

International participatory research

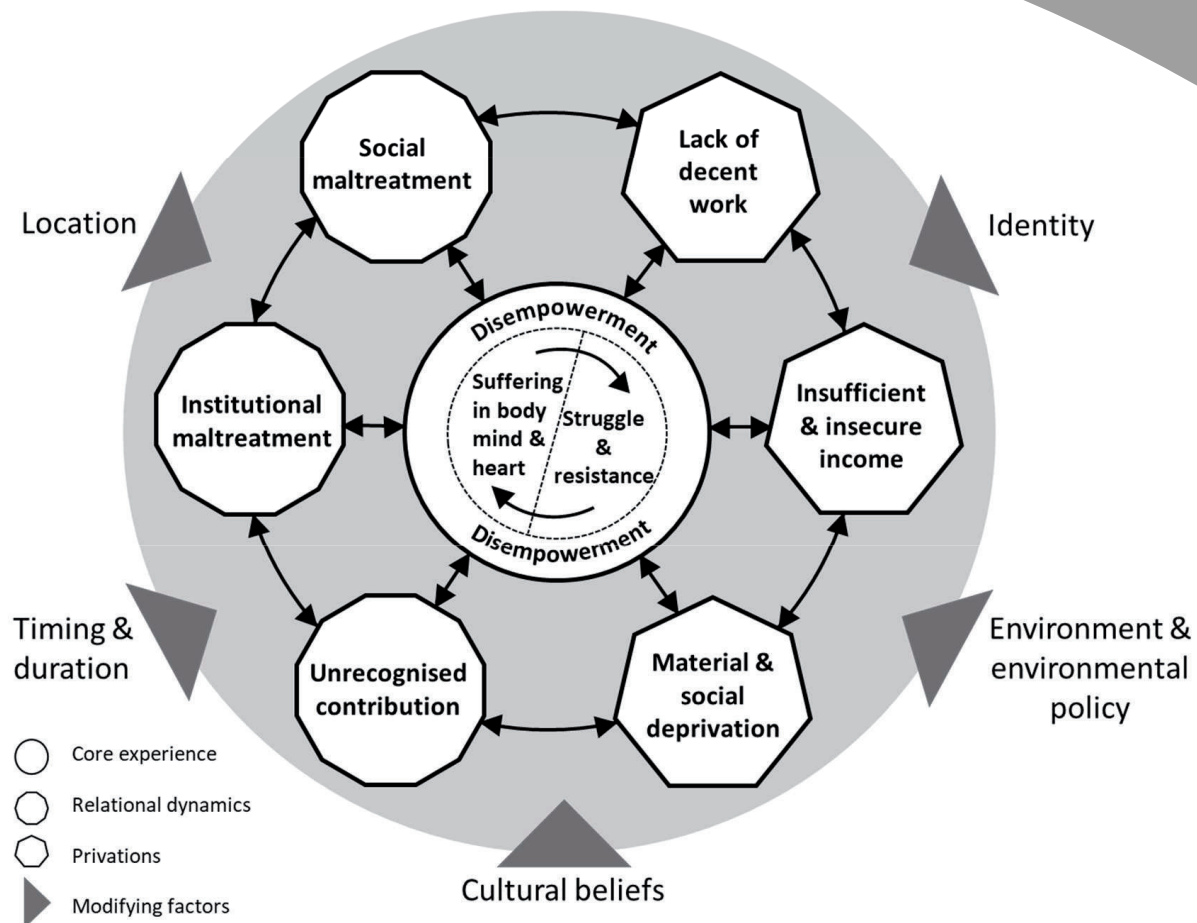


Figure 1

ATD Fourth World - Oxford University diagram on the dimensions of poverty, January 2019

“Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere”, the overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reflects a growing consensus on the need to consider other dimensions, beyond monetary ones, when thinking about poverty.

To improve the global understanding of multidimensional poverty, the **International Movement ATD Fourth World**, together with researchers from Oxford University, launched in 2016 an international research project in six countries (Bangladesh, Bolivia, France, Tanzania, the United Kingdom and the United States) to identify the key dimensions of poverty and their relationships. The project is based on a **Merging of Knowledge methodology**, in which people facing poverty, practitioners and academics, are co-researchers. In this methodology, the

different types of knowledge resulting from life experiences, action and academic research, are built first in an independent way through meetings with peer groups, then merged to enrich one another, resulting in new insights about the reality of poverty. This process has led to the identification of nine **key poverty dimensions** and **five modifying factors**. that, despite differences in the daily lives of people in poverty across countries, are surprisingly similar.

Existing alongside the more familiar **privations**, six of these dimensions were previously hidden or rarely considered in policy discussions. Three of them constitute **the core experience** of poverty and three are **relational**.

SET 1: CORE EXPERIENCE

Disempowerment: it is a lack of control and dependency on others resulting from severely constrained choices.

Suffering in body, mind, and heart: Living in poverty means experiencing intense physical, mental and emotional suffering accompanied by a sense of powerlessness to do anything about it.

Struggle and Resistance: There is an ongoing struggle to survive, which includes resisting and counteracting the effects of the many forms of suffering brought by privations, abuse, and lack of recognition.

SET 2: RELATIONAL DYNAMICS

Institutional maltreatment: it is the failure of national and international institutions, through their actions or inaction, to respond appropriately and respectfully to the needs and circumstances of people in poverty, and thereby to ignore, humiliate and harm them.

Social maltreatment: it describes the way that people in poverty are negatively perceived and treated badly by other individuals and informal groups.

Unrecognised contributions: The knowledge and skills of people living in poverty are rarely seen, acknowledged or valued. Often, individually and collectively, people experiencing poverty are wrongly presumed to be incompetent.

SET 3: PRIVATIONS

Lack of decent work: it refers to the prevalent experience of being denied access to work that is fairly paid, safe, secure, regulated, and dignified.

Insufficient and insecure income: This dimension refers to having too little income to be able to meet basic needs and social obligations, to keep harmony within the family and to enjoy good living conditions.

Material and social deprivation: it refers to a lack of access to goods and services necessary to live a decent life, participating fully in society.

While every dimension is evident in all countries and most contexts, each varies in form and degree according to **five** identified **modifying factors:** **location**, urban, peri-urban, rural; **timing and duration**, short spells differing from long spells, poverty experienced in childhood or in old age varying from that experienced in working age; **cultural beliefs**, concerning for example, whether poverty is generally thought to be caused by structural factors or by personal failings; **identity** with discrimination on grounds such as ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation adding to that associated with poverty; and **environment and environmental policy**, from climate change, soil degradation, pollution and associated policies, to urban deprivation and inadequate public infrastructure.

- “The conventional metrics that are used to measure extreme poverty [...] tell us that extreme poverty has long been eradicated in most OECD countries. ... This conclusion is at odds with what people with direct experience of poverty report about their lives and it reflects the inadequacy of these metrics. Now, for the first time, the ATD – Oxford University research places a bridge across this gulf in the measurement approaches between rich and poor countries.”

Extracts of Miguel Angel Gurría’s speech, Secretary General of the OECD, at the OECD – ATD Fourth World international conference, 10 May 2019, Paris

- “What really struck me in this study is that a number of things you say converge with some of the most groundbreaking advances in global science. For example, with their own tools, the most famous neurobiologists are bringing to the fore the emphasis on emotions that is at the heart of the results of this project.”

Jean-Paul Moatti, Member of the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Report Expert Group (Excerpts from his speech at the OECD conference on 10 May 2019)

The research report can be downloaded at:

https://www.atd-fourthworld.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/05/Dim_Pauvr_eng_FINAL.pdf

ATD Fourth World International
+ 33 (0) 1 34 30 46 10
atdint@atd-quartmonde.org
www.atd-fourthworld.org

ATD Fourth World – New York Office
(212) 228-1339
nycteam@4thworldmovement.org
<https://4thworldmovement.org/>