Is Globalization Good for the Poor? A Reply to Pogge

Jorn Sonderholm and Henrik Lydholm

In an article from 2011, Thomas Pogge asks if globalization is good for the world’s poor. Pogge answers in the negative. As important evidence for the view that the globalization period has not been good for the world’s poor, Pogge cites a dataset provided by Branko Milanović (CUNY). In this article, we do not take issue with Pogge’s definition of “globalization”, “the world’s poor” or with the veracity of the empirical data he refers to in articulating and defending his view about globalization and the world’s poor. However, Pogge’s reference to a dataset showing that there has been an economic polarization between the wealthiest and poorest people of the world, is not, we contend, something that in itself offers strong support for his view that the global institutional order is a significant cause of this economic polarization. We believe that Pogge overemphasizes the impact of supranational institutions in relation to the question of what the main drivers have been of the economic polarization in question. Our thesis is that a high population growth in the poorest regions of the world, relative to the population growth in the richest regions of the world, can help explain a non-negligible amount of the economic polarization that has occurred between 1988 and 2005.

**Keywords**: Political philosophy, Global justice, Globalization, population growth

Introduction

In an article from 2011, Thomas Pogge asks if globalization is good for the world’s poor.[[1]](#footnote-1) [[2]](#footnote-2) Pogge answers in the negative. In the article, Pogge argues for the overall view that:

There exists a supranational institutional regime that foreseeably produces massive and reasonably avoidable human rights deficits. By collaboratively imposing this severely unjust institutional scheme, we are violating the human rights of the world’s poor.[[3]](#footnote-3) [[4]](#footnote-4)

Pogge suggests that some empirical theorists try to resist this view by arguing that i) globalization is good for the poor and ii) that the causes of the poverty that remains today are domestic to the societies in which it persists.[[5]](#footnote-5) [[6]](#footnote-6) Pogge rejects both i) and ii). As important evidence for the view that the globalization period has not been good for the world’s poor, Pogge cites a dataset provided by Branko Milanović.[[7]](#footnote-7) [[8]](#footnote-8) The dataset is this:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Segment of world population | Share of Global Household Income 1988 | Share of Global Household Income 2005 | Absolute Change in Income Share | Relative Change in Income Share |
| Richest 5% | 42.87 | 46.36 | +3.49 | +8.1% |
| Next 5% | 21.80 | 22.18 | +0.38 | +1.7% |
| Next 15% | 24.83 | 21.80 | -3.03 | -12.2% |
| Second Quarter | 6.97 | 6.74 | -0.23 | -3.3% |
| Third Quarter | 2.37 | 2.14 | -0.23 | -9.7% |
| Poorest Quarter | 1.16 | 0.78 | -0.38 | -32.8% |

This dataset shows, according to Pogge, that between 1988 and 2005 “there has been [a] dramatic polarization” in the economic strength of the wealthiest 5% and the poorest quarter of the world’s population.[[9]](#footnote-9) Pogge then goes on to argue that “Given these facts [shown by the dataset], it would be very hard indeed to make a good case for the claim that the massive poverty persisting today was not reasonably avoidable”.[[10]](#footnote-10) Avoidable because it would be a “wildly implausible claim” that the expansive global institutional order could not have been designed in a way that would have resulted in a decreased distance in the economic strength of the wealthiest and the poorest people of the world.[[11]](#footnote-11)

In this article, we do not take issue with Pogge’s definition of “globalization”, “we” or “the world’s poor” or with the veracity of the empirical data he refers to in articulating and defending his view about globalization and the world’s poor. Furthermore, we do not question Pogge’s well-known view that we are harming the global poor through our implementation, and continued political support, of the global institutional order.[[12]](#footnote-12) [[13]](#footnote-13) Lastly, we do not challenge Pogge’s view that the global poor would have fared better under different supranational institutional arrangements.[[14]](#footnote-14)

However, Pogge’s reference to a dataset showing that there has been an economic polarization between the wealthiest and poorest people of the world, is not, we contend, something that in itself offers strong support for his view that the global institutional order is a significant cause of this economic polarization. We believe that Pogge overemphasizes the impact of supranational institutions in relation to the question of what the main drivers have been of the economic polarization in question. Our thesis is that a high population growth in the poorest regions of the world, relative to the population growth in the richest regions of the world, can help explain a non-negligible amount of the economic polarization that has occurred between 1988 and 2005. In short, we believe that Pogge is at fault for not making a reference to the feature of population growth in his preferred explanation of the economic polarization in the period from 1988 to 2005. Any plausible explanation of this polarization must take this feature into account. Let us now proceed by illustrating theoretically how population growth, in itself, can result in an economic polarization between the wealthiest and poorest people of a world.[[15]](#footnote-15)

A theoretical model

At time t1 world A consists of one hundred people. These people can be divided into three different groups. The first group (the rich group) consist of 5 people, and they own in combination 42.87% of A’s Global Household Income (GHI).[[16]](#footnote-16), [[17]](#footnote-17) The second group (the middle income group) consist of 70 persons, and they own in combination 55.97% of A’s GHI.[[18]](#footnote-18) The last group (the poor group) consist of 25 people, and they own in combination 1.16% of A’s GHI. Members of the poorest quarter of A thereby own 1.16% of GHI. Assuming an equal distribution of wealth among members of the poorest quarter, each individual owns 0.046% of GHI.

Over time, the population of A grows, and the world we denote as “B” emerges at t2. B consists of 120 persons. The population growth has, however, not taken place evenly across the three groups. We assume that the first and second group have had no growth at all and therefore still consist of respectively 5 and 70 people. This means that the third group has grown from 25 to 45 persons. We also assume that the relative prosperity of the three groups is the same in B as in A. This means that the wealthiest 5 persons still own 42.87% of GHI and that the 70 persons in the second group own 55.97% of GHI. However, there are now 45 persons who share 1.16% of GHI. If we assume an equal distribution in this group, as we did in A, they each own 0.026% of GHI.

Now, if we look at the poorest quarter of B, the members of this group are economically worse off than the members of the poorest quarter of A.[[19]](#footnote-19) The poorest quarter of B consists of 30 persons (all from the poor group). Each individual in this group owns 0.026% of GHI as opposed to 0.046% of GHI in A. In total, members of the poorest quarter of B only own 0.78% of GHI.[[20]](#footnote-20) If one then compares A and B, it can be seen that the poorest quarter has had a relative change in income share of -32.8%. The increased economic polarization which has occurred in the move from A at t1 to B at t2 can be ascribed *solely* to a growth in the population of the poorest group in A.

This model is, of course, only a theoretical model, and we certainly acknowledge that the empirical world is far more complex than our model.[[21]](#footnote-21) However, we believe that there are empirical data that offers support for the suggestion that population growth in the poorest regions of the world has been a non-negligible driver of the economic polarization in the global income distribution in the globalization period. Let us turn to the empirical data.

**Empirical data on population growth**

In this section, we aim to show that the world, in some interesting and relevant senses, resembles the model described above. We use empirical data provided by the World Bank and the United Nations’ Department of Economic and Social Affairs.[[22]](#footnote-22) In the following, we have chosen a regional classification used by the World Bank.[[23]](#footnote-23) [[24]](#footnote-24) According to data from the World Bank, the two poorest regions in 1988 were sub-Saharan Africa (all income levels) and South Asia. Each region controlled respectively 1.54% and 2.02% of global GDP. The key data for these regions is as follows (for comparison, we have added data from the Euro Area):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Sub-Saharan Africa** | **South Asia** | **Euro Area** |
| **Percentage of global GDP 1988** | 1.54% | 2.02% | 23.61% |
| **Population 1988** | 479,698,379 | 1,086,156,526 | 302,333,622 |
| **Individual percentage of global GDP 1988** | 0.00000000321% | 0.00000000185% | 0.00000007809% |
| **Percentage of global GDP 2005** | 1.42% | 2.28% | 22.17% |
| **Population 2005** | 756,832,300 | 1,498,995,049 | 324,371,720 |
| **Individual percentage of global GDP 2005** | 0.00000000188% | 0.00000000152% | 0.00000006835% |
| **Absolute change in region’s share of Global GDP 1988-2005** | -0.12 | 0.26 | -1.44 |
| **Absolute change in individual GDP 1988-2005** | -0.00000000133 | -0.00000000033 | -0.00000000974 |
| **Relative change in Individual GDP 1988-2005** | -41.43% | -17.84% | -12.47% |
| **Population Growth 1988-2005** | 57.77% | 38.01% | 7.29% |

The data shows that sub-Saharan Africa has experienced a decrease in its share of global GDP from 1988 to 2005. Setting this aside and looking at the change in individual share of global GDP, it becomes clear that each individual in the region has experienced a huge relative drop in her share of global GDP. Importantly, this drop cannot plausibly be explained with reference to the decrease in the region’s total share of the global GDP. We suggest that a non-negligible cause of this huge relative drop in the individual share of global GDP is the relatively high population growth in sub-Saharan Africa.

If, for example, each individual in sub-Saharan Africa in 2005 should have had the same individual share of global GDP as she had in 1988, then sub-Saharan Africa should have had a share of 2.43% of global GDP in 2005. For this to have been the case, sub-Saharan Africa’s share of global GDP would have had to increase with a staggering 57.79% in the period from 1988 to 2005. Such an increase is truly staggering given the fact that from 1988 to 2005, sub-Saharan Africa’s share of global GDP *decreased* with 7.8 %.

The effect of population growth can also be illustrated by looking at the South Asia region. From 1988 to 2005 this region increased its share of global GDP from 2.02% to 2.28%. However, in the same period, each individual in this region experienced a decrease in her share of global GDP. This decrease can, we suggest, to a non-negligible extent, be explained by making a reference to the dramatic population growth in the region. In the period from 1988 to 2005, South Asia experienced a population growth of 38,01%. If each individual in South Asia in 2005 should have had the same individual share of global GDP as she had in 1988, then the region should have had a share of 2.77% of global GDP in 2005. For this to have been the case, South Asia’s share of global GDP would have had to increase with 37.13% in the period from 1988 to 2005. From 1988 to 2005, South Asia’s share of global GDP increased with 12.9%.[[25]](#footnote-25) This increase is, however, completely eaten up by the region’s dramatic increase in population in the period.

The two poorest regions in 1988, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, have experienced a high population growth in the period from 1988 to 2005. These two regions were, in combination, home to more than 30% of the world’s population in both 1988 and 2005.[[26]](#footnote-26) Our hypothesis is then, that when one looks at how the poorest quarterof the world’s population has fared economically from 1988 to 2005, one also has to take into account the effects that population growth has had on the individual share of global GDP.[[27]](#footnote-27) If this hypothesis is correct, then the dataset’s ability to confer plausibility on Pogge’s assertion that globalization is not good for the poor is weakened.[[28]](#footnote-28)

A possible reply to the critique

It should be stressed that the conclusion we defend in this article is a conclusion about global inequality and not global poverty as such. As mentioned in the Introduction, the thesis we defend is a thesis about what the drivers are of the economic polarization that has taken place in the globalization period.[[29]](#footnote-29) Our argument centers on what Pogge might refer to as a domestic driver, or cause, of the fact that the poorest quarter of humanity got poorer during the globalization period.[[30]](#footnote-30) A common strategy used by Pogge for countering this type of argument consists in arguing that such a domestic driver, or cause, is in fact the product of, or helped along by, the design of the supranational institutional arrangements that rich, developed countries impose on poor, developing countries.[[31]](#footnote-31) We do not dispute that this argumentative strategy is plausible on some occasions. However, we suggest that such an argumentative move is not credible in this case. We simply find it improbable that the global institutional order can be held responsible, to a significant degree, for the fact that sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have had a population growth of, respectively, nearly eight times, and more than five times, that of the Euro Area in the period from 1988 to 2005 (let us use “F” to denote this fact about population growth in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia).

In reply to this, Pogge, or a defender of his position, can put forward the following argument:

1. The global institutional order has caused poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in the globalization period.[[32]](#footnote-32)
2. Poverty causes high fertility rates in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.[[33]](#footnote-33) [[34]](#footnote-34)
3. If the global institutional order has caused poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in the globalization period and poverty causes high fertility rates in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, then the global institutional order has caused high fertility rates in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in the globalization period.
4. The global institutional order has caused poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in the globalization period and poverty causes high fertility rates in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
5. The global institutional order has caused high fertility rates in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in the globalization period.
6. If the global institutional order has caused high fertility rates in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in the globalization period, then the global institutional order can be held responsible, to a significant degree, for F.
7. The global institutional order can be held responsible, to a significant degree, for F.

This inference is valid. Premise (2) is empirically well-founded, and premise (6) is true. For the sake of the argument, we accept the first premise.[[35]](#footnote-35) This leaves us with the third premise. This is a conditional. We accept the truth of the antecedent. The consequent is, however, false. Fertility rates decreased in the globalization period in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.[[36]](#footnote-36) It is therefore false to assert that the global institutional order has caused high fertility rates in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in the globalization period. If this assertion is to be true, then the word “cause” must be used in a sense that has very little resemblance to the word’s common, dictionary meaning. Since (3) has a true antecedent and a false consequent, (3) is false. The inference in favor of (7) is therefore not sound, and the argument can consequently not be used to dispute our claim that the global institutional order cannot be held responsible, to a significant degree, for F.[[37]](#footnote-37)

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About the Authors

Jorn Sonderholm is an associate professor at the Department of Learning and Philosophy at Aalborg University in Denmark. His current research interests are in political theory and global justice. He has published papers in journals such as *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*; *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*; *Analytic Philosophy*; *Philosophy Compass* and *Bioethics*. He holds a PhD in philosophy from University of St Andrews.

Henrik Lydholm has an MA in applied philosophy from Aalborg University. He currently works as a project manager in the public sector.

1. T. Pogge, "Are we Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor," *Yale Hum.Rts.& Dev.LJ* 14, no. 2 (2011).: 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Pogge’s article won The American Philosophical Association’s 2013 Gregory Kavka Prize in political philosophy. This is something that makes discussion of the article pertinent. Pogge defines “globalization” as a “dense and influential global system of rules along with a proliferating set of new international, supranational, and multinational actors” Ibid.: 19. The globalization period is, according to Pogge, running from 1988 to 2005 T. Pogge, "Are we Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor," *Yale Hum.Rts.& Dev.LJ* 14, no. 2 (2011).: 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid.: 20 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Pogge defines “we” as citizens of developed countries (e.g. the United States, the European Union, Japan, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) T. Pogge, "Are we Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor," *Yale Hum.Rts.& Dev.LJ* 14, no. 2 (2011).: 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid.: 20 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In virtue of resisting this view, the empirical theorists in question can, according to Pogge, be seen as defending the status quo of the current supranational institutional arrangement. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid.: 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Pogge says that Milanović’s published work contains information similar to the information Pogge uses to underpin his view about what consequences the globalization period has had for the world’s poor T. Pogge, "Are we Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor," *Yale Hum.Rts.& Dev.LJ* 14, no. 2 (2011).: 2. According to Pogge, this published information can be found in, e.g., B. Milanović, *The Haves and the have-Nots: A Brief and Idiosyncratic History of Global Inequality* (New York: Basic Books, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Pogge, *Are we Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor*: 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ibid.: 23 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid.: 24 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. T. Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. It is important to note that in arguing for this view, Pogge utilises a subjunctive baseline for harm. So, Pogge does not reject that the situation for the global poor has improved somewhat in the globalisation period. The global institutional order is, however, still causing harm to the global poor because the situation of the global poor would have been significantly better if an alternative global institutional order had been in place in the globalisation period. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. In fact, we very much agree with Pogge’s view that those World Trade Organization (WTO) rules that allow individual countries to hand out huge subsidies to their own domestic producers and impose an import tax on foreign goods are both morally unfair and seriously detrimental to the economic well-being of many of the global poor T. Pogge, "Responses to the Critics," in *Thomas Pogge and His Critics*, ed. A. Jaggar (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).: 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. It should be noted that Pogge, in a recent article, has responded to some of the criticism that his original article has prompted T. Pogge, "Are we Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor: Responses to Four Critics," *Yale Hum.Rts.& Dev.LJ* 17 (2014). In this "response to critics" article, Pogge does not, however, address the type of criticism that we advance in this article. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. In our article, we have divided GHI into three groups. The dataset Pogge uses divides GHI into six groups Pogge, *Are we Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor*: 22. Our division of GHI maps onto Pogge’s division in the following manner: The rich group in our article corresponds to the “Richest 5%” in Pogge’s article. The poor group (in world A) in our article corresponds to the “Poorest quarter” (in 1988) in Pogge’s article, and the middle income group in our article corresponds to the four groups in between the top and bottom groups in Pogge’s article. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Each individual in this group thereby owns an average of 8.57% of GHI. The individual distribution of assets among members of this group is of no importance. It is, however, important that any member of the first group is richer than any member of the middle income group. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. As with the first group, the distribution of wealth between the 70 persons in this group is of no importance. However, it is assumed that everyone in this group is wealthier than any person in the third group. On average, the 70 persons in this group own 0.799% of GHI. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This is on the assumption that the GDP of B is identical to that of A. This assumption is by no means empirically unrealistic. Consider, for example, that in the euro area, from 1995 to 2000, GDP decreased with13.75 % while the population increased with 1.33%. In sub-Saharan Africa, GDP decreased with 22.60 % from 1981 to 1985. In the same period, the population increased with 12.03 %. See World Bank, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (accessed 30/3-2016). As a matter of empirical fact, it is correct that populations and economic output tend to grow in tandem C. Berry, "The Relationship between Economic Growth and Population Growth," *SPERI British Political Economy Brief*, no. 7 (September, 2014).. From this, it does not, however, follow that a growing population always, or nearly always, leads to a growing economic output (an increased GDP). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Notice how these numbers resemble the numbers in the bottom row of the dataset referred to by Pogge. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The assumptions made in our model, about where on the global income ladder population growth occurs and what the overall magnitude is of global population growth, are not, however, totally implausible if one looks at how the world is. Consider, for example, the following summary comments made by the United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs United Nations, *World Population Prospects the 2015 Revision: Key Findings and Advance Tables* (New York: United Nation (Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division),[2015]).: “Continued population growth until 2050 is almost inevitable, even if the decline of fertility accelerates. There is an 80 per cent probability that the population of world will be between 8.4 and 8.6 billion in 2030, between 9.4 and 10 billion in 2050 and between 10 and 12.5 billion in 2100” United Nations, *World Population Prospects the 2015 Revision: Key Findings and Advance Tables* (New York: United Nation (Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division),[2015]).: 8. “More than half of global population growth between now and 2050 is expected to occur in Africa. Africa has the highest rate of population growth among major areas, growing at a pace of 2.55 per cent annually in 2010-2015 (figure 3). Consequently, of the additional 2.4 billion people projected to be added to the global population between 2015 and 2050, 1.3 billion will be added in Africa. Asia is projected to be the second largest contributor to future global population growth, adding 0.9 billion people between 2015 and 2050, followed by Northern America, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania, which are projected to have much smaller increments. In the medium variant, Europe is projected to have a smaller population in 2050 than in 2015 United Nations, *World Population Prospects the 2015 Revision: Key Findings and Advance Tables* (New York: United Nation (Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division),[2015]).: 3. “The 48 least developed countries (LDCs) as a whole still have high total fertility (4.3 children per woman in 2010-2015) and fast growing populations, at 2.4 per cent per year. Although this rate of increase is expected to slow significantly over the next decades, the population of the LDCs, 954 million in 2015, is projected to increase 39 per cent between 2015 and 2030, and to double to 1.9 billion persons by mid-century” United Nations, *World Population Prospects the 2015 Revision: Key Findings and Advance Tables* (New York: United Nation (Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division),[2015]).: 8. “Africa continues to experience very high rates of population growth. Between 2015 and 2050, the populations of 28 African countries are projected to more than double. By 2100, ten African countries are projected to increase by at least five-fold: Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Somalia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia” United Nations, *World Population Prospects the 2015 Revision: Key Findings and Advance Tables* (New York: United Nation (Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division),[2015]).: 9. In addition to these statements, the report offers information about which ten countries had the highest fertility rate between 2010 and 2015 (average number of children per woman). This is the list: Niger 7.63, Somalia 6.61, Mali 6.35, Chad 6.31, Angola 6.20, Dem. Rep. of the Congo 6.15, Burundi 6.08, Uganda 5.91, Timor-Leste 5.91 and Gambia 5.78 United Nations, *World Population Prospects the 2015 Revision: Key Findings and Advance Tables* (New York: United Nation (Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division),[2015]).: 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. World Bank <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (accessed 30/3-2016) and United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables* (New York: United Nations - Department of Economic and Social Affairs,[2013]). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See World Bank <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (accessed 03/28-2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. We acknowledge some difficulty in comparing our data directly with Pogge’s data. Firstly, we do not know who the “poorest quarter” refers to in Pogge’s data (for more on this issue, please see footnote 27). Secondly, Pogge uses Global Household Income as a base of comparison, whereas we use Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (current US$). Thirdly, Pogge's data yields information about how the *world's* income is distributed (e.g., the richest x % of the world controls y % of Global Household Income). From this information, no information is entailed about which region of the world, individuals from the richest x % come from. We look at a world region’s percentage share of global GDP and divide this number with the number of individuals in that region at a given year. This method yields the individual percentage share of global GDP for each individual in the relevant region in the relevant year. Importantly, this method does not distinguish between individuals within a region. Each individual, in a given region, ends up having an identical individual percentage share of global GDP. However, we do not view these difficulties as being problematic for the plausibility of our critique of Pogge. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Compare the size of this increase (12.90 %) with the size of the increase that sub-Saharan Africa would have needed in order for it to be the case that each individual in sub-Saharan Africa had the same share of global GDP in 2005 as she had in 1988 (57.79 %). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Respectively 30.69% and 34.75% [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. We do not suggest that the poorest quarter of the world’s population is comprised of individuals from only these two regions. Our suggestion is merely that most of the individuals who constitute the poorest quarter of humanity live in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. There is good empirical evidence for this view. See World Bank <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (accessed 03/28-2016). This suggestion is compatible with it being the case that, e.g., some members of the richest 5% come from these two regions and that some individuals from outside these two regions are members of the poorest quarter of humanity. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The dataset in question is the one mentioned in the Introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. It should be acknowledged that Pogge, in his article, makes reference to a second dataset that gives information about the number of undernourished persons in the world Pogge, *Are we Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor*: 23. We interpret Pogge to be of the opinion that such a dataset constitutes an absolute measure of global poverty. The dataset about undernourished persons does not contain data exactly for the globalization period (1988-2005) but contains data for the 1990-1992 period and for the 2005-2007 period. In the former period, there were 843 million undernourished persons in the world. This number of people constituted 16% of the global population. In the latter period, there were 848 million undernourished people. This number of people constituted 13% of the global population. This means that in the 1990-2007 period (a period closely overlapping the globalization period), the number of undernourished persons, as a percentage of world population, *decreased*. The number of undernourished persons increased, however, with 0.59 %**.** In this article, we leave a detailed discussion and interpretation of this second dataset to one side. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. For recent discussions of the role of domestic and global drivers of poverty, see, for example, J. Cohen, "Philosophy, Social Science, Global Poverty," in *Thomas Pogge and His Critics*, ed. A. Jaggar (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 18-45.; J. Sonderholm, "Thomas Pogge on Global Justice and World Poverty: A Review Essay," *Analytic Philosophy* 53, no. 4 (2012), 366-391.; Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights: Cosmopolitan Responsibilities and Reforms*. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. See Ibid.; Pogge, *Are we Violating the Human Rights of the World's Poor*: 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. In a very recent interview with the Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP), Pogge gave the following answer to the question of what the main causes are of the persistence of contemporary poverty: “There are many different causes for the persistence of poverty but one set of causes that is often overlooked is the international institutional architecture that has emerged in the years since the end of the cold war” *Visualising Poverty Research - Interview with Prof. Thomas Pogge (USA), directed by CROP The Comparative Research Programme on Poverty, 2015)*. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Replacement level fertility is the level of fertility at which a population exactly replaces itself from generation to generation. The fertility rate is one of the factors that influence a country’s population growth rate. Other factors include the death rate and the volume of people migrating to and from the country. On average, the replacement level fertility rate is around 2.1 in developed countries. This value includes two children to replace the two parents and an additional 0.1 for the risk of a child dying before reaching reproductive age. For developing countries, this number is slightly higher, at around 2.6, with an additional 0.6 due to the higher risk of infant mortality. See Study. Com: <http://study.com/academy/lesson/population-characteristics-of-highly-developed-developing-countries.html> (accessed 03/28-2016). For average fertility rates for a number of developing countries in the 2005-2010 period, see the UN data in footnote 21. Niger’s was 7.63. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Research has not been able to show that rapid population growth causes poverty, but across all developing countries, over time, a strong inverse relationship between fertility and per capita income, and fertility and life expectancy is observed. There is also a clear connection between high fertility and poverty and the formation of a trap in which low incomes may exacerbate high fertility rates and vice versa. See Center for Global Development: <http://www.cgdev.org/page/demographics-and-poverty> (accessed 03/28-2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. We are, however, of the opinion that this premise is, in the end, false. Justifying this opinion is the topic of a separate paper, but for an overview of some considerations and arguments that can be amassed in support of it, see M. Risse, "Do we Owe the Global Poor Assistance Or Rectification?" *Ethics & International Affairs* 19, no. 1 (2005), 9-18.; M. Reitberger, "Poverty, Negative Duties and the Global Institutional Order," *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 7, no. 4 (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. In South Asia, the fertility rate decreased from 4.35 to 2.95 in the period from 1988 to 2005. This is equivalent to a 32.17% decrease. In sub-Saharan Africa, the fertility rate decreased from 6.48 to 5.52 in the period from 1988 to 2005. This is equivalent to a 14.87 decrease. See World Bank <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators> (accessed 03/28-2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. We wish to thank two anonymous reviewers from *Global Society* for very helpful comments on an earlier version of this article. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)