Introduction: Philosophy and Child Poverty

Child poverty is surely one of the most severe problems in today's world and undoubtedly an ethical issue that needs to be tackled. It is hard to find anyone who argues against the claim that children should not be poor and that we should do something about that. But if we go beyond these obvious truths and dig deeper, we will find many unanswered questions spanning different disciplines, including conceptual, empirical and – as we will particularly argue in this book – normative questions. Child poverty is first and foremost an issue of social sciences, and most publications and studies on this topic belong to that field. But due to its wide-ranging consequences, disciplines such as medicine and psychology are also concerned with it, and more and more researchers acknowledge that such a complex phenomenon must be investigated based on a multidisciplinary approach. Furthermore, it is a highly relevant political topic, and the fight against child poverty is part of the agenda of national and international politicians alike. The reduction of child poverty was part of the Millennium Goals, it will certainly be a goal in the post-2015 agenda, and it is included in the Europe 2020 strategy of the European Union, as well as in countless national action plans or policies.

If one looks at the current state of research and what is done to help children in poverty, it is not easy get the full picture. There are many different conceptions of child poverty, different methods to measure it and no consensus on how best to alleviate it. Philosophy is currently only marginally involved in these debates, but the fields of poverty research and poverty alleviation are implicitly deeply entangled with philosophical issues – most importantly, from our point of view at least, with normative and ethical ones. We would like to briefly name four of them here, before going on to argue for the importance of a deeper

philosophical look into child poverty and show how we will develop our argument in the course of this book.

The first issue is conceptualizing poverty and child poverty. Two ideas are well suited to illustrate that: firstly, poverty is an 'essentially contested' concept, which means that there will presumably never be a consensus on how to understand it properly; secondly, it is a 'thick concept', in the sense that it combines both descriptive and normative dimensions (Schweiger 2012). Every concept of poverty is more than just an empirical description, including a normative dimension, which unfolds in two directions. On the one hand, poverty is evaluative. Describing an adult or child as poor is in most cases also meant to describe the living condition of this person as bad and, to some extent, morally wrong. Entailed in almost all definitions found in poverty research, in policy contexts and in the public and media discourse is that being poor is not good, not something that should be aspired to. On the other hand – and this follows from the judgment that it is something bad – poverty has a certain appellative character. It is used to trigger actions of other people or institutions. Due to this normative dimension, poverty is in a way an 'essentially contested' concept: reaching a consensus on its definition and measurement is very unlikely. Paul Spicker, for example, has distinguished twenty-four concepts of poverty in sociological research alone (Spicker 2007). What it means for a person to be poor is highly unclear, simply because we need to have some kind of normative theory in the background to tell us what aspects of human life or of life in a particular society are important enough to determine poverty. Are resources or capabilities what matter, or is it life satisfaction? What are the important things that we can and should use to measure and track poverty? Naturally, various normative theories can be used for that purpose, and they will most certainly produce different results. We will introduce and discuss many of the relevant concepts in the course of this book. What is important at this stage is to realize that normative considerations have an important place already in the conceptualization of poverty and that it is not possible to grasp it descriptively only.

The second issue is poverty measurement. There are many ethical issues about conducting poverty research itself, especially with children (Bostock 2002; Sime 2008). Poverty is a sensitive issue; it runs deep, making the poor vulnerable. Qualitative research in particular often demands that people talk about private matters. It happens very close to the lives and experiences of poor people, and it touches upon sensitive issues, which are connected to feelings of anger, shame and humiliation. Furthermore, there is an almost unavoidable imbalance in power and

knowledge between the poverty researcher and the poor person; this has to be dealt with.

The third issue is fighting poverty and the question of moral responsibilities of researchers. Poverty research is done not only to gather more knowledge about the poor, to count them and to describe their lives, but because this knowledge should be also used to a large extent to change something and to help end poverty. Many poverty researchers claim with Else Øyen that helping the poor is one of the major drivers to engage in research in the first place (Øyen 2009), but it is highly unclear what kind of obligation is triggered by describing and defining a person as being poor and towards what persons it is directed. Some sort of obligation is almost always implicitly inherent, and so many studies about poverty conclude with some sort of policy advice or name institutions that could make a difference. In the case of national or international poverty surveys that count and monitor the poor, those who are obliged to change the situation are often directly named: the particular state whose official offices track poverty, the European Union or the World Bank and its member states. Poverty research is therefore not only needed to guide policymaking; the definitions and measures employed have power (Ruggeri Laderchi, Saith and Stewart 2006) – if one is not counted as being poor, it can mean that one does not receive benefits or other forms of support by the state. Alice O'Connor has described this issue from a different perspective and argued that poverty research that focuses too much on counting the poor and on refining methods to 'intrude' in their lives and to monitor them is in danger of losing its connection to economic and political issues. Rather, it is necessary to combine poverty research with inquiry and criticism of the economic, social and political environment in which poverty is produced and reproduced and how the national and international institutions have to change to get down to the roots of the problem.

> Although liberal in origins, poverty knowledge rests on an ethos of political and ideological neutrality that has sustained it through a period of vast political change. Very much for this reason, it can also be distinguished by what it is not: contemporary poverty knowledge does not define itself as an inquiry into the political economy and culture of late twentieth-century capitalism; it is knowledge about the characteristics and behaviour and, especially in recent years, about the welfare status of the poor. (O'Connor 2001, 4)

The fourth issue is the inclusion of the poor themselves in theorizing poverty. This raises deep questions related to power: Who decides or

should decide what poverty is and who is characterized as poor? Who has or should have the power to help and change the living conditions of the poor? In short, whether one is counted as poor or not is usually not dependent on whether one views herself as poor. Poverty measures focus mostly – and for good reason – on objective indicators such as income, wealth, goods and capabilities, but there is a growing concern that this focus might be a major shortcoming and that the multidimensionality of poverty and social exclusion demands *the inclusion of the view of the poor themselves* (Brock 1999; Norton 2001). The rise of the debate about subjective well-being, which obviously cannot be determined objectively without reference to the interior view, and its use for poverty research is also an indicator for this (Kingdon and Knight 2006). Finally, the *role of poor people themselves* in the *conceptualization, measurement and evaluation of poverty* is in question. Do they know best, maybe better than poverty researchers, what poverty means or should mean? Neither poverty research nor normative philosophy is situated outside the real world, which is full of relations of power and domination, and it is a fact that some knowledge is privileged and a few have the power to shape the discourse about poverty. Robert Chambers, one of the pioneers of participatory work, writes about that issue:

> A question remains: whose analysis and categories are to be privileged? These are largely 'ours', those of professionals who are not ourselves poor, expressed in 'our' language. The words, concepts, categories and priorities of poor people, especially illustrated by the way they were elicited and expressed in the Voices of the Poor, were rich and varied with commonalities. There are trade-offs to be puzzled over: between 'their' realities and ours; between local participatory diversity and commensurability for purposes of aggregation; and between many categories representing poor people's realities and fewer categories more manageable for outsider professionals and for measurement. (Chambers 2007, 37)

We cannot tackle all of these issues in-depth in this book. They give, however, a first glimpse into the highly complex issues that surround any debate about poverty and the ways in which philosophical, in particular normative, questions, arise. This is not breaking news, neither to poverty researchers and policymakers nor to philosophers. However, today philosophy and poverty research still usually work separately and hence miss out on the benefits of a certainly needed interdisciplinarity. There are, of course, a few exceptions; for example, Monique Deveaux's

(Deveaux 2013) attempt to include the poor as agents of justice (we will comment more on that in the last chapter) or Thomas Pogge's discussion about the flaws in the poverty measures of the World Bank (Reddy and Pogge 2010). But more needs to be done, and it is a shame that philosophy is not a part of most interdisciplinary discussions about poverty. Such collaborations demand much from both sides: social scientists working empirically have to become aware of what they can actually profit from the highly sophisticated debates in philosophy about justice and morality, and philosophers need to acknowledge that the reality of poverty is much fuzzier than we often assume it to be and that constructing valuable theories about poverty and its alleviation implies doing justice to the empirical basis.

Let us now speak more about the aims and scope of this book. It is important to make clear from the beginning that we will be first and foremost concerned with child poverty as it typically occurs in developed countries with welfare systems, as in most member states of the European Union, the USA, Australia and Canada. There are many differences between these countries and systems, and it would be wrong to suggest uniformity here, but they usually manage to avoid, at least to a large degree, extreme or absolute forms of poverty in which children miss the resources for survival and basics such as shelter and access to the most important health care services. Nevertheless, studies show that child poverty is also a big issue in these countries and that most of them are far from giving all their children a fair start in life. The reason for our focus on child poverty as it appears within relatively wealthy states is threefold: First, it is to a certain extent a pragmatic decision. It is not possible to discuss all ethically relevant facets connected to child poverty in this book; we had to narrow down the topics of investigation for the sake of simplicity. Furthermore, data from developed countries are more extensive and more easily available. We know more about how poverty shapes children's lives and the opportunities they get, and a moral theory can be developed in regard to a richer and more substantive material. Second, the injustices of child poverty are more difficult and philosophically challenging to grasp when relative forms of poverty are at stake. As we have already stated, in the countries we take as points of reference, children usually do not die because of poverty, and state support as well as welfare benefits damp the worst consequences of their situation. In some sense, they are better off than their peers in developing countries or failed states; a moral evaluation of child poverty needs to go deeper than pointing to the fact that even the most basic elements of their lives are missing. Finally, our focus on the concept of *social justice*, which we

consider very useful and rich for evaluating child poverty, quite naturally leads to a focus on developed countries with functioning democracies and institutions which, despite all their problems and weaknesses, (still) provide a solid social structure for large parts of their citizenry, especially if they are compared to states where almost no infrastructure and only minimal state support is available. Most philosophers in the field developed their theories in regard to such contexts, and many discussions still relate to nation states and 'internal' distributions of goods, isolated from relationships between countries. We agree that it is important to extend these theories to the domain of global justice and world poverty, and attempts to do so have substantially enriched the theoretical landscape in the last years. In the last chapter, we will therefore briefly address some of the additional questions arising in relation to evaluating extreme forms of child poverty in the developing world.

Our book is located within a certain approach of normative reasoning and thinking about poverty: namely, the capability approach and its most influential representatives, Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. The capability approach has many advocates and certainly also many critics, and we neither hope nor aim to defend it against all of them. Our goal in this book is to apply the approach to a specific topic. Therefore, we will not be able to scrutinize it on a general and fundamental level; we leave these intellectual battles to others. Still, we will say much about the capability approach, how it should be applied to children and what additional value it brings for the analysis and critique of child poverty. As a consequence, we will bring forward several arguments that speak in favor of the approach in general and support many of its assumptions. The capability approach seems a good starting point for our examination, not only because it can provide the normative underpinnings for our goals but also because it is widely used in a variety of academic disciplines as well as policymaking. When it comes to academia, it is extensively discussed, developed, applied and criticized not only in philosophy but also in economics, social policy, political science and development studies, which confirms its interdisciplinary usefulness. A no less influential document than the Human Development Report, which is published annually by the United Nations and monitors human development on a global level, explicitly draws on the capability approach, even if some have questioned how accurately the report represents its theoretical and normative background (Pogge 2002). On the national level, too, governments are interested in the approach and apply it for diverse purposes; the reports on poverty and wealth in Germany (Arndt and Volkert 2006) and the reports of the United Kingdom's National

Equalities Commission, for example, apply the capability approach as part of their theoretical background for their respective concerns (Burchardt and Vizard 2011). And last but not least, it has been inspiring and guiding the work of NGOs and local development initiatives in many different countries and cultural contexts (Deneulin and Shahani 2009). This richness is an asset for our examination of child poverty and social justice, and we will draw not only on the philosophical writings of Nussbaum and Sen but also on the research done in other disciplines which have applied the capability approach to children and to poverty.

Any application of the capability approach faces some challenges that should be made clear at the outset. To begin with, there is no full consensus in the literature on which set of claims and postulates are constitutive of the capability approach. In fact, different authors work on it, and each of them has introduced some new elements or focus points, something that is, inter alia, documented through a constant rise in academic publications on the subject. Furthermore, the capability approach can be characterized not only as a theory in political philosophy but as an 'intellectual movement and programme for action' (Venkatapuram 2011, 114) involving many different agents on the theoretical and practical level. This fact also introduces a certain internal variety and complicates its representation as a clear-cut theoretical concept. In the formulations of Nussbaum and Sen, there is no uniformity to be found, either. While Sen is considered the founder of the approach, Nussbaum joined in early on and over the years developed her own account, which is, in some aspects at least, different from Sen's ideas. In the end, our suggestion will be to work with a kind of 'hybrid', combining elements of both theories, a strategy which has itself proven valuable in other contexts (see, e.g., Wolff and de-Shalit 2007; Venkatapuram 2011).

Besides the capability approach, another major influence on our examination of child poverty comes from the multidisciplinary research on children's well-being and well-becoming. We will argue that these concepts should have a central role in a theory of justice for children, claiming that a just society is one in which each and every child develops and achieves functionings and capabilities that are necessary for her well-being and well-becoming. This introduction of well-being into the capability approach might seem odd, because of the rivalry between capabilities and subjective welfare as possible metrics of justice (a topic which we will discuss in more detail in the first chapter). Let us be clear from the beginning what we understand as well-being and well-becoming. They are not the same as subjective welfare or happiness or satisfaction; in our view, well-being is a multidimensional concept encompassing a wide range of important

features of children's lives: health, education, social inclusion and participation, access to material goods and shelter and the like. A concept of justice for children that is oriented towards children's well-being and well-becoming is primarily concerned not with them being happy but with providing them with the full range of capabilities and functionings that they are entitled to reach comprehensive well-being. Such an objectivist understanding of well-being, as an actual state of being well, and of well-becoming, as the change from one state of being to a state of being well, is now common in much research on children and guiding policies. The capability approach is itself such an objectivist approach towards well-being; for example, Mario Biggeri and his colleagues understand children's well-being as the combination of important capabilities and functionings (Biggeri and Mehrotra 2011). It is also possible to interpret the ten central capabilities of Nussbaum as being a formulation of a concept of well-being. This perspective has been articulated by Alexander Bagattini:

> According to the capability approach, the well-being of persons is identified with a bundle of capabilities that are essential for human nature. (This is seen in analogy with other beings in nature, like plants that need photosynthesis or predators that need to be quick and silent when hunting.) In her recent book, *Creating Capabilities*, Martha Nussbaum gives a list of ten basic capabilities that are supposed to be constitutive for the well-being of human beings: life; bodily integrity; bodily health; senses, imagination, and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; concern for animals and plants; play; and control over one's environment (Nussbaum 2011, p. 33f). Due to its objective account of well-being, the capability approach is very attractive for a conception of child well-being. (Bagattini 2014, 175)

Let us say something about the concept of well-being then. First, we suggest that well-being in childhood matters for its own sake. While it is true that most political philosophers evaluate childhood only insofar it contributes to the genesis of the characteristics necessary for the good life of an adult, this conclusion seems wrong, as a thought experiment by Harry Brighouse powerfully shows (Brighouse 2003): Imagine a tragic world in which happiness in childhood – even though no necessary condition – is a serious barrier to flourishing in adulthood. Under such circumstances, it is obvious that we would consider the scarce individuals who managed to have both a happy childhood and adulthood to be privileged. The standard and more reliable route to get to a flourishing adulthood via a dreary childhood is an inferior option. Furthermore,

let's assume with Brighouse that in such a tragic world there is a reliable correlation between the degree of dreariness in childhood and the level of flourishing in adulthood. Would we really judge parents who impose enormous amounts of dreariness on their children compared to those who allow moments of enjoyment, even knowing that it affects the child's future negatively, as the better ones? We agree that the answer to this question is not an obvious one; there is the strong intuition that the well-being of children seems to matter for its own sake, independently of its contribution to life as an adult. It is simply a good thing that a child lives a flourishing life, exercising and developing her capacities (Macleod 2010). Accordingly, we assume, in line with most theorists in the field, that childhood is intrinsically valuable and that children as the subjects of moral concern have a right to a good life.

Second, the child's condition, which includes a particular vulnerability, immaturity and dependency on others, makes her well-being an especially salient normative category. Children cannot be held responsible for their life choices as adults can, and therefore any harm to their well-being is particularly problematic from a moral point of view. Hence, a society that does not manage to sustain a certain level of well-being for its children cannot be a just one. This does not mean, of course, that the well-being of children is the *only* thing that matters for justice. The child's future as an autonomous and thriving citizen – her becoming – is of importance as well, as is the well-being and well-becoming of all other members of society. However, since it often gets completely neglected in theories of justice, we want to stress clearly the importance that the well-being of children, qua children, should have for normative reasoning.

Third, a comprehensive understanding of children's lives must include a multitude of information. It just is not enough to know, for example, the economic situation of a child or her family in order to judge if she is indeed well off. There is more to disadvantage than can be expressed in monetary terms. In many approaches to the measurement of child poverty, this insight is well established. There, the well-being of children is judged in different dimensions, which are also set into relation with each other. When looking at the lives of children explicitly from a *normative* perspective, such a multidimensional approach is also requested. This is the case for the following reasons: First, if philosophy wants to develop an understanding of justice that is applicable in the real world and its non-ideal circumstances, it must work with a realistic picture of well-being. It should reflect our intuitive judgments about the subject and allow plausible assessments of the social position of an individual (Wolff and de-Shalit 2007, 21). It is obvious that different

aspects of children's lives matter; it would be a theoretical distortion to reduce them to a single good or source and to suggest that being privileged in one dimension compensates the difficulties a child experiences in another. Suppose, for example, that a child with superior academic achievements has serious difficulties socializing and finding friends. The argument that the success in one area is a good reason for neglecting the problems in the other does not, from a commonsensical perspective, do justice to the child's situation and misses important aspects of her well-being. Second, only a pluralist view of the well-being of children allows a differentiated look at what kinds of disadvantages are especially harmful or, to approach it from a different angle, which aspects of a child's life can have a comprehensive and sustainable positive effect on her general situation. Evaluations from a social justice perspective must be sensitive to such differences. Of course, many empirical questions concerning the identification of the most important dimensions of a child's life emerge here, and philosophy cannot answer them a priori. However, its theories must be able to grasp and conceptualize them adequately.

With our focus on children's well-being we strongly agree that it is wrong to look at children *only* as 'human becomings' (Qvortrup 1994; Lee 2001), meaning that they are conceptualized primarily as the future adults they will become. There are very good reasons to take their well-being per se into account and to give it normative weight. In fact, this already follows from a very basic and commonsensical assumption about the moral status of children: namely, that they are entitled to the same moral consideration as adults. This means that their moral claims count equally to those of adult members of a society and that it is morally wrong to discount them with the argument that they are 'only children' (Brennan and Noggle 1997). However, we would also like to stress that considerations concerning justice for children cannot exclusively focus on children qua children. As important as it is to recognize the 'being' child as a social actor in her own right participating in and constructing her own childhood (Uprichard 2008, 304), there is also a need to allow for a life course perspective which recognizes that children usually become adults and that childhood is the most formative period of human life, influencing profoundly the level of well-being one experiences later on, from adulthood to old age. The overemphasis on the child's future and the child's becoming, which is prevalent in large parts of political philosophy, should not be replaced by an overemphasis on childhood itself as is, at least partly, currently the case in the blooming field of childhood studies (Uprichard 2008, 305; Qvortrup 2004, 269). Rather, the being and the becoming aspects of childhood have to be brought together, and a child-

sensitive concept of justice has to operate within the tension between a present- and a future-centered perspective on children's lives. This does not mean a return to an oversimplifying and misleading notion of children as incomplete or innocent incompetents (Archard 2004) who stand in sharp contrast to fully developed and capable adults. Competency depends on both context and task, and in many aspects and situations, children can in fact be more competent than adults (Alanen and Mayall 2001); in addition, it must be acknowledged that development and change are processes at work during the whole life cycle, including adulthood and old age. Still, we suggest that the child's future and her *well-becoming*, that is, her development to a state of well-being over time, is a particularly important normative category; justice should be concerned with human life as a whole and not just with sections of it. Well-being in adulthood and old age is also morally relevant, and therefore one should not underestimate well-becoming considerations, especially since they can get into conflict with claims to a child's well-being. And while childhood is intrinsically valuable and should not be subordinated to adulthood or seen as a mere preparatory phase, it is reasonable to say that children (normally) lack morally relevant characteristics that are of great importance for adulthood and that can be certainly fostered – but also inhibited – by the way children are raised and educated. In particular, we want to argue that the ability to live a self-determined and autonomous life according to a mature conception of the good is generally a valuable achievement in human life (Rawls 1971; Nussbaum 2000; Sen 1999). Now, to act on one's own judgment and to live a life one has reason to value presupposes knowledge, experience, stability of character, the ability to assess the consequences of one's actions and to relate them with one's identity in time, as well as a certain level of emotional health. These abilities, skills and facets of life have to be trained and nurtured – if not, the well-being in adulthood, which crucially includes the ability to act on one's own judgments, is seriously jeopardized. However, sometimes trade-offs are necessary, and so the way children are treated and reared should also include a developmental perspective (Noggle 2002; Brighouse 2003; Adams 2008). Indeed, it is very plausible to claim that children have a right to an adequate development of their capacities, especially those relevant for exercising autonomy broadly construed. Accordingly, injustices for children can be comprehensively grasped only when the effects certain treatments in childhood have on the whole life course are considered.

Before we present a brief outline of the chapters in this book, we want to say something about two issues that we do not deal with but that are related to the topic at hand. The first issue is the question of the moral status of

children, in particular toddlers and newborns, compared to that of (some) animals. There is some philosophical debate about why we should treat such young children differently compared to bonobos or other apes, and this debate is centered on issues of rationality, autonomy and the ability to experience harm. We do not have a clear-cut answer and we also do not engage with this question in this book. Our premise is to say that human children have a moral status which implies that we should treat them with respect and be concerned about their well-being and well-becoming. We will later on explicate what this means in terms of responsibilities of different agents of justice towards children. Whether this moral status should also be applied to other non-human children is not our concern; we leave it to others to debate whether or not a just society would also require us to battle child poverty among non-human animals.

Closely connected to that issue is the second question: the status of children not yet born. This question has two aspects, both of which are connected to a rich as well as controversial philosophical and political debate. On the one hand a society which wants to realize justice for all its children has to take a stance on abortion and also on what it owes to children during pregnancy. We also do not give a answer here, although we will briefly touch upon the issue that it can have harmful consequences if the mother is poor during pregnancy and that this health risk for the baby has to be taken seriously. It is a very delicate question whether or not the right answer here is mandatory prenatal care, based on evidence that being poor influences reproductive health and that girls living in poverty more often get pregnant (voluntarily and involuntarily) than their non-poor peers. On the other hand we focus in this book more or less exclusively on children already born, and we do engage with questions of intergenerational justice. Poverty reduction and alleviation, also during childhood, fight an injustice that should not exist from the start, and intergenerational justice is part of the larger question of how we can make sure that each and every child that is born is free of poverty.

This book is organized in four chapters. Chapter 1 develops a concept of social justice for children. We will argue that the capability approach provides a good framework and discuss some issues that arise when applying this approach to children. Neither Sen nor Nussbaum have written much about children, how a capability-oriented concept of justice for children should be constructed and in what ways it differs from a concept for adults. The most important modification we want to make is to have a more dynamic understanding of functionings and capabilities, since childhood is a phase of development. Furthermore, an initial focus on achieved functionings seems advisable, since children

lack some of the conditions, like autonomy and rationality, to enjoy capabilities in the genuine sense of the term. We will also tackle the issues of selecting relevant functionings and capabilities for children and will specify which distributional rule is best suited for our purposes. We will suggest that a sufficiency-based rule is the most adequate one and explain how it should be interpreted in the context of modern welfare states. Nussbaum and other capability theorists present the capability approach as a concept of minimal justice, which focuses on severe injustices as they typically appear in global poverty in poorer countries. This feature of the approach poses some problems for our case, since we will criticize child poverty in affluent countries, where poverty is usually less severe and harmful. We will conclude the first chapter by claiming that children are entitled to a set of functionings and, as they grow older, capabilities that are important for their well-being and well-becoming. It is a question of justice that they enjoy these functionings and capabilities up to a certain threshold as far as the states in which they live can secure. Furthermore, every child is, within reasonable limits, entitled to develop and achieve well-being as adults. We want to catch this aspect with the term 'equality of opportunity to well-being', which, again, can be expressed on the basis of important functionings and capabilities.

In Chapter 2, we will, based on these normative considerations, examine child poverty and investigate how it affects certain important functionings and capabilities related to both the well-being and well-becoming of children. We will focus particularly on mental and physical health, education and social inclusion, which we consider rather uncontroversial aspects of the well-being and well-becoming of children. We develop our argument in close dialogue with the results of empirical research and show that there is overwhelming evidence that child poverty has detrimental effects on all of them. This finding will lead to the conclusion that child poverty has to be understood as a corrosive disadvantage. It negatively affects more than one important functioning or capability, both horizontally and temporally: child poverty is corrosive during childhood, throughout the whole future life course of the children and to their chances for well-being as adults.

In Chapter 3, we will focus on 'agents of justice'; that is, persons or institutions responsible for securing justice for children in poverty. We will develop a model of responsibilities, using and further advancing a suggestion of Iris Young as presented in her book *Responsibilities for Justice*. There, she distinguishes different grounds or parameters that can be used to attribute agents of justice with various kinds and weights of responsibilities. The grounds that will be at the heart of our model are causation

(being responsible for that injustice in the first place), power (being able to help the victims of that injustice), privilege (having benefited from the existence of that injustice) and interest (having an interest in overcoming that injustice). We will then distinguish eight potential groups of agents of justice (the poor child, the family and close caregivers, the neighborhood and close social environment, the state and its institutions, the community of citizens, the economy, the international institutions, the global community) and give a first ranking of the weight of their responsibilities in the context of child poverty. Our model is still vague, but this reflects both the complexity of the issue and the limits of philosophical inquiry. Attributing concrete responsibilities to the groups of agents we named based on the criteria we presented requires deeper empirical knowledge than we can bring to bear in this book, and to some extent it will never be possible to disentangle all of the relations and interferences. We will then take a closer look at two highly influential agents: the family and the state. We will argue that families in poverty are limited in their power and that their parenting behavior is shaped and influenced by how these parents grew up and how they have lived in poverty. It is not possible to disaggregate exactly how much of the behaviors that are actually harming their children can be attributed to this circumstance, for which they are not responsible themselves, and how much responsibility they have to shoulder. Being poor comes with a restriction of freedom; this restriction, however, is not a total one, and it would be unjust to neglect poor parents completely as agents of justice. We will conclude that the state has high responsibilities to support the child and her family in order to overcome poverty and to secure that the child achieves the functionings and capabilities she is entitled to.

Finally, instead of summarizing the book, Chapter 4 will sketch how our concept could be advanced to cover issues of global justice and global child poverty, which we widely neglect in the other chapters. We will identify a few of the questions that need to be tackled and give an idea how they should be approached. Again, the great urgency and need to address child poverty as a global phenomenon should be obvious. Here too, however, the topic needs philosophical inquiries that clarify in detail the moral implications involved.