates exceeding 10 per cent (Kim et al., 2007: 52). The state-directed, export-oriented industrialization, accompanied by high economic growth, resulted in low levels of unemployment and a notable decrease in abject poverty. For many years until the Asian financial crisis hit South Korea in 1997, economic growth was the principal government strategy for addressing poverty. The crisis resulted in bankruptcies, a dramatic growth in unemployment, and, in the absence of a secure social security safety net, considerable increases in poverty and personal indebtedness. In 2000, the government responded by introducing a universal social assistance programme for poverty relief, the National Basic Living Security Scheme (NBLSS), which remains the main social assistance programme.

South Korea currently confronts what has come to be known as the 'New Poverty', affecting different groups of the population and the product of disparate causes including growing inequality, low wages, a growth in insecure employment, high youth unemployment, a rapidly aging population, and increasing numbers of single-parents and single-headed households who lack any familial support (Kim et al., 2007; 2009). These new manifestations of poverty are yet to be adequately addressed by policy, not least because the dominant discourse surrounding poverty forged during the era of industrialization tends to consider people to be poor for reasons of their own making. Policies designed according to this premise, as we will see in the following chapters covering South Korea, can lead to people becoming trapped in systems of provision that exacerbate the social stigma and shame that they frequently experience as a result of their economic circumstances.

Norway

With a population of just over 5 million, Norway is one of the richest countries in the world, rated first out of 187 countries in the globally comparative Human Development Index (UNDP, 2013). However, Norway has had a chequered past before gaining its status as a modern bastion of equality and social justice. Industrialization in Norway surged at the end of the nineteenth century, forcing massive demographic and social changes, beginning with significant population drift towards increasingly large urban areas. Although slow to take off and not really coming into its own until the mid-1960s (Kangas and Palme, 2009) the system of welfare provision in Norway has gradually become world renowned for being founded on the principles of universalism and 'citizenship' (Gubrium and Lødemel, 2013). Norway's welfare system was designed to promote equal opportunities and to mitigate the effects of social inequalities through the provision of benefits including free

health care and welfare transfers, as well as universal and free access to education (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Wiborg and Hansen, 2009).

Given its principles of (near) universalism and its de-commodifying policies, this social democratic model of welfare (Esping-Andersen, 1990) offers generous social insurance-based benefits to the majority of its citizens. Yet ironically, Norway has also been implicated in what has come to be termed a 'Welfare paradox' (Lødemel, 1997), in that the gradual extension of non-contributory social assistance to specific and identifiable groups of people has meant that such recipients have become increasingly marginalized and stigmatized—the residuum unable to 'function' in what is heralded as a largely inclusive and enabling social and economic environment. Today, those individuals living in poverty and those on social assistance tend to be one and the same (Halvorsen and Stjernø 2008).

Somewhat counterintuitively therefore, rather than being models of inclusiveness, Norway's strong economic and welfare systems are potent sources of a categorical 'other'—those in poverty—who are relegated to the bottom rung of the social hierarchy (Gubrium and Lødemel, 2013) and whose circumstances receive accentuated attention, judgement, and surveillance. The 'groups' associated with poverty in affluent Norway, including the homeless, long-term drug and alcohol users, immigrants, and the 'Roma', are therefore likely to experience considerable levels of poverty-related shame.

The Study

The study comprised four main components, the fourth of which, an analysis of a selection of anti-poverty policies in each country, provides the basis for landscaping the universal implications for anti-poverty policies which are detailed in *The Shame of It: Global Perspectives on Anti-Poverty Policies* (Gubrium et al., 2013). The three other components of the research provide the substantive material for the current volume. First of all, an analysis of cultural representations of poverty and shame and their intersection were investigated using samples of popular media. These were purposefully selected in each of the different contexts to variably include films, novels, poetry, and proverbs. This preliminary phase of the work served as a process of sensitization to how poverty and shame were culturally conceptualized on their own and in combination and the sorts of arenas and social interactions within which the coincidence of the two were likely to emerge. Secondly, in-depth interviews were conducted with an average of thirty or so adults and (where possible) additional children living in poverty in each of the countries. Interviews provided insights into the daily experience of poverty while focusing on the social and psychological impacts of living with inadequate resources and

the individual and collective consequences of such hardship. Thirdly, focus group discussions with people not living in poverty to ascertain their understandings, views, and attitudes about poverty were combined with an analysis of newspaper reporting on issues of poverty in each country. This phase of the work tested out the contention concerning the co-construction of shame in relation to poverty, the side to shame which is externally imposed most notably by society and the media. Findings from the various components of the research were further contextualized using the World Value Survey (see Walker, 2014).

The empirical research was essentially qualitative and conducted in each context in such a way that it generated comparable data. However, it was also grounded in its approach—both in terms of the openness of questions and in the flexibility to allow the detail of the research interaction to be guided by the cultural context and milieu within which each research team was working. Grounded theory (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Corbin and Strauss, 2008) informed the methodology since it facilitates the generation of empirical insights which are not overly constrained by a priori theory but enable theory to emerge inductively throughout the course of the investigation.

The study design incorporated methodological innovation, drawing on disciplines across the social sciences as diverse as anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics, political philosophy, social policy, film, and literary studies. Each component of the research was developed collectively by all members of the research team during six-monthly scheduled meetings and then adapted accordingly to meet the practical constraints of each of the contexts within which the fieldwork took place. In the same way, the comparative analysis carried out at the end of each phase of the research was completed communally, using a process of constant comparison (Merriam, 2002), before the subsequent phase of the work began.

Section I of this volume illustrates how dominant cultural norms and values surrounding poverty and shame are reflected within a range of popular media such as film, literary works, and oral traditions. Section II then illustrates the poverty–shame nexus via the lived experiences of people in poverty in each of these contexts as they engage with the range of structures, institutions, and social arenas which make up contemporary society. Finally, Section III combines the views and perceptions of those currently not living in poverty with an analysis of recent media coverage of poverty in each of these same countries. Together, these illustrative case studies detail the similarities of the social construction of poverty-related shame across vastly different contexts, providing compelling evidence for the possibility of its universal existence and hence for the need to consider more closely its social and political implications.

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