



FACULTAD DE TEOLOGÍA
Departamento de teología moral y pastoral

Moral signification of wealth

A comparison between wealth in the Gospel according to Luke
and wealth in contemporary capitalism

David Cortis

Director:
Dr. Raúl González Fabre

Madrid
December 2015

CONTENTS

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Introductory situation.....	4
1.2 Questions to answer in the study	5
1.3 Plan of the study.....	6
Chapter 2 - INTERPRETING THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE	8
2. Introduction	8
2.1 Overview of the Gospel according to Luke.....	9
2.2 Does Luke talk on wealth in a consistent way?.....	9
2.3 Putting the Gospel in context	13
2.4 Reviewing recent readings of the issues of wealth in Luke.....	13
2.5 The Bible-Ethics epistemological problem	15
2.6 Social-scientific approach to the problem.....	19
2.7 Social-scientific approach principles.....	21
2.8 Chosen texts	22
Chapter 3 - SOURCES OF WEALTH IN NEW TESTAMENT ERA	24
3.1 Getting closer to the sources of wealth	24
3.2 The ancient political economy in Palestine	24
3.3 A set of conceptual lenses in reading ancient economics	26
3.4 Basic structures or social institutions in the NT world.....	29
3.5 Land throughout the ages.....	32
3.6 Land and agriculture in NT times	35
3.7 Moving beyond land as a source of wealth	39
Chapter 4 - CONCEPT OF WEALTH IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE	43
4.1 Introduction	43
4.2 A general reading of the Gospel according to Luke and the theme under review.....	43
4.3 Analysis of Luke's selected texts	56
4.3.1 Luke 12,13-21	57

4.3.2	Luke 16,1-13.....	60
4.3.3	Luke 19,11-27.....	68
4.4	Concluding remarks on the concept of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke ...	72
Chapter 5 - CONCEPT OF WEALTH IN MODERN SENSE		76
5.1	Introducing the concept of capital	76
5.2	Capital and time.....	79
5.3	Capital and accumulation	80
5.4	Capital and durability.....	81
5.5	Capital and the human added value action.....	81
5.6	Capital and the production process.....	88
5.7	Capital is owned, transferred, or traded.....	88
5.8	Conclusion	89
Chapter 6 - COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO CONCEPTS OF WEALTH.....		91
6.1	Introduction	91
6.2	Comparison	93
6.2.1	Type of economics.....	93
6.2.2	Basis of wealth creation	94
6.2.3	Social relationship.....	96
6.2.4	Generating profit	99
6.2.5	Intertwining.....	100
6.2.6	Communitarian aspect	101
6.2.7	Human work factor	101
6.2.8	Ownership	102
6.2.9	Time characteristic	103
6.2.10	Place of generating wealth.....	103
6.3	Conclusion	104
6.4	Future direction for studies.....	109
BIBLIOGRAPHY		110

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introductory situation

Nowadays, movies are one of the most powerful mediums where transmission of values is concerned. They also occupy a substantial part of contemporary culture. Fiction, music, and poetry are not ignored in contemporary culture, but neither of these art forms has the glamour encapsulated in the phrase “Hollywood production”– a production that combines all of the previously mentioned art forms. A quick google search on movies that have wealth as their central theme yields hundreds of such movies. Amongst them there are *Wall Street* (1987), *Trade Place* (1983), *There will be blood* (2007), *Indecent Proposal* (1993), *Casino* (1995), *Other People’s Money* (1991), *Millions* (2004), *Blue Jasmine* (2013), *Cosmopolis* (2012), *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), *Enron: the smartest guys in the Room* (2005), *In Debt we Trust* (2006), *Maxed Out* (2006), *The Ascent of Money* (2008), *Capitalism: A Love Story* (2009), *Margin Call* (2011), *Inside Job* (2010).

However, the aim of this study is to give a taste of the theme of wealth understood as capital and not to analyse such movies, even though such an understanding of wealth is a common element in all the productions. However, beneath all these narrations there are other different terminologies related to wealth including; abundance, riches, savings, possessions, inheritance, prosperity, treasure and various others. This study will focus solely on the concept of wealth.

What is wealth? Economics has often been called the “science of wealth”, following the father – Adam Smith – of economics’ famous book named *An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Despite its centrality, however, the concept of wealth has never been a matter of general consensus. According to the Oxford Dictionary, wealth comes from *welthe*; someone is well. The same Dictionary states that wealth

means “an abundance of valuable possessions or money”¹. It is a state of being rich where one has material prosperity together with plentiful supplies of a particular resource. “It is noteworthy to see how Smith’s “wealth” is translated into other languages: as *Wohlstand* - prosperity (not as: *Reichtum* - riches, *Wohlfahrt* - welfare, *Vermögen* - wealth) in German, *richesse* - riches in French, *riqueza* - riches in Spanish and *fú* - rich in Chinese”².

Moreover, an interesting observation is, how Augustine, in the 4th century, rebuked the wealthy by saying that they had “found” their wealth here; they did not “bring it with them” at birth. Wealth meant an owned land. Nowadays, wealth is not simply “found” in the world,³ but is more equalled to capital, proving that there is a difference between ancient economy and present economy. There has to be an appreciation of the richness in all this, or as the theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar coined it; the “symphonic nature”. Furthermore, there is also an impact on the understanding of the different concepts of wealth, as each term has its meaning, in its era, together with its moral signification. In this context, the word signification, from the Latin *significacio*, ‘to indicate’ means “the representation or conveying of meaning”, where epistemology will enter into the whole scenario. Thus, what moral signification is there for the concept of wealth in the early centuries and also in today’s concept of wealth?

1.2 Questions to answer in the study

This study will focus on the moral signification of wealth, by comparing the concept of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke to the concept of wealth in contemporary capitalism. To arrive to the moral signification of wealth, the *status quaestionis* of the investigation is that in the past, land was principally the basis of wealth. In today’s world, there has been a shift in the paradigm concerning the source of wealth. The source of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke was mainly land, whereas in

¹ OXFORD DICTIONARIES, “Wealth”, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/wealth> (accessed 22 November 2015).

² G. ENDERLE, “The Entrepreneurial Vocation: is creating wealth a calling?”, in *Finding meaning in Business: Theology, Ethics and Vocation*, edited by Bartholomew C. OKONKWO, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2012, 23.

³ Cf. D. FINN, “Preface”, in *Rediscovering Abundance: Interdisciplinary Essays on Wealth, Income, and Their Distribution in the Catholic Social Tradition*, edited by H. ALFORD et al, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame/IN, 2006, ix.

contemporary capitalism, wealth is created without the need of land. The consequential question is therefore; does the change in basis affect and change the moral signification of wealth? That is, does the teaching of Bible remain applicable with the change in the conception of wealth as implied by contemporary capitalism?

The above central question gives rise to a series of subsequential questions, namely:

- What is land? What do we mean by stating that land was the basis of wealth?
- The Bible, which is a compilation of different books, of different genres, some of which address the concept of wealth. This investigation will however focus on one particular book that is the Gospel according to Luke. How are we going to tackle the Bible-epistemological question? What approach are we going to apply when investigating the concept of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke? And what concept of wealth is portrayed in this particular book? What type of economy was present in the first century, when the book was written, and which has therefore affected the biblical categories that one can deduct from its analysis?
- What is the concept of wealth in modern sense? What does it mean?
- What are the differences between the two concepts? What implications can we observe for moral theology in understanding wealth in a particular way and not in another?

1.3 Plan of the study

With regards to the plan that shall be followed in the execution of this study, we will start by addressing a part of the dissertation title, namely “the Gospel according to Luke”. Chapter two starts by addressing the Gospel according to Luke and contemplates the method of interpretation of the chosen Gospel texts. The social-scientific approach shall later be introduced together with the principles that are to be applied to the texts. Chapter three will then analyse the sources of wealth in Luke in light of the type of economics practiced at the time and also through an analysis of the land and agriculture in the New Testament times. After this general overview, which equips us with the tools required for the analysis and interpretation of parts of the Gospel according to Luke, we will dedicate chapter four to a general reading of the Gospel according to Luke with

regards to wealth, together with a deeper study of three particular parables. This will lead us to a possible statement and definition of the concept of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke, also part of the dissertation title.

Attention will then be directed to the concept of wealth in contemporary capitalism, dealing more with the concept of capital, its characteristics as well as its properties before establishing a definition of capital in chapter five. Following the two possible definitions of both concepts of wealth, a comparison is made between the two through a series of factors in order to arrive at the conclusion of 1) why and 2) to what extent do the phrases on wealth in the Gospel according to Luke serve and are relevant to today's situations now that the paradigm has shifted from land to a modern concept of capital as the source of wealth.

Chapter 2

INTERPRETING THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

2. Introduction

Søren Kierkegaard was fond of poking fun at the New Testament scholarship of his day:

The New Testament is very easy to understand. But we human beings are really a bunch of scheming swindlers; we pretend to be unable to understand it because we understand very well that the minute we understand we are obliged to act accordingly.... Here Christian scholarship has its place. Christian scholarship is the human race's prodigious invention to defend itself against the New Testament...I open the New Testament and read: "If you want to be perfect, then sell all your goods and give to the poor and come and follow me." Good God, all the capitalists, the officeholders, and the pensioners, the whole race no less, would be almost beggars: we would be sunk if it were not for scientific scholarship! Scientific scholarship! Those words have a magnificent sound...Scientific scholarship, which helps to restrain the New Testament...this confounded book which would *ein, zwei, drei*, run us all down if it got loose, that is, if scientific scholarship did not restrain it.⁴

It is an interesting comment, by a philosopher outlying an epistemological challenge.

Moreover, Bruce J. Malina, a Creighton University Theology professor pointed out that:

Many Christians seek to take their moral cues for daily living from the Bible. The words and examples presented in New Testament books are seen to offer direct religious sustenance for twentieth-century people intent upon pleasing God. Such twentieth-century people find themselves in a world often assessed in terms of Gross National Product, where quantity orientation, judging one's own success in terms of numbers, is a normal occurrence.⁵

In this regard, a question arises: what about the Middle East setting in which the New Testament was written? There is a difference in the Middle Easterners' values and those of Westerners. While the latter tend to act in a calculated manner in pursuit of some future goal, the former tend to act according to present desires without as much regard for future consequences. At times, those who are willing to take the Gospels' teachings at face value have no idea how to apply Jesus' wealth ethics to the contemporary global markets except in a way that is anything less than reactionary, isolationist or economic suicide. This investigation will focus on one particular book of the Bible, that is the

⁴ S. KIERKEGAARD, *Journals and Papers*, translated by Howard V. HONG and Edna H. HONG, (7 volumes), Vol. 3 (1967-1978), §2872, 270-272.

⁵ B. J. MALINA, "Wealth and Poverty in the New Testament and Its World", *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 41/4 (1987), DOI: 10.1177/002096438704100403, 354.

Gospel according to Luke. We will not take into consideration the sequel volume, written by Luke, that is the Acts of Apostles. This chapter is a preamble before delving into the sources of wealth and the meaning of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke. This chapter attempts to answer the question of how to interpret the chosen Gospel texts and the principles that are to be applied to the texts.

2.1 Overview of the Gospel according to Luke

The Gospel according to Luke, usually dated to *ca.* 85 AD, is commonly believed to be derived primarily from two ‘sources’; being the Gospel according to Mark, dated to around 69 AD, which accounts for common material in all three synoptic Gospels; and the *Quellenschrift*, dated to around 50 AD, which accounts for material common to Luke and Matthew but not found in Mark. However, Luke also includes material that cannot be found in any of the other synoptic Gospels; thus the L source. The Gospel according to Luke is constructed upon a journey to Jerusalem. The audience was predominantly made up of Gentiles and followers of Christ in the Greco-Roman world. After the Gospel was written, Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles, which is the sequel to Luke’s Gospel and tells the story of Jesus’s followers during the thirty years after his death. This study will not delve in the Acts of the Apostles.

2.2 Does Luke talk on wealth in a consistent way?

A reading through the Gospel according to Luke points out various different views on wealth starting from having wealth seen as danger to those who possess it,⁶ to women of means who supported Jesus and his itinerant followers (Luke 8, 1-3). Luke has an ambivalent attitude towards rich people and towards wealth. Allen observed that “on the one hand, wealth is hazardous to people who possess it. On the other hand, the community can use wealth as an instrument for covenantal blessing for those in need of material things”⁷. Therefore, does Luke talk on wealth in a consistent way? The

⁶ Cf. R. L. ALLEN, “Beyond the Ambiguity of Wealth”, *The Living Pulpit* April-June 2003, 20.

⁷ Id.

following are some of the passages in the Gospel according to Luke, relating to wealth, possessions and related terms:

- Levi still had a house after “leaving all” to follow Jesus (Luke 5, 29);
- The Gospel according to Luke makes reference to trees, figs, grapes and fruits as a comparison for good treasure (Luke 6, 43-45); barren fig tree, soil, vineyards and fruits (Luke 13, 6-9) are all related to wealth;
- Luke points to the trade of building a house with good foundations (Luke 6,46-49);
- The Gospel refers to the cancellation of debts to two debtors who respectively owned 500 and 50 denarii (Luke 7, 41-45);
- Luke warns that the comfort provided by regular and secure employment cannot be guaranteed to a disciple (Luke 9, 57-58). However, the disciples, though leaving behind their jobs, did not divest themselves of all possessions;
- Jesus also points out that he has nowhere to lay his head, thus frequent lack of shelter and social contempt exist (Luke 9, 58);
- On various occasions the Gospel also denounces Pharisees and Lawyers, who were considered rich, were lovers of money, loved seats of honour, and loved to be greeted in the marketplaces (Luke 11, 37-44; 16, 14-18; 20, 45-47);
- The rich fool, in a parable, is not only implicated in greedy behaviour and accumulating wealth as a source of security, but fails also to take account of God in his business planning (Luke 12, 13-21);
- Jesus teaches the disciples not to worry about food, clothing, or other things but to trust God to provide them (Luke 12, 22-34);
- In the healing of the man with the illness of dropsy (Luke 14, 1-6), some, such as Hartsock⁸, took the term ‘dropsy’ itself as a key point to the story. According to Hartsock, the illness of dropsy was used widely in the ancient Greek world and among philosophers and was frequently a metaphor for greed and wealth.
- In the Parable of the Wedding Banquet dealing with humility and hospitality, the table fellowship is reserved for the host’s inner circle; his is the concern characteristic of the rich, whose care extends only to friends, brothers, relatives,

⁸ C. HARTSOCK, “The Healing of the Man with Dropsy (Luke 14:1-6) and the Lukan Landscape”, *Biblical Interpretation* 21-3 (2013), 341-354.

and rich neighbours – that is, those who are able to repay concern with concern, hospitality with hospitality (Luke 14, 12-14);⁹

- In the Parable of the Great Banquet, people turned down the invitation to be a part of the realm of God because they will not let go certain material things, including land (Luke 14, 15-24);
- Following the above parable there is the Parable of the Tower Builder (Luke 14, 28-30), and the king who is about to go to war (Luke 14, 31-31). In these parables, Jesus requires a renunciation of wealth as a condition of discipleship (Luke 14, 33);
- There are also the parables of the shepherd who owns 100 sheep (Luke 15, 3-7) and the woman who has 10 silver coins (Luke 15, 8-10);
- In the Parable of the Two Sons (Prodigal Son and his brother), the father is rich with fields and has other property which he divided between his two sons. There is also an undercurrent of tension on possession between the elder son and his father (Luke 15, 11-32);
- The Gospel depicts Jesus, in the Parable of the Dishonest Manager (Luke 16, 13), as strongly criticizing mammon, which is stored wealth and the hoarding of possessions;
- In the story of Lazarus and the rich person, the latter feasted while Lazarus lay hungry at the gate in flagrant violation of covenantal commitment to provide for the poor (Luke 16, 19-31);
- Luke uses the images of house, field and belongings to underscore the danger that attachment to possessions poses in the face of judgement. Furthermore, as a caution referring to the generations of Noah and Sodom who were said to be rich¹⁰, Jesus is quoted to say that “anyone on the housetop who has belongings in the house must not come down to take them away; and likewise anyone in the field must not turn back” (Luke 17, 31);
- The rich ruler became very sad when Jesus requested distributing money to the poor (Luke 18, 18-27);

⁹ J. B. GREEN, “Wealthy...who me, surprising perspectives on faith and wealth from Luke-Acts”, *The Living Pulpit* April-June 2003, 18-19.

¹⁰ Cf. C. M. HAYS, “Hating wealth and wives, an examination of discipleship ethics in the third gospel – Luke”, *Tyndale Bulletin* 60/1 (2009), 62.

- When the question is put to Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”, he replies, “Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor” (Luke 18, 18-22).
- In contrast to this, Zacchaeus’ vow was indicative of genuine repentance. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and rich. His decision to compensate four times as much to those he had deprived of their possessions might also be grounded in well-established Jewish practices on restitution for loss of property (Ex 21,33–22,15; Lev 6,5; Num 5,6). However, Zacchaeus did not sell everything or shared all his wealth, but ‘only’ gave half of his money to the poor (Luke 19, 1-10);
- In the Parable of the Ten Pounds, the nobleman gave one pound each to ten of his slaves to do business with it (Luke 19, 11-27);
- The Parable of the Wicked Tenants shows that a man had a vineyard, and there is a strong feeling of greed and a desire for possession amongst the tenants who also killed the owner’s beloved son to remain with the inheritance (Luke 20, 9-19);
- In the widow’s offering, Jesus points out that all other contributors donated out of their abundance while she gave all she had (Luke 21, 1-4);
- In another episode, the apostles arrived in Jerusalem bedecked with garments, purses, and even a couple of swords, where Jesus also instructed those apostles who have no sword to sell their cloak and buy one (Luke 22, 36-38). This is in contrast to sending out the apostles without a purse, bag or sandals (Luke 22, 35);
- Other stories in Luke show how God provides, even to the disciples who left everything to follow Jesus.

Furthermore, in the Gospel there are other accounts of wealthy people, including the centurion in Capernaum (Luke 7, 1-10); Simon the Pharisee, host at table fellowship (Luke 7, 36-50); the brothers who greedily argue over their inheritance (Luke 12, 13-15); the centurion at the Cross (Luke 23, 47); Joseph, a member of the Council (Luke 23, 50-54).

All this may contribute to confusion in the attentive reader of the Gospel according to Luke. In this regard, in his famous phrase, Johnson pointed out that the problem we face is that although “Luke consistently talks about possessions, he does not talk about possessions consistently”¹¹. At the same time, it seems improbable that Luke would spend one in six of his Gospel’s verses teaching on poverty and possessions if all that material were simply historical trivia, bereft of any bearing on his contemporary readers. There must be a message behind all this.

2.3 Putting the Gospel in context

Let us now put the Gospel according to Luke into its context. Like most other early Christians, the writer of the Gospel according to Luke believed that the present age of history would end fairly soon and would be replaced by a new era in which all people would partake of eternal abundance¹². From this perspective, the theology of wealth and community in Luke is designed not as a permanent arrangement but as a stopgap or emergency provision to help tend to the material needs of members of the Christian community. Moreover, it makes a witness in the larger world until the final great transformation, when the present time of brokenness gives way to the new world. This strain in Luke’s theology is an implicit criticism of any economic practice or system that presumes the inequitable distribution of resources.

2.4 Reviewing recent readings of the issues of wealth in Luke

Upon reviewing recent readings of the issues of wealth and poverty in Luke, Philips noted two factors “(1) the sheer number of Lukan texts that relate to these issues and (2) the immense diversity of perspectives these texts contain related to those issues”¹³. Moreover, Hays, through a thorough survey of existing scholarship on wealth ethics in Luke proposes a set of appealing and well-reasoned conclusions regarding how to interpret what Luke’s Jesus and the first generations of his followers believed and

¹¹ L. T. JOHNSON, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, Scholars Press, Missoula/MT, 1977, 130.

¹² Cf. R. L. ALLEN, “Beyond the Ambiguity of Wealth”, 21.

¹³ T. E. PHILLIPS, “Reading Recent Readings of Issues of Wealth and Poverty in Luke and Acts”, *Currents in Biblical Research* 1/2 (2003), DOI: 10.1177/1476993X0300100207, 233.

practiced regarding material possessions. He identifies four common approaches to Lukan wealth ethics: the bi-vocational, the interim, the literary/popular, and the personalist approaches. Each offers a distinctive explanation for the difficulty of identifying a unitary set of obligations that apply to the holding of wealth within the words and actions of Luke's Jesus.

The bi-vocational strategy divides the Gospel's teachings on money into two thematic groups: "the really batty texts that call for divestiture and renunciation are said to be directed at itinerants, i.e the disciples that followed Jesus around Galilee, while the more reasonable texts are said to be directed towards localized believers, i.e. everyone else"¹⁴. Some scholars suggest that the interim strategy is that "Luke's Jesus proposed an *interim* ethic of radical divestiture, applicable only to the time of his earthly ministry and perhaps to the first generation of apostles"¹⁵. Another strategy to wealth ethics is the literary/popular strategy which originates from the pulpit and popular interpretations.¹⁶ The last strategy, as identified by Hays, is the personalist strategy which highlights the diversity of behaviours and lifestyles of the readers and where each believer is to make a personal evaluation of how to respond to Jesus' ethical mandates.¹⁷

To his credit, Hays outlines a constructive schema, whereby duties and expectations for the renunciation or redirection of wealth are calibrated according to a disciple's situation in life. The key to this range of contingent applications is how a given follower fits the vocational categories of itinerant or localized, as well as whether the disciple is affluent or of limited means. In a nutshell, Hays' claim is that Luke does indeed advocate the renunciation of all of one's wealth, "though that renunciation appears in a variety of forms determined by one's vocation and wealth"¹⁸.

¹⁴ C. M. HAYS, "Engaging with New Testament Wealth in the 21st Century", 2013, <http://theceme.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Hays-NT-Wealth-Ethics.pdf> (accessed 19 March 2015).

¹⁵ Id.

¹⁶ Cf. Id.

¹⁷ Cf. Id.

¹⁸ C. M. HAYS, *Luke's Wealth Ethics: A study in their coherence and character*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2010, 24.

Other various scholars wrote on the issues of wealth and poverty in the Gospel according to Luke. Besides Christopher M. Hays, Thomas E. Phillips (the post-apostolic reader) and Luke T. Johnson (possessions as symbolic of one's person), there is R. J. Karris and W. Stegemann (the financial secure reader – an emerging consensus); D. Sweetland and D. Kraybill (possessions as symbolic of commitment to social structures); John O. York (the eschatological reader); Michael Prior (the sensitive contemporary reader); Richard J. Cassidy (popular reading); Walter Schmithals (the persecuted reader); David P. Secombe (the financially secure God-fearer); Thomas E. Schmidt (the hostile, self-regarding reader); Kyoung-Jim Kim (the metaphorically enslaved reader); Susan R. Garrett (the ascetic reader); John Koenig (the residential reader); Hans Joachim Degenhardt (ecclesiastical reader); G. R. Osborne; D. L. Mealand; W. E. Pilgrim; F. W. Horn; P. H. Esler; W. Heard; J. Gillman; Joel B. Green; Halvor Moxnes; V. K. Robbins; D. J. Ireland; M. Shoemaker; C. L. Blomberg; D. A. Holgate; amongst others.¹⁹ Each one of them wrote on these issues with a different type of approach whether redaction, or literary, or social-scientific, or other critical perspective.

2.5 The Bible-Ethics epistemological problem

Thus, coming to the crux of the chapter: how does a Christian read the above Gospel pericopes with spiritual and intellectual integrity? While Jesus' teachings on possessions do present us with major hermeneutical challenges (i.e. it's hard to figure out how to apply them to the 21st century Western world), we do not confront those challenges by refusing to hear what Jesus said.

Various theologians have written on the use of scripture in moral theology. A particular book,²⁰ called *Readings in Moral Theology; the use of Scripture in Moral Theology*, published in 1984, is a sample collection of articles on the theme of the use of scripture in moral theology edited by the well-known moral theologians Curran and McCormick. In the foreword to this collection, both theologians indicate "the complex question of the

¹⁹ Cf. T. E. PHILLIPS, "Reading Recent Readings of Issues of Wealth and Poverty in Luke and Acts", 231-269.

²⁰ C. E. CURRAN; R. A. MCCORMICK, *Readings in Moral theology No 4: The use of Scripture in Moral theology*, Paulist Press, Ramsey, 1984.

use of the Scriptures in Christian ethics or moral theology”²¹. Through their representative sampling of the articles they tried to call attention to the complex question that involves at least four different aspects; being “the determination of the meaning of the particular scriptural text as it is found in the Bible itself”²²; secondly, “the meaning of the text for today in our different historical, cultural, and sociological situation”²³; thirdly, “the different levels within moral theology itself”²⁴, that is different levels such as person as both subject and agent, values and goals of the Christian life, fundamental call to conversion, attitudes, character, ethical model, amongst others; and lastly, “the relationship between the Bible and the other sources of ethical wisdom and knowledge for the discipline of moral theology”²⁵. This shows the different approaches involved in the question on the use of scripture in moral theology together with related issues.

At the same time, it is important to underline that the Sacred Scripture is not a collection of evidence of ethical norms but our basic nourishment, with all its expressive power. The Bible does not contain a moral treatise, that is, a systematic exposition of biblical morality. Instead, its moral teachings appear in various literary forms (commands, prohibitions, case laws, prophetic exhortations, wisdom sayings, and so forth) and frequently in the course of a narrative.²⁶ Moreover, the Bible is a compilation of different books and different types of literary genres where each book has a particular theology. Prophetic writings present a type of morality, as do the Gospels; each presents an image of Jesus which has its implications for morality. The parables, which were one of Jesus’ preferred ways of teaching, together with the healings in Luke convey in themselves a moral message which is different from Jesus’ discourses. This point is further emphasised in the 2008 Pontifical Biblical Commission’s Document, *The Bible and Morality: Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct*. This document gives a characterization of the principle moral teaching of each of the writings of the Bible.

²¹ C. E. CURRAN; R. A. MCCORMICK, “Forward,” in *Readings in Moral theology No 4: The use of Scripture in Moral theology*, ed. Charles E. CURRAN and Richard A. MCCORMICK, Paulist Press, Ramsey, 1984, vii.

²² Id.

²³ Id.

²⁴ Ibid., viii.

²⁵ Id.

²⁶ Cf. D. J. HARRINGTON, “Biblical Perspectives”, in *Jesus and virtue ethics: building bridges between new Testament studies and moral theology*, edited by Daniel J. HARRINGTON; James F. KEENAN, Sheed & Ward, Chicago/IL, 2002, 8.

Nevertheless, how are we going to do the actualization of Scripture, to the pertinent ethical and moral questions? The term ‘actualization of Scripture’, which describes the appropriateness of using scripture in the life of the Church, in the life of the People of God and the whereabouts they are living, is a term coined by the Pontifical Biblical Commission both in its 1993 document on the *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* and also the 2001 *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*. This method has its limits as it can distort the author’s original intention and the context of the intended readers.

Interestingly, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger,²⁷ just before being elected as a Pope, argued²⁸ that in spite of initial attempts to renew a moral theology under biblical inspiration, these attempts quickly ceased without attaining the desired goal. This was due to the fact that the Bible has no ready-made answers. In our times, it is a challenge to have adequate responses to our contemporary issues. Furthermore, Ratzinger stated that “Scripture does not offer us a theological system and still less a system of moral theology, with a systematic and orderly presentation of the main principles of action”²⁹. He summarised the question in this way:

While it was hoped that a renewed moral theology would go beyond the natural law system in order to recover a deeper biblical inspiration, it was precisely moral theology that ended by marginalizing Sacred Scripture even more completely than the pre-conciliar manualist tradition. In the latter, Sacred Scripture was absent *de facto*, although perhaps in theory it was supposed to inspire, though without success. Now, on the other hand, it is marginalized *de iure*: it is claimed that Sacred Scripture cannot offer moral principles that would suitably guide the construction of our actions. Scripture, according to this position, offers only a horizon of intentions and motivations, but it does not enter into the moral contents of the action.³⁰

The originality of Sacred Scripture in the area of ethics is “the critical discernment of what is truly human because it assimilates us to God, and its purification from whatever is dehumanizing; its insertion into a new context of meaning, that of the Covenant, which raises the human and brings it to fulfilment”³¹. According to Ratzinger, the three important expressions, pregnant with theological meanings, are purification from

²⁷ Cf. J. CARDINAL RATZINGER, “The Renewal of Moral theology: perspectives of Vatican II and *Veritatis splendor*,” *Communio* 32 (2005), 357-368.

²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 359.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 360.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 361.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 362.

whatever is dehumanizing, illumination to raise the human and brings it to fulfilment, and discernment of what is truly human.³²

Furthermore, the 2008 Pontifical Biblical Commission's Document put forward general principles on which moral reflection should be made. The document refers to two fundamental criteria; the conformity with the biblical view of human dignity and the human person as image of God, and the conformity with the example of Jesus. In addition, specifically the document proposes six specific considerations to these fundamental criteria being:

- 1) convergence – that is natural wisdom to enter into dialogue with modern culture;
- 2) contrast – against the culture;
- 3) advance – refinement of conscience to understand moral problems more profoundly;
- 4) community dimension – that is, society;
- 5) finality – hope of future life with God to seek and practice God's will;
- 6) discernment – that is prudence as it is not possible to place all the moral rulings on the same level, nor attribute equal value to all examples of morality found in the Bible.³³

At the same time, as Harrington reflects, “New Testament ethics is oriented toward encountering God and doing God's will in the light of the Christ event”³⁴. Thus, the task is to become a *Doer of the Word*, as suggested by Terence Kennedy.³⁵ This helps us to be more aware of the importance in the reading approach together with the interpretation of the chosen Gospel on the theme of wealth. Thus we come to the fundamental question: What approach are we going to apply when investigating the concept of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke?

³² Cf. Id.

³³ PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, “The Bible and Morality, Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct”, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_2008_0511_bibbia-e-morale_en.html (accessed 19 March 2015).

³⁴ D. J. HARRINGTON, “Biblical Perspectives”, 8.

³⁵ T. KENNEDY, *Doers of the Word*, St Pauls, London, 2002.

2.6 Social-scientific approach to the problem

There are various approaches to interpret the Bible. In the late 1960s and early 1970s there was a growing dissatisfaction with the then-current methods of Biblical studies, especially the type represented by Rudolf Bultmann. Eventually a group of scholars worked together to overcome this dissatisfaction, and from where the Context Group resulted and likewise the social scientific approach. The first presumption of this approach is that “all knowledge is socially conditioned and perspectival in nature”³⁶. The second presumption is that the interpreter must be aware of his or her own personal and social locations, in order to avoid eisegesis that is, reading back into the text which is being interpreted.³⁷

At the same time, the social scientific approach retains a close link with the aims of historical criticism. It is defined as:

Social scientific criticism of the Bible is that phase of the exegetical task which analyses the social and cultural dimensions of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models and research of the social sciences. As a component of the historical-critical method of exegesis, social scientific criticism investigates biblical texts as meaningful configurations of language intended to communicate between composers and audiences.³⁸

In fact social science is the science of people, including economies and people’s behaviours. Interestingly, on similar grounds, the Pontifical Biblical Commission, in its 1994 document, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, pointed out that:

Because of the progress made in the human sciences, questions of interpretation have become more complex in modern times. Scientific methods have been adopted for the study of the texts of the ancient world. To what extent can these methods be considered appropriate for the interpretation of holy Scripture? For a long period the church in her pastoral prudence showed herself very reticent in responding to this question, for often the methods, despite their positive elements, have shown themselves to be wedded to positions hostile to the Christian faith. But a more positive attitude has also evolved, signalled by a whole series of pontifical documents, ranging from the encyclical “*Providentissimus Deus*” of Leo XIII (Nov. 18, 1893) to the encyclical “*Divino Afflante Spiritu*” of Pius XII (Sept. 30, 1943), and this has been confirmed by the declaration “*Sancta Mater Ecclesia*” of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (April 21, 1964) and above all by the dogmatic constitution “*Dei Verbum*” of the Second Vatican Council (Nov. 18, 1965).³⁹

³⁶ J. ELLIOTT, *Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament: An introduction*, SPCK, London, 1995, 36.

³⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 37.

³⁸ J. ELLIOTT, *Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament*, 7.

³⁹ PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church”, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/PBCINTER.HTM> (accessed 13 March 2015), [Introduction].

Furthermore, the same document draws explicit attention to the need for learning and understanding the ancient, Middle Eastern culture, or the “socio-cultural world”. Many who use cultural anthropology to interpret the Bible rely particularly upon its sub-discipline that is the Mediterranean anthropology. Moreover, as pointed by the already quoted document: “It follows, then, that the human sciences—in particular sociology, anthropology and psychology—can contribute toward a better understanding of certain aspects of biblical texts”⁴⁰, where cross-cultural sensitivity is important, in identifying the *Sitz im Leben* of the New Testament texts. It is within the hermeneutical path outlined by Hans-Georg Gadamer, who insists upon the necessity of understanding the horizon of the past and where a historical analysis is indispensable. Social-scientific criticism defines “text” as a “unit of meaningful social discourse in either oral or written form”⁴¹. Thus, “meaningful discourse” assumes a shared system of signification - a social semiotic.

On the other hand, Dvorak, in his article on social-scientific criticism, indicates the cautions and limitations of this interpretation method. The first one is over-interpretation, as any method of interpretation flirts with the danger of over-interpreting a text, but social-scientific criticism may be more susceptible to this trap if not closely scrutinized. The second caution is the methodological egoism, claiming too much about its contribution, forgetting that social-scientific criticism is not the only valid way of interpretation. The third caution is anachronistic fallacy, where there is a very real danger inherent in using models developed by a modern discipline like sociology to interpret the ancient world and text of the Bible. In other words, some models are better at eisegesis than exegesis. A sociological model developed in contemporary world can end up imposing a certain meaning back onto the text of Revelation that the author most likely did not intend. To overcome these cautions and limitations, social-scientific criticism is to be taken as a method in the exegetical toolbox for learning about the social and cultural location from which it was born.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1.D.

⁴¹ J. ELLIOTT, *Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament*, 49.

⁴² Cf. J. D. DVORAK, “John H. Elliott’s Social-Scientific Criticism”, *Trinity Journal* 28/2 (2007), 277-278.

2.7 Social-scientific approach principles

With all these issues in mind, how are we going to tackle the central issue of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke? As the Biblical texts were produced in a concrete and cultural situation, as stated, the social-scientific approach is the quest for the social identity, perceptions of the world, and cultural characteristics of the writers, readers/hearers, and communities. This method is different from the literary approach such as the narrative criticism, where it “collects data from biblical texts to ascertain what was going on *when* and *where*”⁴³. Thus the focus is on different aspects in the text, where as a result “historical criticism reduces social and cultural data in texts to mere illustrative background information”⁴⁴. This social-scientific approach is also different from the socio-rhetorical interpretation, as the latter is an integration of social-scientific approach with narrative criticism.

In this study, the social-scientific method is going to be used in analysing the biblical texts from the Gospel according to Luke. This social-scientific method searches further more than the “that” or “what” information, but delves in questions concerning “how”, “why”, and “what for”⁴⁵. These are three important principles in the social-scientific approach. Furthermore, in the social-scientific method, another important principle is on how did the shared social and cultural knowledge of the hearers of the parable, or of the episode, provide the basis for the shared meaning and communication that Jesus depended on when he told the parable.⁴⁶ Thus the context of texts refer to

social behaviour involving two or more persons, social groups, social institutions, social systems, patterns, and codes, Furthermore, texts themselves are likewise shaped in their language, content and perspectives by the social systems in which they were produced: they serve as vehicles of social interaction. The contexts of these texts, are also social contexts, contexts shaped by societal conditions, structures and processes.⁴⁷

Hence, social-scientific method helps to investigate “the interrelationship of ideas and communal behaviour, belief systems and cultural systems and ideologies as a whole, and the relationship of such cultural systems to a natural and social environment,

⁴³ E. VAN ECK, “Socio-rhetorical interpretation: Theoretical points of departure”, *HTS Teologiese Studies* 57/1&2 (2001), 594.

⁴⁴ E. VAN ECK, “Socio-rhetorical interpretation”, 595.

⁴⁵ J. ELLIOTT, *What is social-scientific criticism?*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1993, 12.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁴⁷ E. VAN ECK, “Socio-rhetorical interpretation”, 595.

economic organization, social structures and political power”⁴⁸. An important point, in order to avoid the risks mentioned above by Dvorak, is that the social-scientific analysis attempts to advance beyond "mere social description and inspired hunches concerning social relationships to social-scientific analysis and description"⁴⁹. The social-scientific method, analyses the text and context of the biblical documents. Care is given, as much as possible, not to impose a certain meaning back onto the text under review.

In view of all this, the “how”, “why”, and “what for” of the social-scientific approach, will be made through the following questions which will be used as a method to read the scenarios under review:

- i. What is the social context and cultural condition of the writer and recipient? In other words what are the shared social and cultural knowledge? How does this influence? How and why the circumstances gave rise to the production of biblical texts?
- ii. What was the social world in which the Gospel was written?
- iii. What were the situation and the socio-economic level of Luke’s community?
- iv. In what changing contexts did the author of the Gospel according to Luke write?
- v. How does all this affect the meaning of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke?

2.8 Chosen texts

Following a thorough reading of the Gospel according to Luke to outline the different ways in which something mentioned in Luke means either as a stock, or as a flow of wealth, three particular texts will be studied in greater depth, in order to establish a possible meaning of wealth in Luke. The three chosen texts are all parables located within the middle section of Luke (Luke 9,51 to Luke 19,40) wherein Jesus journeys to Jerusalem. The selected parables, as named by the NRSV Bible version which I’m following, are:

Parable of the rich fool	Luke 12,13-21	unique for Luke
Parable of the dishonest manager	Luke 16,1-13	unique for Luke
Parable of the pounds	Luke 19,11-27	with Matthew

⁴⁸ Id.

⁴⁹ J. ELLIOTT, *A home for the homeless: a sociological analysis of 1 Peter, its situation and strategy*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991, xix.

The following is an overview comparison, showing the similarities and differences among the selected texts.

Table 1: Comparison between the three selected parables

	The principal actor	Other actors	Economic terms	Other key terms	
Luke 12,13-21	rich man	-	Land; crops; grain and goods	Risk; future	soliloquy
Luke 16,1-13	rich man	manager and debtors	Property/land; olive oil; wheat	accounting	soliloquy
Luke 19,11-27	Nobleman for royal power	slaves and bystanders	do business; money; bank; interest; cities	trading	“afraid of you” thinking

The first two parables begin with the phrase “a rich man”⁵⁰, which invites us to locate these words in their first-century social Palestine world as will be discussed later on. Being “rich” entailed a range of social obligations which went beyond possessions. To be “rich” had more to do with a status than simply the holding of possessions. It included also honour, friendship, love, power, security and status. To be labelled as “rich” is a social, moral and economic statement. Likewise, the third parable begins with the phrase “a nobleman” which is different than a “rich man”. Furthermore, every parable reading requires a “reading between the lines”, which is entirely proper, where one notices that Jesus’ words are prophetic words challenging something.

In the following chapter we will analyse the sources of wealth in Luke within the economics and economic activity practiced at the time, that is Palestine, and also through an analysis of the land and agriculture in New Testament times. This will equip us before establishing a definition of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke, in Chapter 4, through the thorough reading of the Gospel according to Luke and the analysis of the above three chosen periscopes.

⁵⁰ In our post-Occupy context, we might call “the rich” Luke's one percent. A. P. SHEROUSE, “The One Percent and the Gospel of Luke”, *Review and Expositor* 110, Spring 2013, 285-293.

Chapter 3

SOURCES OF WEALTH IN NEW TESTAMENT ERA

3.1 Getting closer to the sources of wealth

This chapter will investigate the sources of wealth in the era in which the Gospel according to Luke was written. The investigation will be carried out within the context of the economics and economic activity that the Gospel was written in, that is Palestine, and also through an analysis of the land and agriculture in New Testament (NT) times.

3.2 The ancient political economy in Palestine

The modern English word “economy” derives from the ancient Greek word *oikonomia*, a term that in ancient times usually designated household management or, more generally, the activity of “organization” or “administration” (cf. Luke 16,1–4). “The ancient concept of *oikonomia* is thus far more expansive than the modern understanding of an “economy,” for ancient writers did not view economic activity as distinct from other aspects of political and social life, including estate and household management”⁵¹.

Economics had been a constant preoccupation of twentieth and twenty-first century Western societies. Accordingly economic questions overshadow our political and domestic lives. To this effect, biblical scholars are now realizing that we cannot understand the New Testament without some attention to the subject. However, the risk is to think about economics in the Bible, in the light of today’s terms. This has led to authors such as Bruce Barton⁵² to consider Jesus as the founder of modern business; using the parables as modern principles of advertising, and also Jesus as an advocate of

⁵¹ D. J. DOWNS, “Economics, Taxes, and Tithes”, in *The world of the New Testament: cultural, social, and historical contexts*, edited by Joel B. GREEN and Lee Martin McDONALD, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids/MI, 2013, 156.

⁵² B. F. BARTON, *The Man nobody knows*, 1925.

philanthropy. Nonetheless, “any economic life prior to the industrial revolution of the late eighteenth century was a different phenomenon from what moderns have come to think of under the term economics”⁵³.

This leads to an important point that the ancient political economy is distinct from modern economies. Thus, it is necessary to have a discernment of the significant differences between the present economies and that of the biblical period. As Oakman expressed: “economic issues are everywhere in the pages of the Bible, embedded within political, family, or religious contexts... A different kind of *common sense* about the ancient economy needs to be acquired”⁵⁴. There are differences that “the use of money, banks, interest is familiar to us, so that we may not think to investigate whether money, banks, and interest functioned socially in the same way in first-century Palestine”⁵⁵. In this section, before analysing the sources of wealth in Luke, we have to apprehend and acquire a kind of common understanding about this ancient political economy.

Hanson and Oakman in their social science study, *Palestine in the time of Jesus*, put various questions in studying the ancient political economy. Some of the questions which interest us particularly are: “How was economy organised in antiquity? Why claim it was so different from modern institutions? How was production organised? What were the basic commodities of antiquity? What were luxuries? How were goods distributed? Who got what, and why?... How did money function?... Who had access to it? What were ancient banks like? What did debt imply? What is “Mammon”? What does it mean to “serve” Mammon?”⁵⁶ Furthermore, we have to ask: Was the ancient economic system like that of modern, western, capitalist societies? Did Jesus criticize the ancient economic system? What is the moral signification of all this?

⁵³ D. E. OAKMAN, “The Ancient Economy”, in *The social sciences and New Testament interpretation*, edited by Richard L. ROHRBAUGH, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody/MA, 1996, 128.

⁵⁴ D. E. OAKMAN, “The Ancient Economy”, 140.

⁵⁵ K. C. HANSON; D. E. OAKMAN, *Palestine in the time of Jesus: Social structures and Social Conflicts*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1998, 100.

⁵⁶ Id.

This particular attention to the social dimensions inherent in particular texts and in the Gospel according to Luke as a whole, avoids anachronism⁵⁷, ethnocentrism⁵⁸, spiritualization and harmonization. We tend to read our values, social systems, behaviour and cultural assumptions back into a text. Thus, we need models that will help us to imagine how ancient Mediterranean people thought and acted, since we, the readers of the NT, are the foreigners.⁵⁹ Not only the “who, what, when, where” questions are to be asked but also the “why” questions. Furthermore, as meaning is found in the social systems, it is important to understand the social system in which the language functioned. One understands the world according to a social reality.⁶⁰ As Malina pointed out, a scenario model which is verified by experiential psychology is necessary. Readers bring ideas of how the world works to a text that invites the reader to rearrange those ideas.

3.3 A set of conceptual lenses in reading ancient economics

In discussing issues concerning ancient economies, with particular to Palestine, the following points stand out, including (1) the agrarian nature of the economy; (2) the relative significance of trade; (3) the distribution or ownership of land; (4) the social-economic conditions of the peasantry, including the impact of taxation. In this regard, long before the advent of Christianity, people in the Mediterranean basin had reflected on the meaning of wealth and the manner in which it should be acquired, employed, and distributed. As Gonzalez pointed out, the “Greeks, Romans, and Jews had all considered and debated these matters, and on such sources the ancient Christian writers drew for their own reflections”⁶¹.

⁵⁷ K. C. HANSON; D. E. OAKMAN, *Palestine in the time of Jesus*, 194: Anachronism signifies “to misunderstand events, persons, or other social phenomena by placing them in a historical context in which they do not belong. An example would be to interpret the status, role, and authority of ancient Roman emperors as if they were analogous to elected presidents in the US”.

⁵⁸ K. C. HANSON; D. E. OAKMAN, *Palestine in the time of Jesus*, 197: Ethnocentrism is “misconstruing social phenomena from another group by interpreting them in terms of one’s ethnic group and social experience”.

⁵⁹ Cf. B. J. MALINA, “Reading Theory Perspective: Reading Luke-Acts”, in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, edited by Jerome H. NEYREY, Hendrickson, Peabody/MA, 1991, 4.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶¹ J. L. GONZALEZ, *Faith and Wealth. A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money*, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1990, 3.

At the same time, the ancients did not discuss the economy and economic issues in the way the moderns do. There was no modern division of life of political, social, economic and religious sectors. The economy of Palestine should not be understood in isolation. Sociologists often use the term “political economy” in describing ancient economies.⁶² This is contrary to today’s compartmentalization. Thus as Oakman suggests “it is necessary to acquire a special set of conceptual lenses when reading ancient literature, including the Bible, in order to perceive appropriately the nature and character of ancient economics”⁶³.

Years before Oakman, Karl Polanyi in his book *The Great Transformation* (1944), showed how markets, which are central in modern capitalism, played only a limited role in the economic affairs of pre-modern societies. The ancient economy was embedded⁶⁴ in and subordinate to other social institutions, notably political and kin institutions. On these same lines, Weber accurately characterizes ancient “capitalism” as relatively unproductive because of its alignment with power groups and because investments were limited only to certain social acceptable outlets. “Are we legitimized to apply economic methods to a social setting other than that of Western market economies?”⁶⁵, asked Gotsis and Merianos. Polanyi and also Finley⁶⁶ are contrary to the idea of applying our economic theories to ancient economic life on the grounds that economy did not play any significant role in shaping the organization of the ancient Mediterranean and Near-East civilizations, making economic theories an inappropriate tool of analysis.

Gotsis and Merianos employed the analytical category of the *household*, which permeates many New Testament narratives to address a set of economic issues. Other New Testament scholars such as Fiensy, Malina, Oakman have adopted a view of the ancient economy as a constitutive albeit not as a distinct sphere of social action.

⁶² Cf. K. C. HANSON; D. E. OAKMAN, *Palestine in the time of Jesus*, 99–129.

⁶³ D. E. OAKMAN, “The Ancient Economy in the Bible”, *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 21 (1991), 34.

⁶⁴ Economics is “embedded”, meaning that economic goals, production, roles, employment, organization, and systems of distribution are governed by political and kinship considerations, not “economic” ones. B. J. MALINA; R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis/MN, 2003, 398.

⁶⁵ G. N. GOTSIS; G. MERIANOS, “Early Christian Representations of the Economy: Evidence from New Testament Texts”, *History and Anthropology* 23/4 (2012), 470.

⁶⁶ M.I. FINLEY, *Ancient Economy*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1973.

Polanyi points to reciprocity and redistribution as crucial economic alternatives to the market.⁶⁷ Reciprocity “means exchange on a gift or barter basis. It is characterized by informal dyadic contracts – social give-and-take – within household and village. A gift accepted implies an obligation owed (eg. Luke 11,8). In contrast to market exchanges in which the transaction implies no personal obligation, reciprocity exchanges often involve one commodity being traded for another and implicit personal obligations as well. Reciprocity ensures not only that goods on the average will be equitably distributed, but also that help will be available in hard times”⁶⁸. On the other hand, redistribution involved “the politically and religiously induced extraction of a percentage of local production, the store housing of that product, and its eventual redistribution for some political end or another”⁶⁹.

At the same time, the zero-sum system was present. George Foster in his 1967 article, *Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good* illustrates this. Goods in peasant societies were perceived to be limited in quantities, wherein every conceivable good existed in a finite amount.⁷⁰ This implies anyone who got ahead was thought to have done so at the expense of someone else. Consequently any time one person provides a favour of some sort to another person, a loss is incurred for the benefactor; the beneficiary of the favour thus must make up for this. This item of information from cultural anthropology serves to explain not a few perceptions and prescriptions in biblical literature. Maybe, it also serves to clarify why the wealthy are believed to be wicked, purely and simply. As Malina puts it, “there really were no ‘free’ gifts in the ancient world. All ‘gifts’ implied obligations to the giver, including gifts from God”⁷¹. In an embedded economy, “profit making and the acquisition of wealth were automatically assumed to be the result of extortion or fraud. The notion of an honest rich man was a first-century oxymoron”⁷². Good and honest persons are preoccupied with continuity and antiquity—they respect

⁶⁷ D. E. OAKMAN, *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day*, Mellen, Lewiston, 1986, following Polanyi, focuses on production and (re) distribution from the viewpoint of the village, arguing that Jesus spoke against the exploitative political economy of Roman Palestine while advocating economic values based on general reciprocity and redistribution under a vision of God’s reign.

⁶⁸ D. E. OAKMAN, “The Ancient Economy”, 129.

⁶⁹ Id.

⁷⁰ Cf. J. H. NEYREY, “Limited Good” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, edited by Bruce J. MALINA and John J. PILCH, Hendrickson, Peabody/MA, 1998, 122-127.

⁷¹ B. J. MALINA, “Grace/Favor” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, edited by Bruce J. MALINA and John J. PILCH, Hendrickson, Peabody/MA, 1998, 90.

⁷² B. J. MALINA; R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, Fortress Press, Minnesota, 2003, 400.

the past; hence those who advocate a break with the past, who advocate something brand-new, are rebellious, outsiders and deviants. In our case in point, if a person is wealthy, he or she is wicked or the heir of wicked people.⁷³

3.4 Basic structures or social institutions in the NT world

Bruce Malina points out that there was no disgrace in poverty, but the inability to maintain one's honour was a serious liability. Not to have the means to do so would be thought of as shameful. Malina reminds the reader that economy was not a freestanding social institution in ancient societies. Thus he points to the cultural meaning of wealth *within* an honour-shame framework. This meaning is not identical to perceptions within modern capitalist societies.⁷⁴ This honour-dishonour (or shame) framework is mentioned also in the 1994 Pontifical Biblical Commission's document on the Interpretation of the Bible.⁷⁵

Honour is a public claim to worth, affirmed by public acknowledgment of that claim. It is attached to appearance and public reputation. Richard Rohrbaugh called it the "core value in the biblical world"⁷⁶. Concern for honour permeates every aspect of public life. "It implies a claim to entitlements on the basis of social precedence"⁷⁷. Honour is a limited good and thus gained through zero-sum thinking, taking honour from someone else. Honour is more valuable than money, land, or possessions, so that it will likely play an important role in a culturally aware interpretation of any biblical text-segment. On the other hand, shame can be positive or negative. A negative shame is the public's denial of the claim to honour, or behaviour deliberately contrary to social, that is, public expectations. By contrast to "have shame", and this in a positive way, is to "have proper concern about one's honour...It can be understood as sensitivity to one's own

⁷³ B. J. MALINA, "Wealth and Poverty in the New Testament and Its World", 364.

⁷⁴ B. J. MANILA, *The New Testament world: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, Westminster John Knox, Louisville/KY, 2001.

⁷⁵ PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church", 1 D.2.

⁷⁶ R. L. ROHRBAUGH, "Honor, Core Value in the Biblical World", in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, edited by Dietmar NEUFELD and Richard E. DEMARIS, Routledge, London-New York, 2010, 109.

⁷⁷ B. J. MALINA, R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on Synoptic Gospels*, 370.

reputation or the reputation of one's family"⁷⁸. Hence, the central paradigm in ancient Middle Eastern society is honour and shame.

At the same time, "one way for a member of the non-elite to preserve his position was to enter into a patron-client relationship with some local worthy. This was a relationship based on a strong inequality of power in which, nevertheless, both sides gained; the client by obtaining social, economic and political resources from the patron, the patron by obtaining useful loyalty and honour"⁷⁹. In fact, patron-client systems are "socially fixed relations of generalized reciprocity between social unequals in which a lower-status person in need (called a client) has his needs met by having recourse for favours to a higher-status, well situated person (called a patron)"⁸⁰. Patrons are powerful individuals who control resources.

Moreover, a word on the social institutions is important to have a clearer picture of the NT social setting, together with its link to honour. Actually, what were the basic social institutions or structures in that era? Malina distinguishes four social institutions or structures which are ways or means humans use to realize basic human values. The basic social institutions in NT era are generally called kinship, economics, politics, and religion. Briefly, kinship is about 'naturing' and nurturing people; it forms the structure of human belonging. It regulates "human relationships within and among family groups"⁸¹. It is the basis of the honour-shame framework. The second structure is economics. Economics is about provisioning a group of people; it forms a society's structure for adapting to a given environment. In the NT world, economics was not *the* social institution. Politics looks to effective collective action and forms the vertical organizational structure of a society where the honour-shame framework works. Finally religion deals with the overarching order of existence, that is, with ultimate meaning; it provides reasons for what exists and the ways of understanding that develop those reasons. Since religion forms the meaning system of a society, it will feed back and forward into the kinship, economic, and political systems, unifying the whole by means

⁷⁸ Ibid., 371.

⁷⁹ P. F. ESLER, *The First Christians in their Social Worlds. Social-scientific approaches to New Testament interpretation*, Routledge, London-New York, 1994, 34.

⁸⁰ B. J. MALINA, R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on Synoptic Gospels*, 388.

⁸¹ Ibid., 377.

of some explicit or implicit ideology.⁸² In the NT world, religion and economics were inextricably intertwined with the kindship and political systems.

All these factors, including the honour-shame framework, patron-client relationship and the social structures, influence in our reading of the NT. Furthermore, in identifying the relevant truisms of the Mediterranean world, Malina suggested four cultural norms: (1) that all goods are limited; (2) that no one goes without necessities; (3) that the wealthy are inherently evil;⁸³ and (4) that “wealth is meant simply as another means for acquiring and maintaining honour”⁸⁴.

Fernando Camacho Acosta specifies that although it is commonly thought that the Roman Empire society’ social position is not primarily determined through economic factor, but through the family you are born in, there are other important factors that need to be taken into consideration. In the Roman Empire there was the pyramidal structure, with the aristocracy at the top of the society and the rest of the people according to the freedom grade enjoyed, city rights, sex, and economic possibility. The situation was divided between rich and poor ones.⁸⁵

Following this general overview of the ancient economy and the Roman Empire’s economy which spanned roughly from the second century BC until the fifth century AD⁸⁶, let us deal with another important issue, that of land and agriculture, within the Palestine economy in a Roman world. In spite of the great expansion and extension of the Roman Empire, agriculture remained the backbone of economic life of the Roman Empire. “Few technical advances were made, the crops, tools, and techniques remained practically the same. What did change was the ownership of land, the distribution of crops, and the nature of the labour force”⁸⁷.

⁸² Cf. B. J. MALINA, “Wealth and Poverty in the New Testament and Its World”, 358.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 361.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 363.

⁸⁵ Cf. F. CAMACHO ACOSTA, “Jesús, el dinero y la riqueza”, *Isidoriarum* (Sevilla) 6 (1997), 393-415.

⁸⁶ Cf. D. J. DOWNS, “Economics, Taxes, and Tithes”, 156.

⁸⁷ J. L. GONZÁLEZ, *Faith and Wealth*, 28-29.

3.5 Land throughout the ages

Once someone anonymous wrote:

I am the basis of all wealth,
the heritage of the wise, the thrifty and prudent.
I am the poor person's joy and comfort, the rich person's prize, the right hand of capital,
the silent partner of thousands of successful people.
I am the solace of the widow, the comfort of old age, the cornerstone of security against
misfortune and want. I am handed down through generations, as a possession of great
value.
I am the choicest fruit of labour, the safest collateral and yet I am humble. I stand before
every person bidding them to know me for what I am and asking them to possess me.
I am quietly growing in value through countless days. Though, I might seem dormant,
my worth increases, never failing, never ceasing. Time is my aid and the ever increasing
population adds to my gain. I defy fire and the elements, for they cannot destroy me.
My possessors learn to believe in me and invariable they become envied by those that
have passed me by. While all other things wither and decay, I alone survive. The
centuries find me younger, always increasing in strength. All oil and minerals come from
me. I am the producer of food, building materials and the home to every living thing. I
serve as the foundation for homes, factories, banks and stores.
I have not been produced for millions of years, yet, I am so common that thousands,
unthinking and unknowingly, pass me by.
Who am I? "I AM LAND."⁸⁸

However, was land always appreciated and taken as a basis of all wealth? Around 2.5 million years ago, the skilful man, *homo habilis*, the earliest human species, was using stone tools. Around the year 200,000 BC, *homo sapiens*, the first modern humans appeared in Africa and later on migrated to other places, including in Middle East and China. About the year 70,000 BC, the Neanderthal man was using fire and advanced tools.⁸⁹ Along the years humans arrived in other parts of the world. In the primitive period, the Palaeolithic Age, man acted through necessity. He lived almost exclusively by hunting and fighting for existence from wild beast. He searched for food and gathered it. Then, a group of hunters, through the collection of wild fruits by woman, learned about agriculture. This development began in the Yellow River Valley and elsewhere in China. It was a great revolution – the Neolithic Revolution⁹⁰. The Neolithic was a point in

⁸⁸ [N.N.] http://www.beiramar.com/includes/pdf/Beiramar_News_WhoAmI.pdf (accessed 15 June 2015).

⁸⁹ Cf. G. KERR, *Timeline of World History*, Canary Press, 2001, kindle edition.

⁹⁰ Here, I am not entering into the debate on the movement from hunter-gathered societies to agrarian societies and its effect on the living standards, which some economists, archaeologists and anthropologists debated as at the end decreased the living standards with the increase in population. (see G. CLARK, *A Farwell to Alms: A brief economic history of the world*, Princeton University Press, 2007).

a continuous story of greater economic control over resources from scavenging to farming.⁹¹

By 10,000 BC, they started to produce grains, fruits and vegetables from seeds. A discovery was made that food could be created through agriculture. At around 8000 BC, a discovery of domesticizing wild animals, dogs, sheep and cattle, led to have the same domesticated animals used for agricultural work. Later on, around 4400 BC, there is the first evidence that horses were domesticated and used for transport and warfare.⁹² Consequently, hunting became an accessory, a thing added to something else. Subsistence was chiefly obtained from the cultivation of fields and flocks. Land became a reality. Families claimed permanent property, a home and an enclosure consisting of fields. People learned how to form and raise animals, which could be used also as wool and leather.

They learned to settle in one place, while cultivating land. Small villages occurred. Soil was at first cultivated in common and then to satisfy individual tendencies, land was regulated accordingly. At first, in aristocratic or monocratic tribes, chiefs were elected. This was later on changed to heredity. This meant that they transformed the usufruct of the property into a property transmissible to their descendants. Descendants owned the land. Later on, in the Roman society, the social position of a person was not determined primordially through the economic factor. It was determined through the family. Being born in a particular family and not another one determined the social position.

While feudal economy was already present in Sparta through the *Ilotas*, the Roman Empire, used this type of economy as its basis. The relationship between owner and slave as in the Roman Empire, was transformed into one between owner and serf. "The serf was tied to the land he cultivated and received protection from the land in return for certain economic and political service. The ultimate control of economic activity was

⁹¹ Cf. C. GAMBLE, *Origins and revolutions: human identity in earliest prehistory*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2007, 44.

⁹² HISTORY CENTRAL, "World History 5500 - 3000 B.C.", <http://www.historycentral.com/dates/5500bc.html>, (accessed 15 August 2015). Although horses appeared in Paleolithic cave art in early 30,000 BC, these were wild horses and were probably hunted for meat. There is no clear evidence when horses were domesticated. R. SOANS, "4400 BC - Horse Power - Domestication of the horse", <http://history2world.blogspot.com.es/2008/02/4400-bc-horse-power-domestication-of.html> (accessed 15 August 2015).

in the hand of the king, who could, in most cases, transfer the feuds from one lord to another. Land and labour were transferred rather than bought and sold; and this meant that there was no need for labour and land markets”⁹³.

“Among the nobility, marriage, land, and politics were hopelessly intertwined, a condition best explained by noble thirteenth century example. These transfers of property were also part of the peace treaty. Even if the land changed lordships, the serf was tied to the land by his unwritten contract and fulfilled his obligations to the next lord”⁹⁴. The right to use land was generally inherited by the eldest son, with the others left with nothing. Women could acquire a property share only by marriage. The intent of the feudal system was the survival of the fief, where “those who sought wealth and power sought land”⁹⁵.

Thus, land is a piece of a plot used for agriculture, and includes natural deposits. Finley⁹⁶ determined that land is a special sort of property, having attributes not shared by any other types of property, e.g. it is permanent and it is the major source of livelihood. All societies are faced with how to feed their population. Landownership is important also for fiscal aspects, civic privileges, obligation of military service, juridical and administrative aspects. Moreover, land is a nation, a region or a place where one is born and rests after life. It means where one has grown and has roots. Land has a personal and communitarian identity dimension. It means tradition, ancestry and culture. Land is the basis of political power. Thus, in the ancient economic world and in older economy in the agrarian times, land was the main source of wealth, security and individual identity. Wealth meant land.

⁹³ E. SCEPANTI; S. ZAMAGNI, *An Outline of the History of Economic Thought*, translated by David Field and Lynn Kirby, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005, 19.

⁹⁴ E. R. CANTERBERY, *A Brief History of Economics: Artful Approaches to the Dismal Science*, World Scientific Publishing, Singapore, 2011, 20.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹⁶ M. I. FINLEY, *Land and Credit in Ancient Athens, 500–200 BC*, New York, 1952, reprinted 1973, 13.

3.6 Land and agriculture in NT times

The notion of land as a main source of wealth has a direct implication for the era in which the text of our investigation, being the Gospel according to Luke, was written. As Pastor pointed out, “most people lived by agriculture, so that land was the source of livelihood, wealth, and power. Much of the land was owned by the ruler, whoever he was”⁹⁷. Furthermore, “land was the most precious commodity for the ancient elites; for them control or ownership of land implied honourable lineage and was the material basis for household economic security. Thus people in antiquity who acquired wealth through commerce or other means normally attempted to achieve respectability by investing in land. Ancient societies as a rule resisted placing a money value on land precisely to protect the status of longstanding elite groups and to discourage newcomers from obtaining respectability”⁹⁸. Wealth, land and security of subsistence were in hands of the elite.

Moreover, “money was mostly available to and in the hands of the political elites”⁹⁹. Therefore, “in an environment in which land was elevated to both an economic and political value, economic activities other than agriculture enjoyed a low esteem, culminating in the aristocratic disdain for merchants as well as in the concomitant repudiation of various forms of remunerative work, the latter being tantamount to bonds of subordination”¹⁰⁰. The nominal control of the land was by Caesar and people of Rome, whereas the practical control was by local elites. Landlords got control of land through debt manipulation. While these controlled the land, the peasants who were subject to high taxation worked the land.¹⁰¹

According to Duncan-Jones, land in the Roman world generally fell into one of six categories. These being: *ager publicus*, land belonging to the Roman state and generally in the hands of private tenants of the state; the second type is imperial land, owned by the emperor; the third category is city land where foundations were commonly provided

⁹⁷ J. PASTOR, *Land and Economy in Ancient Palestine*, Routledge, London-New York, 1997, 151.

⁹⁸ D. E. OAKMAN, “The Ancient Economy”, 130.

⁹⁹ Id.

¹⁰⁰ G. N. GOTSIS; G. MERIANOS, “Early Christian Representations of the Economy”, 474.

¹⁰¹ Cf. D. E. OAKMAN, “The Countryside in Luke-Acts”, in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, edited by J. H. NEYREY, Hendrickson, Peabody, 1991, 151-179.

with a dowry of directly owned territory; temple land is the fourth type although not on a significant scale and widespread as in the Greek world; the fifth category is the *ager assignatus*, land assigned by the state to individuals; whereas the sixth type is other land in private possession, since land was the principal source of wealth in Roman society, where land ownership meant differentiation of wealth.¹⁰² It is an interesting analysis in having an idea of the different types of land ownership. However due to various difficult methodological challenges, it seems that there are no concrete studies in establishing how arable land was divided in the first century in Palestine. Instead of statistical studies, there are various descriptive analyses describing who controlled the land. For instance, Oakman argued that:

The land of early first-century Palestine was directly or indirectly under the political control of Caesar or the people of Rome...Caesar had "inherited" lucrative estates from the Hasmoneans in the Esdraelon Plain and the Jericho area. The rest of the land was nominally under the ownership of the people of Rome, but in practice it was controlled by the local elites of Palestine who acted as Roman agents of subjugation (even if unwillingly).¹⁰³

In the Roman Mediterranean world, landed property was deemed as a more noble occupation than mercantile engagements, and profit derived from agricultural enterprises opposed to dishonest sources of wealth, such as tax extraction. Unlike agricultural pursuits, which responded to the ideal of self-sufficiency as a source of honourable income, wage earning activities placed a man in a state of dependence upon others, not appropriate to free persons.¹⁰⁴

Moreover, land ownership was unique in both wealth accumulation and the generation of income to support and maintain social status.¹⁰⁵ Freyne¹⁰⁶ emphasizes Jesus' appeal to those engaged in fishing enterprises in an area allowing for export of Galilean produce and inter-regional trade. In so doing, Jesus was effectively challenging the values on which the Herodian market economy was based.¹⁰⁷ This "market economy", far from being conducive to win-win situations, appeared highly exploitative; it

¹⁰² R. P. DUNCAN-JONES, "Some Configurations of landholding in the Roman Empire", in *Studies in Roman Property*, edited by M. I. FINLEY, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976, 7-33.

¹⁰³ D. E. OAKMAN, "The Countryside in Luke-Acts", 164.

¹⁰⁴ G. N. GOTSIS; G. MERIANOS, "Early Christian Representations of the Economy", 475.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. K. C. HANSON; D. E. OAKMAN, *Palestine in the time of Jesus*, 116-125.

¹⁰⁶ S. FREYNE, "Herodian Economics in Galilee: Searching for a Suitable Model", in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context*, edited by Philip F. ESLER, Routledge, London-New York, 1995, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 45.

reflected fragmentation and rigid social stratification, contributing to the maintenance of status of those who dominated productive activities.¹⁰⁸ This interesting point will be delved into in the following chapters.

Interestingly, David Fiensy described the ancient economy in three points. It was agrarian, it was aristocratic (ruled by a dominant political group), and it was a peasant society.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, as Oakman highlights, the economic meaning of parables “shifts within an agrarian social setting”¹¹⁰. What does this mean? An agrarian society is a “society in which primary production and subsistence centres around agriculture, such as all of those in the ancient Mediterranean, as opposed to hunter/gatherer, fishing, or industrial societies”¹¹¹. Thus an agrarian economy, which is one step up from horticultural economies,¹¹² is based on land ownership and farm production, capable of supporting large cities. This also implied that the way “to acquire wealth in an agrarian economy was to acquire more land. There was not much else a person could do with wealth but buy land. One could invest in trading and shipping but it was risky”¹¹³. Land was less risky investment. Therefore the ruling class regarded their land and the peasants as income for themselves,¹¹⁴ whereas the peasant saw his land and work as the means of feeding his family and not as a business for profit.¹¹⁵ Peasants were not trying to become wealthy or even comfortable, but merely to feed themselves.

Peasants laboured on their land as family units, when they were freeholders or tenant farmers. Those bound to a piece of land also were bound to their families. But when they became landless – dreadful plight in an agrarian society unless one knew a craft – they also tended to lose family bonds. Day labourers and agricultural slaves, then, were at most risk for loss of subsistence. To a peasant, land means family-bonding in addition to a guarantee of subsistence.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. D. FIENSY, “Ancient Economy and the New Testament”, in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, edited by Dietmar NEUFELD and Richard E. DEMARIS, Routledge, London-New York, 2010, 195.

¹¹⁰ D. E. OAKMAN, “The Ancient Economy”, 127.

¹¹¹ K. C. HANSON; D. E. OAKMAN, *Palestine in the time of Jesus*, 194.

¹¹² Horticultural economies are capable of supporting small communities of gardeners who used primitive tools such as the hoe.

¹¹³ D. A. FIENSY, *Christian Origins and the Ancient Economy*, James Clarke & Co, Cambridge, 2014, 68.

¹¹⁴ Cf. E. R. WOLF, *Peasants*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs/NJ, 1966, 13.

¹¹⁵ Cf. G. E. M. DE STE CROIX, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, Cornell University, Ithaca/NY, 1981, 210-211.

In this regard, Esler makes an interesting observation of the Mediterranean context of early Christianity by pointing out that “poor harvests generally meant that the peasants had to borrow at high interest rates, with the loans often secured against their next crop or their land itself. A very visible sign of this was the way in which the elite acquired peasants’ land, by taking over fields which had been used to secure loans. It was very common for peasants to be forced off their land in these circumstances and to become tenant farmers, landless labourers or even beggars”¹¹⁶. Thus, debt is used to create dependence and indebtedness leads to property control and tenant farming.¹¹⁷

It was Gerhard Lenski¹¹⁸, who pioneered the macro-sociological model of an “advanced agrarian societies”, which is “identified by their use of iron tools, the dominance of the plow over the hoe, the use of large animals (oxen, donkeys, horses) for ploughing and carting”¹¹⁹. Lenski offers eight levels of social stratification characteristic of advanced agrarian economies: (1) ruler, (2) governing class, (3) retainer class, (4) merchants, (5) priests, (6) peasants, (7) artisans, and (8) unclean, degraded, and expendables.¹²⁰ Thus, an agrarian system of economics is rooted in political or kinship contexts and not in independent social institutions. “In the perception of people of those days there was a domestic economy and a political economy, but no free-standing economy. The rules and roles of kinship and/or politics were those that controlled the economic institution”¹²¹. At the same time, exchange happens through non-market means: village exchange is through reciprocity, while elites operate through redistribution; two terms which were discussed earlier on in the chapter.

¹¹⁶ P. F. ESLER, “The Mediterranean Context of Early Christianity”, in *The Early Christian World, Vol I-II*, edited by Philip F. ESLER, Routledge, London-New York, 2002, 13.

¹¹⁷ D. E. OAKMAN, “The Countryside in Luke-Acts”, 157.

¹¹⁸ G. LENSKI, *Power and privilege: A theory of social stratification*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill/NC, 1966.

¹¹⁹ K.C. HANSON; D. E. OAKMAN, *Palestine in the time of Jesus*, 194.

¹²⁰ D. J. DOWNS, “Economics, Taxes, and Tithes”, 160.

¹²¹ B. J. MALINA, *The social world of Jesus and the Gospels*, Routledge, London-New York, 2003, xiv.

3.7 Moving beyond land as a source of wealth

Is land the *only* source of wealth in the NT times? Regarding agriculture, Josephus pointed out that “there is no doubt that economic activity in Roman Palestine *centred* on agricultural production, with the harvest of grain for food, olives for oil, and grapes for wine the primary crops”¹²². Most of the Roman society’s wealth came from the source of agriculture.¹²³ Furthermore, none of the agricultural writers specifically advocates complete concentration on a single crop to the exclusion of others, including viticulture, which was both capital and labour intensive. However, it is debatable, whether the theoretical model of an “advanced agrarian society,” and the political economy that such a model entails, adequately explains the available data. For example, according to Downs, there is little archaeological and/or literary evidence for large-scale displacement of peasants through the aggregation of land ownership in the hands of private estates in Palestine in the first century.¹²⁴ Moreover, as pointed out by Harland, that “though in several respects our knowledge of economic realities in first-century Palestine has increased, especially in connection with issues of land, agriculture, trade, and taxation...there is room for considerable debate over other features, including the level and importance of trade”¹²⁵.

At the same time, there is an academic dispute, largely centred on the extent to which, if at all, the structures and performance of “the ancient economy” (or various ancient economies, including those of classical Greece and imperial Rome) resembled medieval, early modern, or modern economies. On one hand, the so-called modernist camp (represented in the work of scholars like Eduard Meyer and Mikhail Rostovtzeff) has stressed trade and market enterprise as keys to urbanization and the development of early capitalism in the ancient world, even while acknowledging that “archaic” economies did not reach levels of production similar to modern, industrialized

¹²² JOSEPHUS, *Against Apion* 1.60. The emphasis is ours.

¹²³ R. DUNCAN-JONES, *The Economy of the Roman Empire: quantitative studies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1974, 33.

¹²⁴ D. J. DOWNS, “Economics, Taxes, and Tithes”, 161.

¹²⁵ P. A. HARLAND “The Economy of first-century Palestine: State of the Scholarly Discussion”, in *Handbook of Early Christianity Social Science: Social Sciences Approaches*, edited by Anthony BLASI et al, Altamira Press, Walnut Creek-Lanham-New York-Oxford, 2002, 511.

economies. Rostovtzeff, for example, declares that, “the modern [economic] development ...differs from the ancient only in quantity and not in quality”¹²⁶.

On the other hand, “primitivists” led by Moses Finley, the leading historian of classical economics in the twentieth century, have contended that the structures of the ancient economy severely constrained its performance. Drawing especially on the substantivist economic theory of Karl Polanyi, Finley argues that, in a traditionally agrarian context, economic activity was limited both by social values that discouraged practices such as lending, trade, and integrated market development and by technological confines that made interregional trade cost prohibitive, apart from some items such as wine, oil, and certain luxury goods. Concentration of wealth in the hands of a small number of landowners stunted the growth of integrated markets, for the vast majority of the population lived at, near, or below subsistence level and therefore did not possess the buying power to stimulate large-scale market expansion. Since economic activity in antiquity was embedded in other social customs and institutions, modern economic theory is not useful in the analysis of the ancient economy.¹²⁷

More recent work on the economic conditions of the Roman Empire has also emphasized the need to move beyond a single model to explain “the ancient economy,” since factors such as climate, geographical location, population, political context, and redistributive mechanisms of various regional economies might indicate that “Finley’s primitivist model is too static to account for the diversity of economic activity and conditions in Greco-Roman antiquity”¹²⁸. The theoretical model remains powerful, but it must also account for evidence that suggests higher levels of production, performance, and trade than the model allows. The discussion of the Roman economy is also shifting to include more attention to the relationship between economic performance and human well-being, a movement with parallels in the field of development studies, where terms like “poverty” are now frequently defined with reference to multidimensional categories such as financial resources, education, access to healthcare, nutrition, and so on.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ D. J. DOWNS, “Economics, Taxes, and Tithes”, 157.

¹²⁷ Id.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 158.

¹²⁹ Cf. Id.

Additionally, the Late Bronze Age (c.1200–500 BC) was marked by extensive international trade, although it must be emphasized that the agrarian economy remained dominant: this economy was the locus of the revival of Palestine’s fortunes in the early Iron Age following the disruptions of the end of the Late Bronze Age. Palestinian produce, including grain, wine, oil, linen, dyed textiles, and timber, was widely distributed throughout the Mediterranean system. Such open trade routes around the Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age directly benefited Palestine, given its strategic position within the trade nexus.¹³⁰

Moreover, if one takes a look at archaeological museums in the Mediterranean, one notices that there are other artefacts that are not explicitly related to agriculture. In an ancient society study, called *Economies beyond agriculture in the classical world*, the authors argue that while “the view that the commonest economic activity until the industrial revolution was the growth of food for household consumption is not in itself controversial”¹³¹, through an integration of historical and archaeological approaches, the scholars studies other economies besides the agricultural one. The title of the study is with reference to Finley’s study on *Ancient Economy*¹³². The economies beyond agriculture that were studied were the extractive industry of the ancient world, construction, and textile production. However, it was found that, in many cases, there is a close relationship between agricultural and non-agricultural production.¹³³ In fact “much of the production in cities depended on raw materials provided by the countryside (for example, *amphorae* for wine and oil, and textiles); and the nature of agriculture in many areas was significantly altered by the fact that an export market developed in (for example) wine, oil or textiles: land was often exploited not for subsistence, but to produce goods for the market”¹³⁴. It is argued that Finley over-generalized about the economy of the ancient world.

¹³⁰ K. W. WHITELAM, “Palestine during the iron age”, in *Biblical World I*, edited by John BARTON, Routledge, London-New York, 389.

¹³¹ D. J. MATTINGLY; J. SALMON, “The Productive Past: Economies beyond agriculture”, in *Economies beyond Agriculture in the classical world*, edited by David J. MATTINGLY and John SALMON, Routledge, London and New York, 2001, 4.

¹³² M.I. FINLEY, *Ancient Economy*.

¹³³ Cf. D. J. MATTINGLY; J. SALMON, “The Productive Past,” 9.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

This chapter showed that land is the main source of wealth in the era while highlighting the setting the Gospel according to Luke was written in. Furthermore, land is not the only source of wealth. Additionally, the chapter offers a sound basis for the next chapter, which through the thorough reading of the Gospel according to Luke and the analysis of the three chosen pericopes, arrives at the different ways in which something mentioned in Luke means either a stock or a flow of wealth. Through that analysis, a possible meaning of wealth in Luke is attained.

Chapter 4

CONCEPT OF WEALTH IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

4.1 Introduction

The first section of this chapter deals with a general reading of the Gospel according to Luke with regards to the theme under review. Then, three particular parables will be studied in depth. In both sections, we will try to comment on the different ways in which Luke refers to a stock or a flow of wealth, and the possible ways to acquire it and to spend it. The aim behind this is to establish a possible statement of the concept of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke.

Generally speaking, a stock of wealth is usually meant capital, which corresponds to the total wealth owned, at a given point in time, whether appropriated or accumulated from previous years. On the other hand, a flow is an income, and corresponds to the quantity of goods produced and distributed. However, in our case this is not an automatic statement. In fact we are trying to investigate whether the understanding of a stock of wealth is the same in the Gospel according to Luke as it is to capital in the modern sense.

4.2 A general reading of the Gospel according to Luke and the theme under review

Let us start with the Gospel according to Luke and wealth. José Manuel García Fernández in his doctoral thesis, *El dinero en la Sagrada Escritura*, through his analysis points out that the Gospel according to Luke has 1,150 verses, in 24 chapters, out of which 202 verses (17.6%) relate to money, wealth and material goods.¹³⁵ It is quite a large amount of verses related to these themes. In fact, that study will serve as an inspirational background for our reading of the Gospel according to Luke with regards

¹³⁵ Cf. J. M. GARCÍA FERNÁNDEZ, *El dinero en la Sagrada Escritura*, Universidad Católica San Antonio, Murcia, 2004, 347.

to wealth, money and land. The analysis will help us to concentrate on particular aspects.

In the Gospel according to Luke, the word “land” is used specifically only in two instances. The first one in the Parable of Rich Fool, when it is stated that “the land of a rich man produced abundantly” (Luke 12,16) and then in the Parable of the Great Dinner, where one of the excuses was that “I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it” (Luke 14,18). A similar word to “land”, that is property, is being also used in two instances, once in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (or better stated the Parable of the Merciful Father), and the second instance in the Parable of the Dishonest Manager.

Likewise the word “fields” besides being used in the introductory chapters of the Gospel where “the shepherds were in the fields” (Luke 2,8) and when Jesus has gone through grain fields (cf. Luke 6,1), it is mentioned in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and twice in Chapter 17 in the Gospel according to Luke: “who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field” (Luke 17,7) and “anyone in the field must not turn back” (Luke 17,31).

On money, Oakman remarks out that “money was a significant factor within the institutional administration of the Roman Empire. For peasants, the chief productive factors are land access and labour; for the elite, they are land control, servile labour, and capital”¹³⁶. Moreover, Oakman highlights that “taxes were mandated to be paid in silver of specific types and mints. Copper money was ubiquitous, as seen in the archaeology of Galilee. For villagers and peasants, money remained highly ambiguous and dubious as to social meaning. Coins advertised their political sponsors with images of prosperity and good fortune. But money facilitated agrarian debt and, for peasants, was always mortgaged by subsistence needs, taxes, and debts”¹³⁷.

¹³⁶ D. E. OAKMAN, *The Political Aims of Jesus*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2012, 155. (References made to this book are to a digital book).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 154.

Through the studies discerned from the work of economic historians, the same author, Oakman established five functions (F stands for function) of money, which he divided into:

- money may store value; a hoard which is a stock (F1);
- measures value as a standard of measurement (F2);
- functions as a standard of payment (F3);
- functions to generate profit (F4);
- functions to facilitate exchange (F5).¹³⁸

Furthermore Oakman tables the functions of ancient money according to the metal basis. For storage, Oakman marks them F1 with a metal basis of gold or silver, depending on the Gospel under review. For measurement of value (F2), standard of payment (F3) and exchange value (F4), the metal basis is silver, while for money barter (F5), the metal basis is bronze.¹³⁹

Before outlining and describing the functions of money and the respective instances in the Gospel according to Luke, there is the conceptual problem of wealth-money, which merits a discussion. At that time there was no monetary wealth. There was wealth that was not money, for instance honour. Moreover, there was wealth that only became money in extreme circumstances, such as selling a piece of land.

For 1st century Palestine, the elite were looking for honour, power and privilege. In fact Malina and Neyrey comment that “honour is like wealth: ascribed honour resembles inherited wealth”¹⁴⁰. Ascribed honour is “granted to a person by virtue of birth, family connections, or a grant from a notable person such as a king or deity”¹⁴¹. It is simply honour given for being you. On the other hand, there is the other type of honour which is acquired honour. This is “honour actively sought and achieved, most often at the expense of one’s equals in the social contest of challenge and riposte. Acquired honour

¹³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 155.

¹³⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 155-156.

¹⁴⁰ B. J. MALINA; J. H. NEYREY, “Honor and shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal values of the Mediterranean world”, in *The social world of Luke-Acts: Models for interpretation*, edited by J. H. NEYREY, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, 1991, 28.

¹⁴¹ M. W. BARTUSCH, *Understanding Dan: An Exegetical Study of a Biblical City, Tribe and Ancestor*, Sheffield Academic Press, London, 2003, 143.

is like wealth obtained through one's efforts, honourable or dishonourable"¹⁴². It is interestingly to highlight that in the 1st century Palestine world, poor persons were those "persons scarcely able to maintain their honour or dignity"¹⁴³. Contrary to this, a rich person maintained or increased his status. As Neyrey stated, "loss of honour is more serious to ancient peasants than the mere loss of wealth"¹⁴⁴.

Together with all the above, the implications of tenancy in the decisions made for production, distribution, and consumption, between landlord and tenant, which results in a clash of interest is taken into consideration throughout our analysis. A summary of these decisions is shown in the Figure 1. Actually, when the land is taken out of the peasants, likewise are the decisions about production and land. A tenant has a debt, and his land is transferred to the landlord. Consequently, the agrarian decision making is not made by the tenant. The landlord may decide to plant fields with other crops which are disadvantageous to the peasant's family subsistence needs. Moreover, the figure shows the conflict of interests where "not only that Galilean peasants of the first century were put into a different relationship to subsistence decisions by urbanization, monetization, commercialization, and tenancy promoted by the Roman elites (including provincial urban elites) but also that the relationship of the peasantry to its core values was under pressure"¹⁴⁵. This led to bitterness and resistance.

¹⁴² B. J. MALINA; J. H. NEYREY, "Honor and shame in Luke-Acts", 28.

¹⁴³ B. J. MALINA, "Wealth and poverty in the New Testament and its world", 355.

¹⁴⁴ J. H. NEYREY, "Loss of wealth, the loss of family and the loss of honour", in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context*, edited by Philip F. ESLER, Routledge, London-New York, 1995, 149.

¹⁴⁵ D. E. OAKMAN, *The Political Aims of Jesus*, 72.

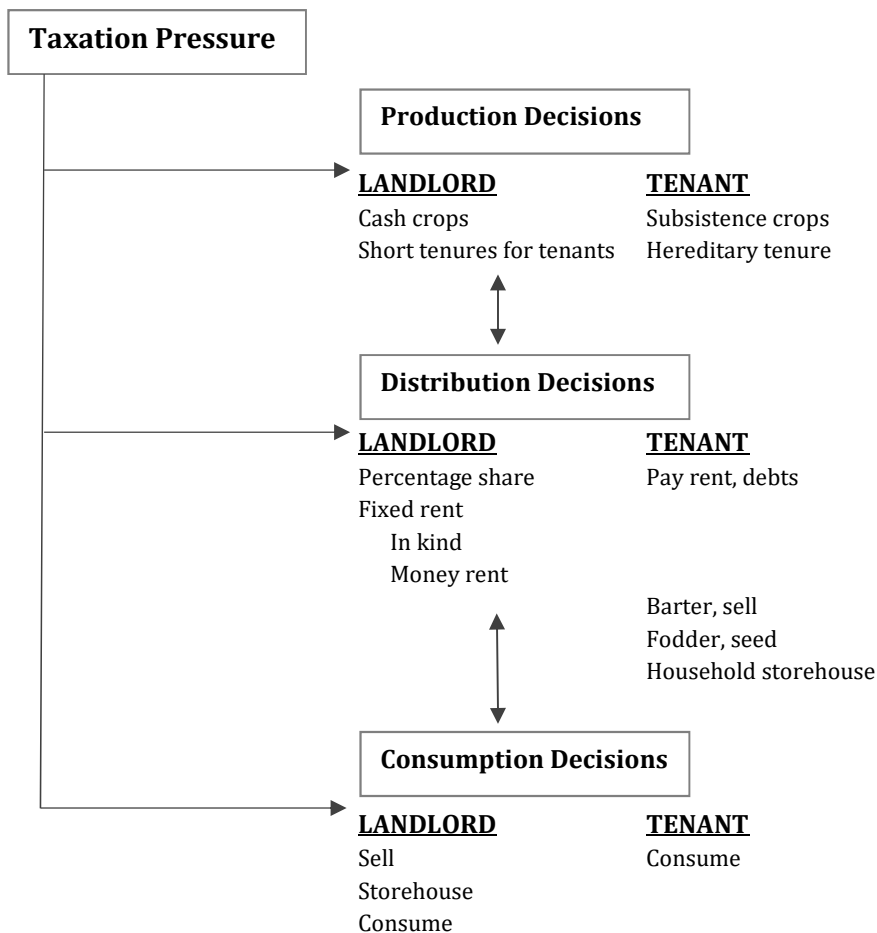


Figure 1

The figure shows the implications of tenancy in the decisions made for production, distribution, and consumption, which results in a clash of interest¹⁴⁶

Jesus told parables that give evidence to those elements that were common in advanced agrarian societies such as

- debt (Luke 16,1-8a);
- patrons (Luke 16,19-26);
- the elite using their status to coerce tenants (Luke 20,9-15);
- the existence of large estates and tenants working on large estates most probably because they had lost their land through excessive taxes or debt (Luke 20,9-15; Luke 12,16-20);
- elite that amass wealth, which was seen as theft in a limited good society (Luke 19,11-27);
- elite putting money out on loan at most probably very high rates (Luke 19,13-24);

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 71.

- elite playing the social game of challenge and riposte to gain honour and status (Luke 14,16–23);

Parables not only assume knowledge of the Palestinian countryside under the early Roman Empire¹⁴⁷, but also show the ugly face of the exploitation of the peasantry by the elite that was so common to advanced agrarian (aristocratic) societies. They are stories about the kingdom of Caesar. By telling these parables, Jesus most probably acknowledged the needs and frustrations of the peasants in his first-century rural context.¹⁴⁸

In fact, the kind of village depicted in the parable of the friend at midnight (Luke 11,5-13) is what Shimon Appelbaum¹⁴⁹ called a “nucleated village” located in the midst of the fields, “which included the individual peasants’ smallholdings and common land that belonged to the village”¹⁵⁰. The peasant villagers lived in a limited goods society, where “an individual or a family can improve [themselves] only at the expense of others”¹⁵¹ in the village.

In another parable, in the Parable of the Great Dinner, (Luke 14,15-24), although in Luke 14,16b the host of the feast is simply introduced as a certain man, it can be assumed, deduced from the parable, that he was a wealthy person. Moreover he has the means to entertain ‘many’¹⁵² with a big feast together with slaves at his service (Luke 14,16b; 17,20–23). Furthermore, the double invitation in the parable illustrates the man’s wealth since the double invitation was a special sign of courtesy practiced by the wealthy.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ D. E. OAKMAN, *Jesus and the peasants*, 172-173.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 118-119.

¹⁴⁹ S. APPELBAUM, “Judea as a Roman Province: The Countryside as a Political and Economic Factor”, *ANRW* 2/8 (1977), 363.

¹⁵⁰ W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville/KE, 1994, 216. (References to the page numbers are made to the adobe digital edition of the book).

¹⁵¹ *Id.*

¹⁵² E. VAN ECK, “When patrons are patrons: A social-scientific and realistic reading of the parable of the Feast (Lk 14:16b–23)”, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 69/1 (2013), <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i1.1375>, 9.

¹⁵³ Cf. B. B. SCOTT, *Hear Then the Parable: A commentary on the Parables of Jesus*, Fortress, Minneapolis, 1989, 169.

The same parable also gives us information in the excuses of three of the many guests invited to the feast. The first two deal with land. The first invitee acquired a piece of land. No peasant would sell land if it was not the final option. As outlined above and in Figure 2 below, due to taxes (extracted by the elite) and high interest rates on loans (made available by the elite), many peasants in 1st century Palestine lost their land or had to sell it¹⁵⁴. Available land was normally bought by the elite who had the means to acquire land, and much of the land outside of cities in 1st century AD Palestine was indeed owned by the elite.¹⁵⁵

The person behind the second excuse was also one of these landowning elite. According to Jeremias¹⁵⁶, the general size of the land of a peasant farmer was more or less 10–20 hectares which needed 1–2 yoke of oxen to plough.¹⁵⁷ In Luke 14,19, the person bought five yoke of oxen, which means that the land he owned was at least 50 hectares in size. If one also takes into consideration that, normally, half of a land was left fallow each year, a landowner needing five oxen was the owner of a very large piece of land¹⁵⁸. He has bought oxen sufficient to plough about 110 hectares. If half his land is fallow each year, he is exceedingly wealthy (a subsistence plot was 1.5 hectares per adult).

As discussed earlier on, to be rich in the New Testament era, that is having a stock of wealth, meant also to be able to defend one's honour, one's position. Applied to the Gospel according to Luke, one instance is the man in the story (Luke 13,6-9) who 'had' the fig tree planted. This suggests that he is not a peasant farmer but a landowner from the city who hires landless labourers. As he is a landowner, it seems there is a stock of wealth. On the other hand, to be poor is to be vulnerable, open to attack and loss¹⁵⁹ (cf. Luke 1,53-55 – The Magnificat). Moreover, to the peasant, "the enemies are all those who try to get what is rightfully his. They are those who destroy his honour, take his

¹⁵⁴ E. VAN ECK, "Interpreting the parables of the Galilean Jesus: A social-scientific approach", in *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 65/1 (2009), <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/v65i1.308>, 4-5.

¹⁵⁵ R. L. ROHRBAUGH, "The pre-industrial city in Luke-Acts: Urban social relations", in *The social world of Luke-Acts: Models for interpretation*, edited by J.H. NEYREY, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, 1991, 142-143.

¹⁵⁶ J. JEREMIAS, *The parables of Jesus*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1972, 177.

¹⁵⁷ E. VAN ECK, "When patrons are patrons", 10.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. R. L. ROHRBAUGH, "The pre-industrial city in Luke-Acts: Urban social relations", 143.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. B. J. MALINA; R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 229.

land, and undermine his family”¹⁶⁰, where no flow or stock of wealth remains. (Zechariah’s Prophecy: “we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us”, Luke 1,71).

Moreover, the Gospel according to Luke states that “for to those who have, more will be given” (Luke 8,18). “The notion that those who have will get more and those who have little will lose what they have is a truism of peasant life. The ultimate example for peasants was the loss of land because of debts owed to the rich”¹⁶¹. The figure below shows how peasants lose control over land through debt. Peasants were oriented toward debt relief and productive land without any hindrance. The left side of the figure shows how “indebtedness comprises subsistence by forcing repayment based solely on natural product and peasant labour”¹⁶². This led to a widespread tenancy. On the other hand the right side of the figure shows “how foreclosure on securities for indebtedness (that is, conversion to tenancy) deprives the peasant of secure access to land”¹⁶³.

Meanwhile one has to remember that land is the gift of God. This implies that all people are debtors to God as the land on which they live belongs to God.¹⁶⁴ Wealth used to be distributed on sabbatical and jubilee years on the principle of “extension”, “where all the assets of the land and its wealth are extended to all people”¹⁶⁵. There is substantial evidence of debt causing the loss of land among peasants in the first century. Zealots, on gaining control of Jerusalem, burned the debt records of the city. In Roman law a magistrate could grant a creditor one of two choices: he could either force his debtor to work until the debt was paid off or he could have him put in prison for ransom, that is to extort the debt payment from his family. This meant that the relatives would either sell their land to pay the debt or bail him out themselves¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 230-231.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 258.

¹⁶² D. E. OAKMAN, *The Political Aims of Jesus*, 70.

¹⁶³ Id.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 195.

¹⁶⁵ Id.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 281.

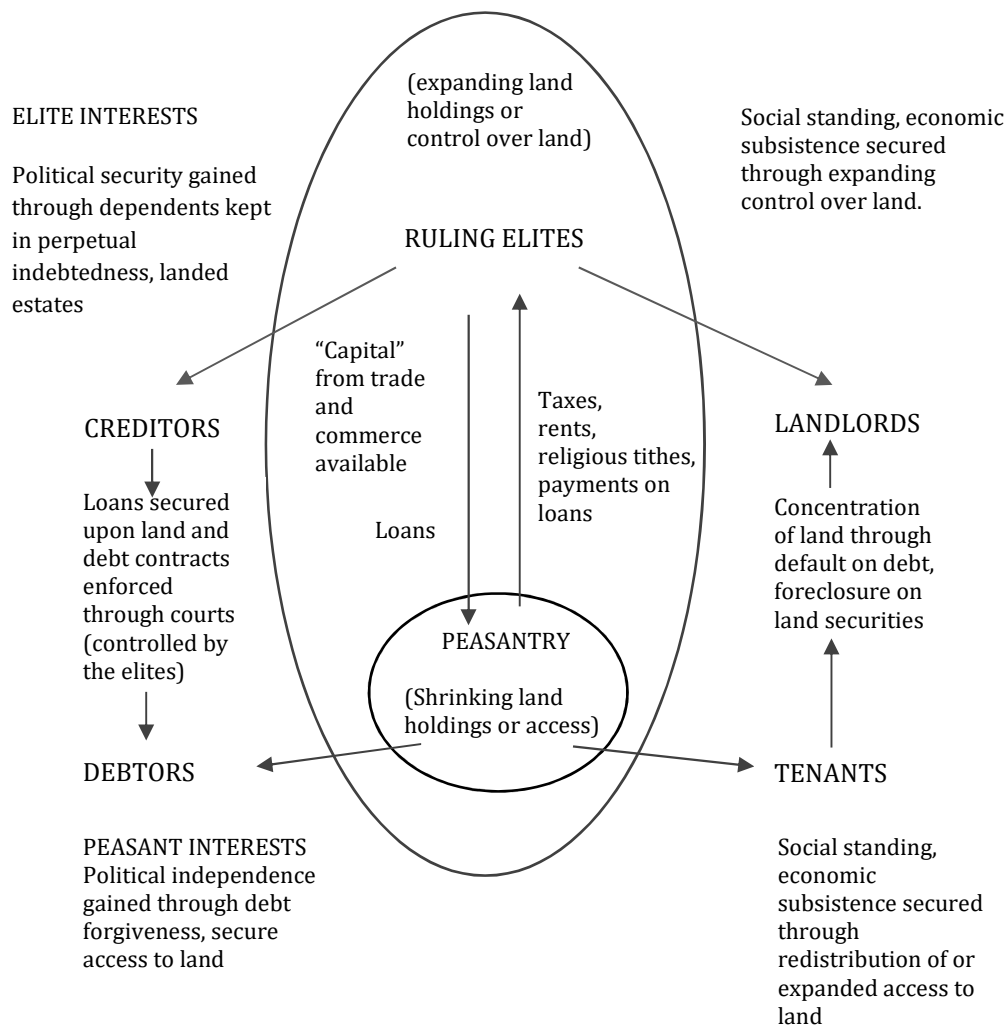


Figure 2

The figure shows how peasants lose control over land through debt.¹⁶⁷

Following this, it is important to establish the relationship between money and honour within the broader conception of wealth. Money was used in everyday transactions as shown in instances in the New Testament. In antiquity ‘poor’ did not imply the unavailability of economic resources such as land or money but was in relation to cultural and social meaning; that is honour. As discussed earlier on, honour is related to wealth while shame is related to loss of wealth. Wealth and honour were the family or kinship’s property. A loss of family wealth or a loss of a member of the family, especially parents and or husband threatened both the honour and the economic situation. Honour had to be publicly claimed and acknowledged. Moreover it had to be displayed

¹⁶⁷ D. E. OAKMAN, *The Political Aims of Jesus*, 70.

by the clothing worn in public as did the father of the prodigal son (cf. Luke 15,22), and through the table setting.¹⁶⁸

“Obviously great wealth resided in the hands of aristocrats with vast land holdings, but peasants with small plots of land also enjoyed some ‘wealth’ because of their land”¹⁶⁹. To this effect, historians of the ancient economy remind us that ‘wealth’ in antiquity resided in land. Likewise, Carney argued that “power and wealth went with possession of land...It was land, not capital, that produced resources in antiquity”¹⁷⁰.

Therefore, an analysis of Gospel material can be undertaken in the light of the functional model as outlined by Oakman and the points highlighted in the analysis up to now. In every instance an assessment is made as to the metal basis of money, if applicable; the function envisioned; whether it is a flow or a stock, together with the social context, in accordance with the socio-scientific analysis already outlined in the previous chapter. The analysis discussed below in this section, in accordance with the divided five functions outlined by Oakman, is not an exhaustive one. It excludes the three parables which will be dealt with in more detail in a later section.

In the Gospel according to Luke, there are various instances where money is mentioned, with or without outlining the denomination. In Luke 9,3, the “money” referred to is not *chalkos* (copper coinage) but an *argurion*, which serves as an F1 function. Moreover, the silver coin mentioned in the Parable of the Lost Drachma (Luke 15,8-10) represents an F1 function and possibly was part of the dowry. A drachma was the Greek equivalent of the Roman denarius.

The Greek word usually translated as ‘tax collector’ refers to “toll collectors employed by those contracting directly with the Romans to collect fees on the movement of goods”¹⁷¹. However, many toll collectors, if not the majority, remained poor.¹⁷² Those

¹⁶⁸ Cf. J. H. NEYREY, “Loss of wealth, loss of family and loss of honour”, in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context*, edited by Philip F. ESLER, Routledge, London-New York, 1995, 134-153.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹⁷⁰ T. CARNEY, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity*, Coronado Press, Lawrence/KS, 1975, 181-182.

¹⁷¹ B. J. MALINA; R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 248.

¹⁷² Cf. J. DONAHUE, “Tax Collectors and Sinners”, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33 (1971), 39-61.

who did not, were universally presumed to be dishonest, as was the case of Levi who provided a great feast. Levi had a stock of wealth and it is an F1 function (cf. Luke 5,27-30). As pointed earlier, when someone did not pay either taxes or creditors for goods provided, he “was put in prison as a form of extortion since it was their families that would have to pay for their release”¹⁷³ (cf. Luke 4,18-19).

In the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16,19-31), the backdrop is that of a Rich man (through lavish spending,¹⁷⁴ and the rare and expensive clothes he wears) and Lazarus in an advanced agrarian (aristocratic) society. In that society, there were the ruling class, the elite and the ‘haves’, comprising of 2% of the population and living in the city and controlling most of the wealth through land, its produce and yield through taxation. All this, is a stock of wealth and an F1 function. The elite controlled the peasant through hereditary control and the expropriation of land (the so-called ‘proprietary theory of the state’¹⁷⁵). On the other hand, the ruled peasantry are the peasants and ‘have-nots’, living in the countryside¹⁷⁶.

As Malina and Rohrbaugh¹⁷⁷ argued, the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus is a story about the great class disparity in 1st century Palestine, about the divide between the urban elite, who controlled all the wealth, power and privilege, and the exploited rural peasantry, who lived in the narrow margin between famine and subsistence. While the rich man, “to enhance his honour and status, he ‘made merry’ (feasted) every day, most probably with other members of the elite class who stood with him in patron-client relationships. Being part of the elite, he also competed for clients among the poor and the peasantry. These patron-client relationships put him in a position to control more and more land, produce and labour”¹⁷⁸. On the other hand, Lazarus represents the exploited peasantry, the poor and the destitute, who may have been a “smallholder of inherited land who lost his land because of, inter alia, the excessive tax burden imposed

¹⁷³ B. J. MALINA; R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 243.

¹⁷⁴ D. FIENSY, *Jesus the Galilean: Soundings in a first century life*, Gorgias Press, Piscataway, 2007, 91.

¹⁷⁵ G. E. LENSKI, *Power and privilege: A theory of social stratification*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1966, 214-219.

¹⁷⁶ D. FIENSY, *Jesus the Galilean*, 39.

D. E. OAKMAN, *Jesus and the peasants*, Cascade Books, Eugene, 2008, 58.

¹⁷⁷ B. J. MALINA; R. L. ROHRBAUGH, 2003, *Social science commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 295.

¹⁷⁸ E. VAN ECK, “When patrons are not patrons: A social-scientific reading of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19–26)”, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 65/1 (2009), DOI: 10.4102/hts.v65i1.309, 8.

by the ruling elite”¹⁷⁹. Lazarus has no honour left: he is economically poor¹⁸⁰; poor in the sense that he cannot maintain his status as a peasant smallholder¹⁸¹.

An F2 function is as a measurement of value. While Luke recounts the feeding the five thousand (Luke 10,17), as the Gospel according to Mark does (Mark 6, 30-44), in the Gospel according to Luke there is no similar instance of Mark 6,37: “Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?”, which is an F2 function. Neither there is a similar statement as Mark 14,5 that the “ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii”, nor as Revelations 6,6: “A quart of wheat for a day’s pay, and three quarts of barley for a day’s pay”. For that society, the goods and products of agrarian societies were first and foremost agricultural but also included the basics of life (clothing, shelter) and, for the elites, luxury goods. Money underwrote taxation and debts (an F3 function) as well as facilitated patronage politics. Related to taxation and money are the “tables” of the moneychangers/bankers (which is also an F2 type). In the Gospel according to Luke, a tax collector is named. This is Levi, who was sitting at the tax booth, and who Jesus saw and called him (cf. Luke 5,27). There is also Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and was rich (cf. Luke 19,2). Other tax collectors are mentioned in the same Gospel as an example of outcast persons for the society and sinners (Luke 5,30; Luke 7,34; Luke 15,1; Luke 18,9-14).

It is interesting to note the F3 function of money in the Gospel according to Luke. Once instance is the episode when the tax collectors asked John what to do, where he told them to “collect no more than the amount prescribed” (Luke 3,13), while to the soldiers he told them not to extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and to be satisfied with their wages (cf. Luke 3,14). It is both a flow of wealth and an F3 function of money.

Furthermore, when in Luke 7,41-42, it is stated that “a certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them”, we have a standard of payment for debt (in

¹⁷⁹ Id.

¹⁸⁰ P. HOLLENBACH, ‘Defining rich and poor using the social sciences’, in *Society of Biblical Literature 1987 Seminar Papers*, edited by K. RICHARDS, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, 1987, 58.

¹⁸¹ B. J. MALINA, ‘Wealth and poverty in the New Testament and its world’, *Interpretation* 41 (1987), 355.

silver), where the non-elite pays to an elite. Here we see an F3 flow. Furthermore, regarding Luke 12,57-59, in the episode dealing with the effort to settle a case and the desperate situation of debtors at the bottom of society, there is a debt paid by non-elite to elite. This appears to be an F3 flow. Likewise, since the Samaritan (Luke 10,35) could also be incurring additional debt ("I will repay you whatever more you spend"), formally F3 is also observed.

In another instance Luke states that "the labourer deserves to be paid" (Luke 10,7). This is an example of an F3 function and a flow of wealth. The same applies in Luke 21,2, when the widow casts 2 *lepta* into the temple treasury. Both the elite gifts and the casting of the copper coins, being equalled to the smallest of Roman coins, are an F3 type.

An important parable and episode is the so-called Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15,11-15). The younger son, while exercising the right of asking for his inheritance, he made a sharp break with his father, his brother and the community in which they lived. The older also accepted his share of his inheritance and did not do the honourable thing to refuse his share while his father was still alive. The father had land, for which the young son liquidated his portion of the property, to consume the money in a foreign land. This appears to be an F3 flow. Furthermore there were servants in the setting, and the father is wealthy as he also had rings, shoes and a very good robe.

In this general reading of the Gospel according to Luke, without taking into considering the three selected texts, it seems that there is no F4 function. The only possible instance of an F4 function, also as pointed out by Oakman¹⁸², is found in Luke 19,23, which will be discussed in the below selected text.

Luke 10,35 is one of the highly probable examples in the New Testament of money use value (F5).¹⁸³ Notice that a trader can produce silver denarii for use in exchange and payment. Furthermore, in the episode of that person who go at his friend at midnight to lend him bread (Luke 11,5), in lending three loaves of bread, there is a barter in kind

¹⁸² Cf. D. E. OAKMAN, *The Political Aims of Jesus*, 156.

¹⁸³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 161.

where there is an exchange of a commodity for a commodity. The same applies to Luke 12,6 “are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?”, where there is an F5 function with use value being a money barter. There is a witness to money barter in the local market. Sparrows are sold for Roman *assaria* (that is, the bronze *as* or *aes*), worth one-sixteenth of a denarius. According to Oakman, F5 is directly in view.

4.3 Analysis of Luke’s selected texts

Following the overall reading of the Gospel according to Luke with regards to the theme under study, as noted in Chapter 2, three parables have been selected to be studied in greater detail. The selected parables, as named by the NRSV Bible version which I’m following, are:

Parable of Rich Fool	Luke 12,13-21	unique for Luke
Parable of Dishonest Manager	Luke 16,1-13	unique for Luke
Parable of the Pounds	Luke 19,11-27	with Matthew

A preamble question is to whom are these parables addressed? During Jesus’ preaching there were generally three groups that made up his audience. There were the disciples, the crowds and the hostile Pharisees:¹⁸⁴

- The Parable of the Rich Fool is addressed to the crowd (Luke 12,13: “someone in the crowd”; Luke 12,16: “he told them”).
- The Parable of the Dishonest Manager is addressed by Jesus explicitly to “his disciples” (Luke 16,1).
- The Parable of the Pounds is addressed to the crowd following Jesus after he healed a blind beggar near Jericho and the dialogue with Zacchaeus.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. J. DURKIN, “A cultural reading of Luke 16:1-9”, *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa* 31/2 (2007), 8-9.

4.3.1 Luke 12,13-21

The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." ¹⁴But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" ¹⁵And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." ¹⁶Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' ¹⁸Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" ²⁰But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" ²¹So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

The passage starts with a family inheritance issue. In the Middle East, it is a customary that profane issues are dealt with by religious authority. The Jewish inheritance law was regulated by the Mosaic Law. It is an agricultural situation, and it is assumed that the older brother inherits two thirds of the possessions (Dt 21,17). In this case presented to Jesus, it seems that the eldest son does not want to give anything, as it may be a situation where a father has left the inheritance (an F1 function) to his sons without specifying a division. "Roman law required a division of inheritance only if both parties wanted it; however, traditional Israelite custom granted a division on the demand of a single son"¹⁸⁵. The man seems to be from a peasant family as wealthy families would have had the means to resolve the issue. Since the succession was regulated by law, it was easily to follow the opinion and the decision of the doctors of the law. They came to Jesus, treating him as a doctor of law. This is a positive honour challenge so to give an opinion and exercise authority over the unjust brother. However, Jesus does not want to be a judge or arbitrator in the affairs of this case. The Scripture also shows the problems that one faces in becoming an arbiter in such matters (see Exodus 2,14; Joshua 13-22).

Thus Jesus begins his parable, which forms part of a section in the Gospel dedicated to goods and possessions. Luke formed a single story from two pieces (vv 13-15 and 16-20), and finished with a conclusion in verse 21.

¹⁸⁵ B. J. MALINA; R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 277.

The parable is situated in an agricultural setting and in a notion of limited goods. The rich man is a substantial landholder “denoting that the property envisioned is certainly not a mere subsistence plot or even a normally sized field but rather something on the scale of a ridiculously expansive estate”¹⁸⁶. As Szukalski remarks the term used by Luke for the rich man, “appears elsewhere in exclusive reference to a sizable geographic district or region (2,8; 3,1; 8:26; 15,13-15; 21,21) and may be used here hyperbolically to exaggerate the outrageousness of the rich man’s wealth”¹⁸⁷. According to the parable, the fruit of the fields are extraordinary. It is supposed that wealth was abundant (F1), that permitted destroying older barns and building new larger ones, so that there is more profit (F4). This meant also a zero-sum game, where if someone’s share got larger, someone else’s automatically got smaller.

In constructing the new barns, the rich farmer is also taking a risk that the new barns will not be ready for harvest time, or that it will be only a one-off that the crops were abundant. Although “anxiety about the future was not a peasant outlook; anxiety about daily bread certainly was”¹⁸⁸. At the same time, as Hays argues, “the man decides that, rather than dispersing his excess gains to those in need, he will build bigger barns, and then he able to enjoy the riches of his provisions for years to come”¹⁸⁹.

In a limited goods perspective, his decision is strange. He did not even consider sharing freely any of the abundance with his neighbours, nor his family members or kin, nor in the marketplace. He only engages in a form of negative reciprocity,¹⁹⁰ where there is extraction of limited resources from the poor who need them for their living. “He has failed to act as a patron towards those in need around him”¹⁹¹. These plans for new barns, with the possibility of getting a better price for the product, were in line with ancient recommendations to farmers to maximize their productive land area.¹⁹² “By keeping everything to himself and refusing to act as a generous patron, the rich man in

¹⁸⁶ J. A. SZUKALSKI, *Tormented in Hades: A Socio-Narratological Approach to the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)*, a doctoral thesis, The Catholic University of America, Washington/DC, 2012, 121.

¹⁸⁷ Id.

¹⁸⁸ B. J. MALINA; R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 278.

¹⁸⁹ C. M. HAYS, *Luke’s Wealth Ethics*, 126.

¹⁹⁰ J. A. SZUKALSKI, *Tormented in Hades*, 141.

¹⁹¹ Id.

¹⁹² Cf. S. I. WRIGHT, “Parables on poverty and riches”, in *The challenge of Jesus’ Parables*, edited by Richard N. LONGENECKER, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI, 2000, 222.

the parable reveals himself as a dishonourable fool”¹⁹³. At the same time, some argue that in front of the uncertainty of one’s death, there are strands of wisdom to enjoy their wealth while they have the chance (Ecc. 6,2; Sir 11,18-19; 14,3-6.14-16). “Luke repudiates this sapiential perspective by contending that one should not be primarily concerned about enjoying earthly possessions in view of the uncertainty of life”¹⁹⁴.

Metzger reads the parable as a challenge to overconsumption.¹⁹⁵ Others read it in a private-property view, where the entire tenor of Luke, that possessions are about relationships with others, that one must “have” in order to “give”, is central to the rights - or relationship-based dimension of the legal-philosophical view of private property. One cannot “have” and “give” possessions unless there are rights that protect them from the use of others.

However, taking into consideration what was discussed above, in his soliloquy, the question asked is in the subjunctive mood of possibility, which conceives potential options yet to be determined. He dwells at the crossroads of possibility. In his reply, the rich farmer reveals his ideal life and his personality in the dialogue that engages with himself: to live is enjoy life: eat, drink, consume and be merry; live is to have a long life for many years and to have a secured life. Ethics of welfare! How can this ideal of life be achieved? Storing and thus ensuring the future. There are various forms of securities. The farmer builds barns. The economy of this farmer has no other meaning than ensuring one’s comfortable life.

Although it seems that there is an F4 function, however the investment is not made to produce gains without limit, but merely for consumption and security, as already noted above. This parable seems to indict the prevailing economic plan of most retirement that is similarly based upon the notion of saving wealth for one’s future use.¹⁹⁶ There is also the shame-honour aspect of the parable in a political advanced agricultural economy. The honour is of the rich man who has land and from which wealth is

¹⁹³ B. J. MALINA; R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 278.

¹⁹⁴ C. M. HAYS, *Luke’s Wealth Ethics*, 127.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. J. A. METZGER, *Consumption and Wealth in Luke’s Travel Narrative*, (=Biblical Interpretation Series 88), Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2007, 63.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. M. S. RINDGE, “Luke’s Artistic Parables: Narratives of subversion, imagination, and transformation”, *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 68/4 (2014), 406.

produced. As Wright comments that “though technically the land might not have been ‘his,’ for legally the peasants were allowed their patrimony, the system of exploitation was such that he had *de facto* ownership of the lands, both his and theirs”¹⁹⁷.

However, in the parable we do not read of the man’s response to God’s voice in the night (Luke 12,20), or his death, or anything else. The true “end of story” remains untold. If he died, he had to leave it in the hands of others, either through inheritance or otherwise, and what did the recipients do with his stock of wealth? And if he did not die, did he change his mind?

4.3.2 Luke 16,1-13

The Parable of the Dishonest Manager

Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. ² So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ ³ Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴ I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ ⁵ So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶ He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ ⁷ Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’ ⁸ And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. ⁹ And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

¹⁰ “Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³ No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

There is a large bibliography¹⁹⁸ on this difficult parable. Metzger reads the parable as a criticism of wealth,¹⁹⁹ while others read it as an example of the proper use of wealth,

¹⁹⁷ S. I. WRIGHT, “Parables on poverty and riches”, 222.

¹⁹⁸ W. LOADER, “Jesus and the Rogue in Luke 16,1-8a: The Parable of the Unjust Steward”, *RevBib* 96 (1989) 518-532; J. S. KLOPPENBORG, “The Dishonoured Master (Luke 16,1-8a)”, *Biblica* 70 (1989) 474-495; D. M. PARROTT, “The Dishonest Steward (Luke 16,1-8a) and Luke’s Special Parable Collection”, *NTStud* 37 (1991) 499-515; D. A. DE SILVA, “The Parable of the Prudent Steward and Its Lucan Context”, *CriswellTheolRev* 6 (1993) 255-268; H. J. B. COMBRINK, “A social-scientific perspective on the

especially v. 9 to v. 13. Some scholars, such as Fitzmyer, treat the parable together with verses 9-13, which also concern wealth. Others, such as Durkin²⁰⁰, in their study of the parable, concern themselves with verses 1-8a and ignore the conclusions to it. The praise at v. 8a has always caused concern. From the bibliography on this parable, one can deduce at least four possibilities where the parable ends, which are not dealt with here as they are outside our scope for this study.

The parable was read from an anthropological, sociological and Christological prism. However, at the same time, one does not always have to read the parable in this light, as sometimes, in a desperate search for “spiritual” messages in the parables, the social situation embedded within has frequently been downplayed. William Herzog in *Parables as subversive-speech*²⁰¹ tried to redress this imbalance.

The social setting of the parable scene is that it represents small village life, where the landlord is not present and the manager manages his estate. His position was of “considerable authority and trust”²⁰², and at the same time a vulnerable one. “Rich landowners frequently employed estate managers who had the authority to rent property, make loans, and liquidate debts in the name of the master”²⁰³. There is a mixture of F1 and F3 function, thus having both a stock and a flow of wealth.

The parable presents a man who takes steps to ensure his life in a desperate situation. The manager²⁰⁴ knows that hard manual labour is outside his physical possibility, having long worked in a “white-collar” job. Furthermore he rejects begging as it is not honourable, and so an alternative plan is made.

parable of the ‘unjust’ steward (Lk 16,1-8a)”, *Neotestamentica* 30 (1996) 281-306; R. KRÜGER, “Lucas 16,1-13. La opción decisiva: por la ley de Dios o por la ley del capital”, *Cuadernos de Teología* [Buenos Aires] 15 (1996) 97-112; J. CÁRDENAS PALLARES, “De cómo ganarle a Don dinero (Lc 16,1-13)”, *EfMex* 18 (2000) 79-91.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. J. A. METZGER, *Consumption and Wealth in Luke's Travel Narrative*, 109.

²⁰⁰ J. DURKIN, “A cultural reading of Luke 16:1-9”, 7-20.

²⁰¹ W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 257.

²⁰³ B. MALINA; R. ROHRBAUGH, *Social Scientific Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 373.

²⁰⁴ I preferred to use the term “manager” (following NRSV version), instead of steward or administrator.

The manager possesses responsibilities similar to the Roman *vilicus*²⁰⁵. He oversees a rich man's agricultural estate²⁰⁶. The manager is charged with scattering his master's resources.²⁰⁷ The rich landowner is a probably a foreign one. He 'exploits' its goods through a native manager who is authorized to act with a great degree of autonomy but is accountable to the owner. The manager's task is to make an agreed profit for the owner, but once assured of this profit, he also had the possibility, through an increase in price, to achieve personal gains. This was allowed. This manager has been denounced – with or without a reason – to his master as embezzler of his property. The aorist passive verb *dieblēthē* ("he was accused"), as signalling a false or slanderous accusation, is used. These rumours probably refer to "an alleged inefficient use of the master's property to make profits, because the failure to produce expected profits would constitute grounds for dismissal"²⁰⁸. The landlord is not concerned about the manager's profits but about the fall of his expected yield. It appears to be an F4 function. This claim, for the owner, is more than enough to demand from him the full accounting of his administration. He must deliver documents, receipts, invoices, accounts, etc. At the same time the owner seems to be very upset and decided to fire him. However, the manager is not thrown in jail but is rather asked to present the accounts. The manager is presented with an unflattering situation. He is in a crisis.

The manager is blamed for cheating the master by participating in some first-century version of savings²⁰⁹. This was also a way to a hidden interest which was contrary to Jewish Law and which we encounter in this parable. "Such agents were usually paid in the form of a commission or fee on each transaction they arranged"²¹⁰. There existed the "honest graft", a term coined by Lenski²¹¹, which meant a socially accepted form of extortion. "The governing class members participated in the exploitive system by accumulating as much 'honest graft' as possible during their terms of service. Such

²⁰⁵ K.J. KIM, *Stewardship and almsgiving: a study in Luke's theology of wealth*, PhD thesis, 1998, 153-54.

²⁰⁶ J. S. KLOPPENBORG, "The Dishonoured Master (Luke 16:1-8a)", *Biblica* 70/4 (1989), 491.

²⁰⁷ C. M. HAYS, *Luke's Wealth Ethics*, 141.

²⁰⁸ W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 258.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 260.

²¹⁰ B. J. MALINA; R. L. ROHRBAUGH, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 292.

²¹¹ G. E. LENSKI, *Power and privilege*, 246.

'honest graft' could total many times a person's regular income for serving in such positions. And what the ruling class did, the retainers imitated"²¹², but in a smaller scale.

Kloppenborg and Bailey²¹³ argue that the people to whom the manager makes remittances are either merchant debtors who have received a loan in comestibles, or tenants who owe fixed portions of their yield each year. Each debtor is invited to take out his receipt and change quantities. He obliges them to reciprocate a favour to him. It seems that the manager wants to ensure a long future, he cannot be content with little. However, as argued below, the amounts do not warrant a roof and a bed for the rest of the manager's life, even if the figures were somehow considerable, and where people in those times and cultural setting under review, were fond of hyperbole.

Moreover, Jeremias views the debtors as wholesalers, who have overdue bills. In an agrarian society there was a problem as the elite owned estates that were the source of their wealth, but those estates were geographically removed from market towns and urban centres.²¹⁴ Thus there was the need of merchants to monetize the goods and sell them in market towns. In turn these towns and urban cities were controlled by the elites. They controlled the entire process.²¹⁵

However, the "most commonly held view is that the debtors are peasant tenants or sharecroppers who till the soil in the master's fields and maintain his orchards"²¹⁶. Bailey identifies three types of tenants: "1) a tenant who paid a percentage of the crop in rent, 2) a tenant who paid a fixed portion of the crop in rent, 3) a tenant who paid a fixed rent in cash"²¹⁷. In the parable under study only two debtors are presented, which form part of the first category. Wheat and oil, which are mentioned in the parable, were

²¹² W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 192.

²¹³ J. S. KLOPPENBORG, "The Dishonoured Master (Luke 16:1-8a)", 491.

K. E. BAILEY, *Poet and Peasant: A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI, 1976, 92-94.

²¹⁴ Cf. W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 264.

²¹⁵ Cf. G. E. LENSKI, *Power and privilege*, 189-296.

Cf. R. L. ROHRBAUGH, "The Pre-Industrial City in Luke-Acts: Urban Social Relations", in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, edited by J. H. NEYREY, Hendrickson, Peabody, 1991, 129-37.

²¹⁶ W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 261.

²¹⁷ K. BAILEY, *Poet and Peasant: A literary-cultural approach in the Parables in Luke*, 92.

the main products of the land in Palestine. It is interesting to note that the debt is stated in terms of goods and not in terms of money.

One debtor has 100 *bats* of oil. The *bat*²¹⁸ is equivalent to 45 litres. The debt is, therefore, of 4500 litres, about 1,000 denarii. Another is 100 *koros* of wheat. The *kor*²¹⁹ (barrel) has a capacity of 450 litres. The debt is therefore 45,000 litres, which represents about 2,500 denarii. Jeremias²²⁰ adds that the amount equals the yield of one hundred hectares of land, and James Breech²²¹ gauges that it yields an amount equal to seven-and-one-half years' wages. To the first debtor, the manager lowers 50% of the debt, while for the second one a 20%. Oil is less secure and wheat easier to assess. In value terms, the sum the manager reduces for both persons is quite similar, about 500 denarii.²²² All these figures help us to understand the social class as the landlord "belongs to the ruling elite who control the land and the lives of the people of the land"²²³.

Thus the social background of such managers is that they would receive the surpluses of the big estates and promise the landowners a monetary return on what was sold. The return promised, however, was not only the price of the commodity at the time of its sale but included also a hidden interest rate, which was kept hidden because of the Jewish prohibition of usury. The debt would then be stated simply in terms of a quantity of produce (cf. vv. 6-7). William Herzog argues that "the fact that the steward is

²¹⁸ G. SCHNEIDER; H. R. BALZ, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, I*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI, 1990, 209: The Hebrew unit of liquid capacity corresponds to the *ephah* for dry materials (grain and meal). 1 *bat* = one-tenth *kōr*. According to Josephus *Ant.* viii.57 and other bases for comparison the *bat* is commonly interpreted as 39.384 litres; according to Segrè (on the basis of an Egyptian papyrus of A.D. 289) and a "royal measure" found in Lachish, it is reckoned as 22.991 litres.

La Biblia TOB (Traduction Oecumenique de la Bible, Elledici, 2010, 2379: points out that it is between 21 and 45 litres.

²¹⁹ G. SCHNEIDER; H. R. BALZ, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, II*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI, 1990, 309: *Kópos* is a Semitic loanword (*kor*) and designates a measure of capacity for grain, flour, etc. (from Josephus *Ant.* xv.314 one can calculate that 1 *kor* = ca. 400 liters).

La Biblia TOB (Traduction Oecumenique de la Bible, Elledici, 2010, 2379: points out that it is between 210 and 450 litres.

²²⁰ J. JEREMIAS, *The Parables of Jesus*, translated by S. H. HOOKE, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1963, 181.

²²¹ J. BREECH, *The Silence of Jesus*, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1983, 108.

²²² J. L. STORY, "Twin Parables of Stewardship in Luke 16", *American Theological Inquiry* 2/1 (2009), 109. J. M. GARCÍA FERNÁNDEZ, *El dinero en la Sagrada Escritura*, Universidad Católica San Antonio, Murcia, 2004, 29.

J. JEREMIAS, *The parables of Jesus*, 181.

(1000 denarii x 50% = 500; 2500 denarii x 20% = 500).

²²³ W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 254.

dismissed indicates that he is a retainer, not a slave, although a retainer in the household of an elite person was nearly as dependent as a slave but without the security associated with slavery”²²⁴.

Here again, similar to Luke 12,17 we have a soliloquy (Luke 16,4), which reveals the situation he is in. He has lost his good name – a shame. To work in fields and heavy duty he lacks forces, decorum prevents him from begging. This reveals the manager as “weak and proud”, rejecting honest work. Furthermore, in the social context joining digging would have meant dropping out of “the class of retainers” and enter into “the class of expendables.” This would have meant a different story regarding his food diet. Thus, he starts to think.

Decides to “forgive”, to receive in return good treatment. What to do to ensure the future? He has in hand the risky possibility to create friends to be obliged, to offer shelter, and secure and save for his own future existence. As he is still the manager, he takes advantage of the property and he can negotiate with what he has been entrusted. He creates goodwill in the community for both himself and his master. He does not waste time. The critical moment requires a quick action. This left an impact on the manager. Here Jesus draws attention to the critical situation in which the manager is.

Other scholars take the manager’s actions at face value. That is, the manager is not forgoing a commission of any sort or correcting any usury; rather, he is actually reducing the amounts owed to his master and securing for himself goodwill with his master’s debtors. As Kloppenborg notes, the manager asks in verse 5 how much the debtor owes the master specifically; if these two had negotiated an agreement including a commission for the manager, the question would have been more likely phrased “how much do you owe me?” Thus the reductions in debt most plausibly result in a loss of revenue for the master, although others interpret it as simply given up the part of the profit of the manager, without damaging the owner,²²⁵ thus pointing to the patron-client relationship.

²²⁴ Ibid., 255.

²²⁵ Cf. B. MAGGIONI, *Le parabole evangeliche*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 228.

Moreover, Kloppenborg and Landry and May also conclude that the parable addresses the strategic manipulation or defiance of the honour-shame economy²²⁶, as was discussed above. The master is especially pleased because his wealth was originally doing him no good in the honour-shame system; the manager has shrewdly converted it into public acclaim. His actions were not dishonest as much as risky.

After the parable, “the Lord commended the unjust manager”. Who is the man who praises the manager? Is he the landlord? Who is the Lord? The Lord is Jesus (Luke 7,6; Luke 11,39). It is not the rich man, for how could praise the manager who was scamming him. It is Jesus, for whom Luke gave the title of “the Lord” for 18 times. Now, how can Jesus praise for this action? Jesus does not praise the manager for his injustice, that is reprehensible, of the crafty rascals and shamelessness of the scammer, but for his shrewdness, resourcefulness, boldness, resolution, imagination and creativity in a crisis situation (cf. Luke 6,20b; Luke 10,21b).

Furthermore, the traditional value orientation in Middle Eastern society placed great emphasis on “being” in the present (acting in accordance with one’s present desires) and not so much emphasis on “doing” for the future (acting with intent to produce favourable consequences in the future).

As argued by Wright, “many readers of this parable have been unable to see the manager in any way as being exemplary, simply because, notwithstanding his shrewdness, he is so clearly a sharp operator”²²⁷. There are other parable characters, who are portrayed as being at the same time both self-interested and right — as, for example, the prodigal son in his decision to return (cf. Luke 15,18-19), the judge in his verdict delivered under pressure (cf. Luke 18,4-5), and the customs officer in his plea for mercy (cf. Luke 18,13). “The teaching of Jesus generally presupposes not an ethic of selfless motivation, but the conjunction of righteousness and one’s own best interests”²²⁸ — as highlighted also in the Wisdom tradition of Israel.

²²⁶ J. S. KLOPPENBORG, “The Dishonoured Master (Luke 16:1-8a)”, *Biblica* 70/4 (1989), 474-95.
D. T. LANDRY; B. MAY, “Honor Restored: New Light on the Parable of the Prudent Steward (Luke 16:1-8a)”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119/2 (2000), 287-309.

²²⁷ S. I. WRIGHT, “Parables on Poverty and Riches”, 227.

²²⁸ Id.

There remains still the possibility of a creative and proper use of the world's unrighteous mammon. Bonaventure (1221-74), the Franciscan philosopher, educator, and commentator of the Middle Ages, recognized such a positive motivation in the shrewd manager's actions, and so proposed that the manager sought by his actions to make friends among his fellow underlings rather than to gain money for himself by whatever means²²⁹. Moreover, the manager does not bully his fellow servants (as Luke 12,42-46, where the slave thought to himself that his master will be delayed in coming and he began to beat the other slaves, men and women).

However, the parable leaves in the dark many details that provoke curiosity. For example, how many debtors were there? Could it be that, knowing the fraud, debtors would receive him at home? It seems that the master did not punish the debtors. What happened to the manager? Either the landowner has reinstated the manager, who had proven himself to be a skilled public-relations man, or, at the very least, he would have recommended him to others. Another question is precisely what does it mean to seek *first*? If it indicates sequence, must we re-write Mt 6,24: "Serve God, then serve Mammon"?

Luke ends this section with a stern warning and invites personal decision: you cannot serve at the same time God and money. You have to make a choice. Nobody is able to provide a full service to two masters simultaneously. God and riches claim the whole man, every man for himself. Money appears here as personified. The Greek word "mammon" is an Aramaic word transcript, for any sort of wealth, not just money²³⁰. Furthermore, mammon has the same root for trust. In its etymology, it is thought that mammon is "what is safe and gives security", a security as also seen in the other parable. Men believe that with the money and goods can ensure their existence (Luke 12,15ff). The rest of Chapter 16 of the Gospel according to Luke continues on this theme, where in verses 14-18 Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for being "lovers of money". In the Qumran sect, they are called "deceitful people, who have set their sights on fun and live in abundance."

²²⁹ BONAVENTURE, *In sacrosanctum Jesu Christi Evangelium secundum Lucam Elaborata Ennaratio*.

²³⁰ Cf. D. E. GARLAND, "Mammon," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 3, 232.

This parable seems as an example of the honour-shame aspect in a patron-client relationship where the patron is the rich man and the client is the manager. The manager who started with a shame position turned it around as an honour position both for himself and the patron. For Wright, the Parable of the Rich Fool, and this parable offers “a provocative, though quite understated, moral challenge that is both prophetic and practical. It is prophetic because the character praised subverts an unjust system. But it is practical because it suggests not a grand blueprint for revolutionary action in the future, but something that an ordinary person under pressure can do here and now”²³¹.

4.3.3 Luke 19,11-27

The Parable of the Ten Pounds
(Mt 25,14-30)

¹¹ As they were listening to this, he went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. ¹² So he said, “A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. ¹³ He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, ‘Do business with these until I come back.’ ¹⁴ But the citizens of his country hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to rule over us.’ ¹⁵ When he returned, having received royal power, he ordered these slaves, to whom he had given the money, to be summoned so that he might find out what they had gained by trading. ¹⁶ The first came forward and said, ‘Lord, your pound has made ten more pounds.’ ¹⁷ He said to him, ‘Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities.’ ¹⁸ Then the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your pound has made five pounds.’ ¹⁹ He said to him, ‘And you, rule over five cities.’ ²⁰ Then the other came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your pound. I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, ²¹ for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’ ²² He said to him, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked slave! You knew, did you, that I was a harsh man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? ²³ Why then did you not put my money into the bank? Then when I returned, I could have collected it with interest.’ ²⁴ He said to the bystanders, ‘Take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds.’ ²⁵ (And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten pounds!’) ²⁶ ‘I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ²⁷ But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and slaughter them in my presence.’

The setting of this third parable, is that Jesus left Jericho after giving “salvation” to Zacchaeus and his house, and is now near Jerusalem, where he will enter triumphantly and will be hailed as King-Messiah. Jericho, where the parable is told, is a city of Archelaus. According to the will of Herod, the territory had to be divided between his

²³¹ S. I. WRIGHT, “Parables on Poverty and Riches”, 229.

three sons, Herod Antipas, Philip; and Archelaus. Archelaus was to receive the title of king of Judea. However, he had to negotiate with the Roman emperor Augustus to get this title. To this end he went to Rome. In spite of the fact that there was an embassy of fifty Jews working against Archelaus, at the end Augustus awarded the title. The parable seems to be inspired by the history of the period. The nobleman going into a far country seems to be Archelaus.

The man in the parable is not just a wealthy businessman, but a noble leaving to a distant land, to receive the kingdom and then return. This shows that politics and economics are intertwined together. Furthermore, the very fact that he is travelling, he is a wealthy elite (F1), as only the wealthy could afford to go abroad. Moreover, in the ancient world, the “most basic social, economic, political and cultural unit was the household (*oikos*)”²³², which was the household of elite families. “The members of the great households were the agents by whom the wealth of land was harvested, gathered into storage, redistributed or monetized, and exported. The *oikoi* of the elite were trading houses export-import businesses and the source of concentrated wealth”²³³.

Before leaving, the nobleman called ten servants. Due to system built on households of the elites, a number of staff was required in assisting the household, including “stewards, scribal accountants, tutors”²³⁴. As the household was organized hierarchically, the greater the wealth, the more elaborate the household bureaucracy needed to be. As Kautsky remarks “a large household staff was a sign of status and power,”²³⁵ and an indicator of the man’s wealth.

Why was it necessary for the head of the household to leave home? It was necessary to protect his interests, to expand his influence, in “hopes of increasing his investments, initiating new business schemes, building patron-client networks”²³⁶. It appears to be an F4 function. Thus he needed to entrust important portions of his wealth to his most trusted staff, where he is unlikely testing his staff while he is abroad. The number ten of

²³² W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 168.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 169.

²³⁴ *Id.*

²³⁵ J. KAUTSKY, *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1982, 190-192.

²³⁶ W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 170.

these officers seems to have no other purpose but to emphasise the dignity of the aristocrat and the wealth he possesses.

He gives everyone a pound (or a mine, as others name it. It is a hoard – an F1 function, which is a stock of wealth) to negotiate with it during his absence. A pound amounted to a hundred denarii, where a denarii was the daily minimum wage. The pound is not an extraordinary amount; a labourer could gain it in a semester. The assignment of the nobleman's wealth is done according to the status of the officers in his household hierarchy where there is a relationship between ability and power or status. A staff who is incapable or incompetent would lose his place in the bureaucracy²³⁷.

Once the nobleman receives the royal investiture, he returns as a king. Upon his arrival, he finds those ten servants to whom he entrusted a pound (vv 15-26). The parable only gives account of three of the ten servants. The art of storytelling does not consent to for all ten to appear. Parables want to impact not bore. The first two servants have successfully negotiated the pound. They do not speak of their own effort. The pounds have provided the gain (an F4 and a flow). The first servant with a pound gained another ten, and the second with a pound gained five more. The third servant, however, wrapped it in a cloth, and neglected the fact that the pound could be stolen or lost. He lacked courage and fear paralyzed him. The servant wanted to be sure and therefore did not take risks from theft and liability²³⁸.

It is interesting to note that a portion of the nobleman's "accumulated wealth" is monetized, thus implying a liquid asset to work with. As Herzog commented, the "three servants have convertible assets"²³⁹. Furthermore, it is important to ask what was the minimum profit accepted? Both the first and second servant did a high amount of profit, even though it seems that there are no agreement between the master and his staff beyond the distribution of pounds. There must have been some implicit understanding. Derrett²⁴⁰ pointed out that the profit of 100% was the minimum profit accepted under

²³⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 171.

²³⁸ J. JEREMIAS, *The Parables of Jesus*, 163.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

²⁴⁰ J. D. M. DERRETT, "Law in the New Testament: The Parable of the Talents and Two Logia", *ZNW* 56 (1966), 190.

the laws of Hammurabi. Anything less was considered a default. Being nobleman, the rewards are regal.

Still, while the dominant reading of the Parable of the Pounds is one that calls the third servant as “lazy,” the “third servant is revealed as a spokesman for the citizens who opposed the ruler, and in his speech he articulates their discontent and shares their faith”²⁴¹. The third servant describes the nobleman, now king, as an “exploiter who lives off of the productive labour of others”, and returns to the master what is his, showing that the third servant as an honourable person. In the world of the parable, which is one of limited goods, it is thought that there is so much wealth where any increase to one person means that it is taken out from someone else’s. However the third servant is “thrown out of a comfortable household into a world where the sounds of grief and anguish were facts of everyday life”²⁴². He is left alone without any support and with no solidarity. The third servant is deprived of the pound. The nobleman orders that pound is given to the one who has ten. That seems strange to the others who object. Moreover, the third servant has taken the pound out of circulation, where “it cannot be used to dispossess more peasants from their lands through its dispersion in the form of usurious loans”²⁴³.

Furthermore, regarding this “lazy” third servant we might ask questions of what it means to be lazy. Laziness must be seen as a criticism of power, for certainly if one believed in the leadership and creeds of the ones who shape the economic system, one would work toward those ends. This is even more so in an agrarian peasant society, in particular in Luke’s context. The nobleman, whom the people dislike, must gain his power from colonial rule. He rewards those who can make economic profit at any cost. He ignores those who will not, and destroys all those who oppose him. Indeed, this is not Luke’s Jesus.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 176.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 180.

²⁴³ *Id.*

²⁴⁴ A. F. BRAUN, “Reframing the Parable of the Pounds in Lukan Narrative and Economic Context: Luke 19:11-28”, *Currents in Theology and Mission* 39/6 (2012), 448.

Moreover, the nobleman suggests that the money should have been placed into the bank. Herzog observes that the reference to bankers (*trapezites*) goes beyond money changers who dealt mostly in relatively small change. It is an F4 type. “Bankers were more like merchants who worked with capital in investment ventures, although they could limit themselves to small, safe and quite secure schemes that would realise a low profit margin of about 25%”²⁴⁵.

The parable also illustrates “how little modern notions of capital and investment apply to ancient economics. The narrative recalls two of the three prevalent uses for ‘capital’ in antiquity: money on loan or money hoarded. The third regular employment for the money elites was purchase of land”²⁴⁶.

However, as seen above, this parable is an example of the patron-client society, as there is an interaction between patron and client, which is based on simultaneous exchange of different types of resources. Furthermore, there is a strong element of solidarity linked to personal honour and obligations. The relation seems to be binding and long.²⁴⁷ It seems that it is not strictly linked to an advanced agricultural society model, as terms such as “money”, “interest”, “bank” are used. However as the gifts were cities, it meant a political economy, from which wealth is produced.

4.4 Concluding remarks on the concept of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke

Money was a crucial element in a political economy. As evident through the analysis guided by the model, F1, F3, and F4 essentially are available for gold or silver coinage only to the elite or their agents. F2 is nominally available to the common person, but its utility (F5) seems rare and only appears in terms of “small change”²⁴⁸. Overall, the

²⁴⁵ J. D. M. DERRETT, “Law in the New Testament”, 192.

²⁴⁶ M. I. FINLEY, *Ancient Economy*, 118.

²⁴⁷ Cf. H. MOXNES, *The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke’s Gospel*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1988, 42.

²⁴⁸ D. E. OAKMAN, *The Political Aims of Jesus*, 163.

analysis confirms Crawford's conclusions that the rural empire knew little of money as a universal medium of exchange.²⁴⁹

For Jesus and the villagers of the early imperial Roman period, money was a fact of daily life, although viewed with a critical eye on the increase of money through commerce that is a F4 type. Oakman summarised the theme by highlighting that "money was especially important for storing, controlling, and moving goods and products of real value. The goods and products of agrarian societies were first and foremost agricultural but also included the basics of life (clothing, shelter) and, for the elite, luxury goods. Money underwrote taxation and debts (F3) as well as facilitated patronage politics. Good money (gold or silver) stored value in the storehouse (F1). Related to taxation and money are the "tables" of the moneychangers/bankers (F2, F3, F4)"²⁵⁰.

There is a relation between the term "money" and the word "Mammon". The word Mammon has the Semitic root for trust (*'mn*). As Finley observed, "the Roman elite usually wanted their money on loan, in land, or in the storehouse"²⁵¹. Thus, "mammon" is money on deposit with banks or goods in the storehouse, trusted in self-sufficiency. Moreover, Mammon could be money on loan, keeping the villager or artisan in debt and thus "loyal" as a client. Money in land depended on the possibility of available land; traditional peasants would never sell land, since it, like air or water, is indispensable for the peasant ideal of self-sufficient subsistence"²⁵².

Following the brief analysis of the Gospel according to Luke and the analysis in some detail of the three chosen parables, how are we going to establish a definition of the concept of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke? Firstly we have to examine the F4 function to what extent that function is present or absent in the Gospel according to Luke, which is finally the objective of this study. This function is the typical function of money in capitalism, that of reproducing itself as capital.

²⁴⁹ D. E. OAKMAN, "Money in the Moral Universe of the New Testament," in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, edited by Wolfgang STEGEMANN, Bruce J. MALINA, and Gerd THEISSEN, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2002, 342.

²⁵⁰ Cf. D. E. OAKMAN, *The Political Aims of Jesus*, 163-164.

²⁵¹ Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 116.

²⁵² Cf. D. E. OAKMAN, *The Political Aims of Jesus*, 164.

Regarding the F4 function of money to generate profit, following the above study it seems that there are these instances when the F4 function is alluded to:

- In the Parable of the Rich Fool, the rich man wanted to destroy the older barns and building new larger ones, so that there is more profit (an F4 function). However the investment made to build the barns is not to generate profit but merely for consumption and security.
- In the Parable of the Dishonest Manager, it seems that the landlord is not concerned about the manager's profits but about the fall of his expected yield, which appears to be an F4 function.
- Also, in the other parable under study, that of the Pounds, the head of the household leaves home to increase his investments, begin new business schemes and build patron-client networks.²⁵³ It appears to be an F4 function.
- Another instance of an F4 function can be seen in the same parable where the first two servants have successfully negotiated the pound, which have provided a gain; one gained another ten, while the other gained five more.
- Moreover, in the same parable there is the reference to bankers who "worked with capital in investment ventures"²⁵⁴ even to "realise a low profit margin of about 25%"²⁵⁵.

In spite of all these instances, it transpires that the use of the F4 function of money was limited in use in the Gospel according to Luke, probably also as the concept of wealth in the New Testament era meant another thing.

All this leads us to establish a possible concept of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke. Wealth is created from the land which is precious in itself and provides security. In the 1st century AD society, economics were closely tied with agriculture which was dominated by a patron-client relationship. Such relationships were also closely tied to concepts of honour and shame. In such complex societies; kinship, economics, politics and religion were closely intertwined to provide a complex and wide relationship between the notions of honour and wealth.

²⁵³ Cf. W. R. HERZOG, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 170.

²⁵⁴ J. D. M. DERRETT, "Law in the New Testament", 192.

²⁵⁵ Id.

Through the thorough reading of the Gospel according to Luke and the analysis of the three chosen pericopes, an analysis of the different ways in which something mentioned in Luke means either a stock or a flow of wealth was made. Through that analysis, a possible meaning of wealth in Luke was attained. The next chapter will deal on the concept of wealth as capital in modern sense.

Chapter 5

CONCEPT OF WEALTH IN MODERN SENSE

5.1 Introducing the concept of capital

This chapter will deal with the concept of “capital”. Throughout the chapter the question “what is it like?” is to be asked, to answer the question “what is capital”? The aim of the chapter is to establish a definition of what is “capital” following a discussion of the characteristics and properties of “capital”.

Against the expectation of a clear definition of capital, there is an ambiguity, complexity and at times disagreement on the definition of capital. James Gale, through his review how the concept of capital is treated in textbooks of Principles of Economics, found that there are both consistencies and inconsistencies in the use of the word ‘capital’.²⁵⁶ As Lester Taylor points out, capital is not a single concept in the canon of economics, but a surfeit of concepts.²⁵⁷

Irving Fisher, in a statement resembling that of Ulrich²⁵⁸ concerning intellectual capital 100 years later, remarked that “of economic conceptions few are more fundamental and none more obscure than capital”²⁵⁹. While the question of what should be categorized as capital was hotly debated for much of the latter half of the nineteenth century, this was largely assumed to be settled for most of the twentieth, until new concept of capital emerged. Moreover, as Piketty highlights, “capital is not an immutable concept: it reflects the state of development and prevailing social relations of each society”²⁶⁰. Thus, it is a dynamic concept, having certain conditions, and which this chapter will delve into.

²⁵⁶ Cf. J. R. GALE, “A note on Capital in Principles of Economics Textbooks”, *Journal of Economics* 30/2 (2004), 97.

²⁵⁷ Cf. L. D. TAYLOR, *Capital, Accumulation, and Money: An Integration of Capital, Growth, and Monetary Theory*, Springer Science+Business Media, New York, 2000, xiii.

²⁵⁸ D. ULRICH, “Intellectual capital = competence x commitment”, *Sloan Management Review* 39/2 (1998).

²⁵⁹ I. FISHER, “What is capital?” *The Economic Journal*, December 1896, 509.

²⁶⁰ T. PIKETTY, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, Harvard University Press, Cambridge/MA, 2014, 47.

The origins of the word “capital” lie in a more primitive economic era, “when *capita* referred to heads of cattle, and the major form of economic capital lay in the ownership of land”²⁶¹. From ancient times, traced to Greek and Roman times, until the medieval period the word capital signified the principal of a loan, in contrast with the interest. In those times, in various occasions, money was borrowed to satisfy personal needs, not to finance the production of something. It was rather “land, not capital that was understood as being productive – generating income and, hence, being a source of wealth”²⁶². Later on trade became the source of wealth. In its popular meaning, capital remained as money or financial capital in order to support commercial activity and trade, where it was identified as a key element in the economic system to facilitate the creation of further wealth or value.

A look at the history of economics shows the Physiocrats who considered agriculture to be the only productive sector of the economy. They understood capital as tools advanced to a worker at the beginning of the production cycle, which facilitated agricultural production, and thus was the means of generating wealth. Through this agricultural production was the primary source of wealth. “Value was created in agricultural production through the interaction of two elements: land and labour, with any surplus being that which exceeded what was required to support that level of agricultural production”²⁶³. Despite the differences between the two elements, “the underlying characteristics and function were broadly similar: a stock of accumulated assets, representing past output, which could be used in the economic system to facilitate current output and further increase that accumulated stock”²⁶⁴.

Contemporary economists use “capital” to “characterise the other two factors of production. Land itself – actually a stand-in for all natural resources – is often understood as capital asset even though not humanly produced”²⁶⁵.

²⁶¹ M. NOVAK, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, The Free Press, New York, 1993, 128.

²⁶² A. DEAN; M. KRETSCHMER, “Can Ideas be capital? Factors of production in the post-industrial economy: a review and critique”, *Academy of Management Review* 32/2 (2007), 575.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 576.

²⁶⁴ *Id.*

²⁶⁵ J. P. GUNNEMANN, “Capital, Spirit, and Common Wealth” in, *The True Wealth of Nations: Catholic Social Thought and economic life*, edited by Daniel Finn, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, 293.

From the literature reviewed, it transpires that there are different kinds of capital that are mentioned, including:

- Manufactured or physical capital, which consists of infrastructure, machines, tools and factories. It “has been traditionally used in economics to mean the machines, buildings and physical infrastructure of an economy”²⁶⁶;
- Human capital, including labour and intelligence, culture, and organization;
- Natural capital; consisting of resources and living systems. As Goodwin pointed out, it “may be called a capital stock if it plays a role in some economically productive process”²⁶⁷;
- Financial capital, including cash, investments, and monetary instruments. “Money can be regarded as a capital stock if it will be invested in some activity that produces something, at the very least if it will produce, for its owner, more money”²⁶⁸. Furthermore, “the more that wealth accumulates in the form of financial assets, and the more those shares and other securities appreciate in value, the more wealth is created, not as earned, but as *unearned income*”²⁶⁹;
- Social capital, which according to the OECD is defined as “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups”²⁷⁰. There are real-world networks and links between groups and individuals.

At the same time, Dan Usher also points out that capital in real terms is also referred to as “real capital”, “aggregate capital stock”, “capital in its own limits”, or just plain “capital”.²⁷¹ Having reviewed the above, for our study, certain characteristics will be discussed and a dialogue will be made with some authors, in order to arrive to our plausible definition of “capital”.

²⁶⁶ L. NOISET, “Commentary: An expanded concept of capital in Development Economics”, *World Economics* 9/4 (2008), 202.

²⁶⁷ N. R. GOODWIN, “Five Kinds of Capital: Useful concepts for Sustainable Development”, Global Development and Environment Institute, Tufts University, Medford/MA, http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/publications/working_papers/03-07sustainabledevelopment.pdf (accessed 21 September 2015), 4.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁶⁹ C. MEYER; S. M. DAVIS, *Future Wealth*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, 2000, 10.

²⁷⁰ OECD, “Insights: Human Capital”, <http://www.oecd.org/insights/37966934.pdf> (accessed 1 October 2015), 103.

²⁷¹ D. USHER, *The measurement of capital*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1980, 1.

5.2 Capital and time

The first characteristic, which is a transverse characteristic, is the relationship between capital and time. Capital signifies the presence of time, where capital is the exchange of present goods for future goods.

The relationship is seen especially in the Austrian treatment of capital, through Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, where “the disadvantage which attends the capitalist method of production consists in a sacrifice of time. Capitalist roundaboutness is productive but time-consuming. It yields better consumption goods, but not until a later time”²⁷². Capital brings a concept of time into our understanding of the production process, separate from that conveyed by its own durability. It is the means by which labour/effort expended in “the past can be incorporated into current production, or by which current effort can be carried forward into the future. It is a store of labour. It can also represent investment, an advance against future returns”²⁷³. In capital the past, the present and the future are intertwined.

To this effect, an important point here, in relation to time, is to distinguish between the concept of capital and the concept of stock, which is the opposite of a flow. In fact a stock “is a quantity identified at a particular point in time”²⁷⁴. It is at a particular moment of a particular day, whereas flows “are measured over a period of time”²⁷⁵. One is at a particular point in time whereas the other over a period of time. Thus, for something “to be considered a capital stock it must have the potential to produce something that is economically desirable.”²⁷⁶ An emphasis is to be given to the word potentiality. Potential, or *dynamis*, is something that is not-yet-actual, but that which over time and through the principle of development has the power to actualise (*energia*)²⁷⁷. Development is actualised over a period of time.

²⁷² E. V. BÖHM-BAWERK, *Capital and Interest*, Libertarian Press, South Holland, 1959, 82.

²⁷³ A. DEAN; M. KRETSCHMER, “Can Ideas be capital?”, 579.

²⁷⁴ N. R. GOODWIN, “Five Kinds of Capital: Useful concepts for Sustainable Development”, 2.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁷⁶ *Id.*

²⁷⁷ P. NADAL, “The Concept of Potentiality: On Agamben”, <https://belate.wordpress.com/2010/04/04/agamben-on-potentiality/> (accessed 1 October 2015).

In relation to all this, capital embodies past productive activity. As Noiset points out, “capital can be defined as anything that is created in a previous period and used in the current period to produce output”²⁷⁸. This resembles to the writings of Böhm-Bawerk in 1890, who defined capital as a means of acquisition as a result of past production and which increases productivity of labour²⁷⁹.

5.3 Capital and accumulation

Another characteristic of capital is related to accumulation, where according to Piketty “capital is a stock. It corresponds to the total wealth owned at a given point in time. This stock comes from the wealth appropriated or accumulated in all prior years combined”²⁸⁰. There is gradual gathering or an acquisition from the past. Accumulation values the means of production, efficiency, rationality and knowledge.

Other authors tried to discuss the characteristic of accumulation. Amongst them, there is Lester D. Taylor, who saw *myros* “as representing a pool of accumulated savings”²⁸¹. In fact, in discussing and identifying the root concept of capital, the author used the concept of *myros* to have a unifying and encompassing concept of capital. As Taylor points out that the pool of accumulated savings “comes into existence through saving and is reduced through investment in produced means of production, the funding of current production, and consumption in excess of current income”²⁸². One side of the pool of *myros* consists of “stocks of unconsumed consumables and finished intermediate goods”²⁸³, while the other side consists of “the sum total of unexercised claims to both current and past production”²⁸⁴, bringing back the characteristic of time into the highlight. In a barter economy the two sides would be almost the same, as goods saved are owned by the person in question. However, in a monetary economy, as income and savings occur in money, the sum of unexercised claim takes the form of money.

²⁷⁸ L. NOISET, “Commentary: An expanded concept of capital in Development Economics”, 205.

²⁷⁹ Cf. E. V. BÖHM-BAWERK, *Capital and interest: A critical history of economical theory*, 1890, <http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/bawerk/Capital/index.html> (accessed 1 October 2015).

²⁸⁰ T. PIKETTY, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, 50.

²⁸¹ L. D. TAYLOR, *Capital, Accumulation, and Money*, 16-17.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁸³ *Id.*

²⁸⁴ *Id.*

For the 16th-18th century mercantilists, capital was defined as value of stock in trade or a sum invested in trade. However, some, supported by the Catholic Church concluded that money *per se* is sterile and it lacks capacity and ability to be productive. This led to Turgot²⁸⁵ to define capital as “saved stock of goods”, where only goods that money can buy are productive; thus creating a distinction between accumulated wealth as a stock and the income or profits accruing to it as a flow.²⁸⁶ “The definition of capital as stock in trade carried implications of the accumulation of surplus, of durability, and of persistence from one time period to another, although these were not made explicit”²⁸⁷. The time and accumulation characteristic of the quote were discussed above, whereas the next characteristic to be discussed is durability.

5.4 Capital and durability

Capital was generally held to comprise a stock of durable, usually tangible, assets. This following Ricardo who upon separating circulating capital from fixed capital, and in developing the latter, distinct term, made explicit the concept of capital as durable.²⁸⁸ Thus capital was that part of wealth used in production. Nowadays, capital consists of durable assets and also intangible, which are both the results of past production, engaged in production. In fact, in today’s capital, one notices that hybrid capital is almost always intangible and difficult to measure.

5.5 Capital and the human added value action

Part and particle with the past productive activity is the human added value action. From a historical point of view of economics, for the mercantilists, the physiocrats and the classical economists, it was labour that added value, while the role of capital in the economic system was as catalyst and facilitator²⁸⁹, where it is “the result of past production, embodying past productive activity, and employed in production to facilitate the creation of surplus”²⁹⁰. Capital precipitates and makes an action easier.

²⁸⁵ E. BOHM-BAWERK, *The positive theory of capital*, G E Stechert, New York, 1930, 25.

²⁸⁶ A. DEAN; M. KRETSCHMER, “Can Ideas be capital?”, 575.

²⁸⁷ Id.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 576.

²⁸⁹ Id.

²⁹⁰ A. DEAN; M. KRETSCHMER, “Can Ideas be capital?”, 577.

An important discussion is whether “capital” can be produced by itself or not. From our point of view, capital has the characteristic that it is produced through a human activity. This means that both land and natural resources are not “capital” as it would be contradictory in talking of a capital which is produced through a human activity, where neither land nor natural resources are produced through a human activity.

The characteristics of time and labour are intertwined, especially through the writings of J. Mill, J. S. Mill and Marx. They defined capital as the product of past labour used to supply current productive labour, where it embodies past labour. As argued by Bellofiore, following a reading of Marx Capital, when there is “submission of labour to capital, living labour not only counts as abstract, says Marx, but it is abstract”²⁹¹.

In his works, Marx developed a concept called *Mehrwert*, which is translated as “surplus value”. For Marx, human labour was the source of economic value. According to Marx, workers are paid by the capitalist “less than the value that their labour has added to the goods”²⁹², with the remainder being “surplus labour” where the value it produces is “surplus value”. For Marx this is exploitation of the employees. The employment of this “surplus-value” is an accumulation of capital. Only when it is invested in more means of production and in engaging other employees it becomes capital.²⁹³

Later on, neoclassical economists, understood labour and capital to be substitutes where both were capable of generating surplus. According to the neoclassical economists, capital, whether financial or physical capital expressed in value terms, was defined as investment employed and expressible in monetary form. In fact, there are those which see “in capital a stock of physical goods destined for future production and those which see capital as monetary values, a fund available to investors with the purpose of generating profit”²⁹⁴.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 183.

²⁹² “Surplus value”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/surplus-value> (accessed 1 October 2015).

²⁹³ “The Transformation of Surplus-value into Capital”, <https://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/357k/ksg24.html> (accessed 1 October 2015).

²⁹⁴ A. PATRUTI, “The two conflicting approaches to the concept of capital within economic thought”, *Economic Insights - Trends and Challenges* 65/4 (2013), 90.

In fact, Adam Smith pointed out that “the essence of capital resides in physical goods which have the ability to produce other goods and services”²⁹⁵, which Alexandru Patruti labelled as the “objective view regarding capital”²⁹⁶. This ability is the possession of the means or skill to do something, to have power to do something. It involves labour. Capital does not reproduce by itself. Labour using capital does produce itself. In contrast with the objective view of Adam Smith, the subjective view of capital, which seems to have been introduced by John Bates Clark, “considers capital to be a monetary sum, an ‘investment fund’ at the entrepreneur’s disposal”²⁹⁷.

Likewise, in the literature on capital, when the headings “land, labour and capital” are used, capital is meant to be produced capital. In fact, N. Gregory Mankiw explains that “the essence of capital is that it is a factor of production that is itself produced”²⁹⁸. There is an emphasis on production, and the point that capital is humanly created²⁹⁹. This is close to the classical definition of capital. Thus, the “essence” of capital, for Gunnemann is “the organization and storage of energy for a specific purpose or end”³⁰⁰. According to the author, all are forms of “organized energy”³⁰¹, except for financial capital. However, we tend to disagree as money has the capacity to cause work. Thus, it seems a way to organise work, and then there is energy, which are physically the same.

On the other hand, Fisher defined capital as a stock of goods yielding a steady flow of income in which “income” can include money, energy, or even personal satisfaction.³⁰² This use of the term “capital” does not cohere easily with Mankiw’s “essence” of capital: that is “man-made” (some stocks of goods are, some are not) and is for the purpose of production (it may have as its purpose the generation of various kinds of income or simply the creation of more capital)³⁰³.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 83.

²⁹⁶ Id.

²⁹⁷ Id.

²⁹⁸ N. G. MANKIW, *Principles of Microeconomics*, Cengage Learning, Stamford/CT, 72015, 397.

²⁹⁹ J. P. GUNNEMANN, “Capital, Spirit, and Common Wealth”, 293.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 294.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 295.

³⁰² Cf. I. FISHER, *The Nature of Capital and Income*, Macmillan, New York, 1906.

³⁰³ J. P. GUNNEMANN, “Capital, Spirit, and Common Wealth”, 293.

While Gary Becker, in *Human Capital*, understood that educated or trained labour is human capital, other authors, including Piketty, exclude “human capital”, which consists of an individual’s labour power, skills, training, and ability. On one hand, following Berker thought, all human work is educated or trained. Every work activity needs training in order to have a better work activity. On the other hand, for Piketty, human capital is excluded as it “cannot be owned by another person or traded on a market”³⁰⁴ in non-slave societies. It is limited in time and scope.

It seems that Piketty builds upon a positivistic concept of capital. He understands capital as something that exists within society, while capitalism is defined as a system. Christian Lotz, from the Michigan State University, on the grounds of Marx’s theory of society, argues that “capital is the main category that determines the existence of capitalist society”³⁰⁵, where “capital in the form of valorised labour determined the specific social form of capitalist society”³⁰⁶. For Lotz, capital is not ‘some-thing’ where capital must “describe the functioning of a social totality as a whole and cannot be related to a simple aspect of it”³⁰⁷ but it is a “relation” in Marx’s writings. “Relation” does not imply, as the English word implies, the intersubjective relation between persons, but the encompassing word *Verhältnis* (relation) which refers to “the wholeness of an entire situation”³⁰⁸.

Lotz, who is inspired of a Marxian philosophical concept of capital, points out that capital “[1] remains naturalistic, since, according to Piketty’s assumptions, capital can also be found in societies other than capitalistic societies, [2] it remains positivistic, since capital is here understood as the sum of all entities that social agents ‘have’ and possess, and [3] it is a-social, since, according to Piketty, it exists independently from commodity circulation before it enters the market”³⁰⁹.

³⁰⁴ T. PIKETTY, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, 46.

³⁰⁵ C. LOTZ, “Is Capital a Thing? Remarks on Piketty’s Concept of Capital”, *Critical Sociology* 41/2, 2005, 375.

³⁰⁶ Id.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 376.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 381.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 377.

As Lotz points out, as labour gets paid, it becomes valorised, and becomes universally exchangeable, and it becomes subjected to 'processing money' and, become what Marx calls 'abstract labour'. Wealth, then, is not simply a 'stock' or something that is owned by individuals or by groups of individuals, since it is always the collective network of how the productivity of social agents is turned into something that exists socially.³¹⁰

Even though nowadays the worker is substituted with a machine and there is the use of informatics, from the early to the late information age there was the primacy of human capital, as behind the informatics there are human persons who created all this. In fact, Novak points out that "modern capitalism centres more and more attention on caput, on factors such as knowledge, insight, discovery, enterprise, and inquiry"³¹¹.

However, at times, from an economic perspective, human work can be viewed as an expense. Nonetheless, it is not expense to be cut, but an asset to be invested in. Zeynep Ton, a Professor of Operations Management at MIT's Sloan School of Management argues that by underinvesting in the employees, the employees make their operations much more inefficient and less profitable. In a paper she published she writes: "Highly successful retail chains — such as QuickTrip convenience stores, Mercadona and Trader Joe's supermarkets, and Costco wholesale clubs — not only invest heavily in store employees, but also have the lowest prices in their industries, solid financial performance, and better customer service than their competitors."³¹²

Furthermore, through technology there were changes in how certain services are provided. Few years ago, a person interested in buying an airline ticket, or other transport service, including buses and trains, had to pay a visit to a local agency to buy him, on one's behalf the required ticket. Nowadays, one surfs online airline fares or a particular search engines and consequently buys the desired ticket. There is more selection to choose from, which is a value. At the same time, there is no human contact and most probably not even a single word is verbalised. The ticket booth is automated where airfares increase when the demand is high and when the date is nearer to the

³¹⁰ Ibid., 380.

³¹¹ M. NOVAK, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 130.

³¹² Z. TON, "Why 'Good Jobs' are good for retailers", *Harvard Business Review*, Jan-Feb 2012, available at <https://hbr.org/2012/01/why-good-jobs-are-good-for-retailers> (accessed 31 October 2015).

required flying date. On the same lines, one can also buy a travel insurance online, with a click of a button. This also happens when paying bills via internet banking, where there is no need of an employee to pay you the bills on behalf of the particular organisation. Moreover, through internet banking and ATM, one can deposit money, withdraw money, do the necessary banking services including opening new bank accounts without meeting no one personally at the bank. This does not only apply to services but also in buying certain things on internet, including food, clothes, books, electronics and all type of second hand items. This does not mean that “human capital” is not needed anymore, but there were changes in understanding “human capital”.

Moreover, at some point, “human capital” becomes the major cause of the wealth of nations, which is being more important than natural resources. Individuals are preparing themselves intellectually, psychologically and financially to take risks. As argued by Christopher Meyer and Stanley M. Davis, the authors of *Future Wealth*, human capital is one of the biggest assets of an enterprise that leave the building and can go home after certain hours. However, as Novak observed, “a country without natural resources can in fact become wealthy; another country quite rich in natural resources can remain very poor”³¹³, as human and intellectual capital are becoming the crux of a country to be wealthy or not.

Moreover, this was also pointed out by Pope John Paul II, in his 1991 Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, when he stated that:

many goods cannot be adequately produced through the work of an isolated individual; they require the cooperation of many people in working towards a common goal. Organizing such a productive effort, planning its duration in time, making sure that it corresponds in a positive way to the demands which it must satisfy, and taking the necessary risks — all this too is a source of wealth in today's society.³¹⁴

The characteristics of labour and time in a network are taken into consideration. Likewise, “innovation once developed can be thought of as technological know-how or a form of intellectual capital that can be considered part of the productive capacity of an economy”³¹⁵. In a book entitled, *Technology and the Wealth of Nations*, edited by Rosenberg et al, there is a challenge of long-standing models of how technical progress

³¹³ Id.

³¹⁴ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 32

³¹⁵ L. NOISET, “Commentary: An expanded concept of capital in Development Economics”, 203.

contributes to a nation's economic growth. Michael Boskin and Lawrence Lau, in a chapter in the referred book, titled "Capital, Technology and Economic Growth"³¹⁶, found that new technology does not replace jobs, it makes them, but only if nations invest enough capital to make effective use of it: "A country with a low level of capital stock relative to labour will not benefit as much from technical progress as a country with a high level of capital relative to labour"³¹⁷.

While economists have always assumed that technology primarily augmented the value of labour or of labour and capital equally, through the analysis of Boskin and Lau, the technical progress augments the value of capital. However, in using technology to increase productivity, we think of technology as embodied in produced capital. However technology can "be disembodied, potentially enhancing the productivity of many different inputs used in production"³¹⁸ where it may consist of shared understandings and procedures. Capital is that which is capable to reproduce itself using labour, where the employee has a machine. Through this process, an added value is produced, which is then reinvested.

Another aspect of this characteristic is that capital is linked to an economic actor who occupies a particular economic position in relation to other economic actors, and who makes an economic decision. Capital resides in a relationship or network between individuals. It is a concept that embodies processes and is dynamic. Nowadays, "like physical capital and technological know-how, the human capital embodied in a population at any moment in time is part of the productive capacity of an economy"³¹⁹. To this effect, capital embodies past mental effort, as well as past physical effort. Thus capital is the enabler of the production process and/or to add more value to the process than if labour were used alone. Capital facilitates the creation of value.

³¹⁶ M. BOSKIN; L. LAU, "Capital, Technology and Economic Growth", in *Technology and the Wealth of Nations*, edited by Nathan ROSENBERG, Ralph LANDAU and David MOWERY, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1992, 17-55.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

³¹⁸ N. R. GOODWIN, "Five Kinds of Capital: Useful concepts for Sustainable Development", 9.

³¹⁹ L. NOISET, "Commentary: An expanded concept of capital in Development Economics", 203.

5.6 Capital and the production process

As Dean correctly questioned: What role does “capital” fulfil in the economic system? What processes does the concept explain?³²⁰ As already pointed out above, capital is distinct and distinguishable from other factors of production that is land and labour. To the notion of capital Adam Smith added another notable aspect; “capital became more or less synonymous with tools of production (defined as produced factors of production), tools which were considered by many researchers as being the ‘real’ manifestation of capital”³²¹. Early industrial age economists, such as Smith, used the concept of capital largely in terms of ‘circulating capital’ – that is, to embody stock in trade and work in progress, where capital is complementary to labour in production process. In the twentieth century debate focused on how capital behaved – its relationship to, and interaction with, other productive resources, other “factors of production”. For our purpose capital is put to use in the production process in a dynamic way to generate a flow of goods and services. Here with “dynamic” we mean that the production process is characterized by progress and constant change, which is not something static but changes through other factors.

5.7 Capital is owned, transferred, or traded

In his famous book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, when dealing with the definitions of capital, Piketty argues that “capital, includes all forms of wealth that individuals (or groups of individuals) can own and that can be transferred or traded through the market on a permanent basis”³²². Moreover, in another instance, Piketty defines capital “as the sum total of nonhuman assets that can be owned and exchanged on some market. Capital includes all forms of real property (including residential real estate) as well as financial and professional capital (plants, infrastructure, machinery, patents, and so on) used by firms and government agencies”³²³. For Piketty capital and wealth are interchangeable. This is the same for Solow, or Cass-Ramsey who in their models viewed capital and wealth as the same thing. The common elements of the two

³²⁰ A. DEAN; M. KRETSCHMER, “Can Ideas be capital?”, 575.

³²¹ A. PATRUTI, “The two conflicting approaches to the concept of capital within economic thought”, 85.

³²² T. PIKETTY, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, 46.

³²³ Id.

definitions as given by Piketty are the aspects related to property and the market, which are other characteristics of capital.

Looking back at the history of economics, the Scottish economist Smith, referring to Turgot's definition of capital as "the saved stock of goods", pointed out that the word goods has two main sub-categories, namely goods which are intended for immediate consumption and goods that are intended to bring an income to their owner. According to Smith, only the second category of goods can correctly be called capital, because only those goods are used in an acquisitive way.

As already pointed above, for Piketty, human capital is excluded from capital as it "cannot be owned by another person or traded on a market"³²⁴ in non-slave societies. However, human capital is essentially composed of the skills, knowledge, abilities, among other attributes of the human being. Even though human capital cannot be owned by another person as people cannot be owned, these skills and abilities are owned by each employee and can be transferred to other companies and also traded on a market. If one takes a look at interviews, most of the times it is the mental, the skills, the abilities and intellectual capabilities, which the employers are looking for.

5.8 Conclusion

Even though throughout the ages there was a development in the concept of capital, as we have seen, there is nevertheless something that does not change. In earlier centuries there were machines and installations. Today there is informatics. However what does not change is the fact that in each case there is wealth which is capable of reproducing itself through the service of labour.

Jon P. Gunnemann, in a chapter in *The True Wealth of Nations* correctly pointed out, "the way one defines and uses the term 'capital' depends on one's purpose"³²⁵. For our purpose and following the study of the above characteristics, we can establish a plausible definition of capital. Capital embodies gradual gathering past productive

³²⁴ T. PIKETTY, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, 46.

³²⁵ J. P. GUNNEMANN, "Capital, Spirit, and Common Wealth", 294.

activity through human added value action, put to use in the production process in a dynamic mode, to facilitate and generate a flow of goods and services, and create value and wealth over time, and which can be used as further capital. It includes all the produced intangibles which are used in the production. Capital is owned, transferred or traded.

The next chapter will deal on the differences between both concepts of wealth as seen in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Furthermore it will treat, not in an exhaustive way the consequences of understanding wealth in a way and not in another for the moral evaluation of decisions. What is the impact on all this? What are the consequences?

Chapter 6

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO CONCEPTS OF WEALTH

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will compare the concept of wealth as outlined in the New Testament, particularly in the Gospel according to Luke, and the concept of wealth in today's world. The comparison will include both the differences and similarities, if any, between the two concepts, while taking into consideration the moral evaluation of understanding wealth in a particular way and not in another.

As outlined in Chapter 4, wealth is created from the land which is precious in itself and provides security. In the 1st century AD society, economics were closely tied to agriculture which was dominated by a patron-client relationship. Such relationships were also closely tied to concepts of honour and shame. In such complex societies; kinship, economics, politics and religion were closely intertwined to provide a complex and wide relationship between the notions of honour and wealth.

In Chapter 5 the following definition of capital was established: Capital embodies the gradual gathering of goods past the productive activity through human added value action, put to use in the production process in a dynamic mode, to facilitate and generate a flow of goods and services, thereby creating value and wealth over time, and which can be used as further capital. It includes all the produced intangibles which are used in production. Capital is owned, transferred or traded.

Having established a definition for 'capital', the study then endeavoured to evaluate whether the understanding of a stock of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke is the same as capital in the modern sense. The two definitions were compared through a series of factors; a summary of which, is provided in the table below. The dynamics of the comparison are meant to contemplate the differences in the concepts of wealth and

whether these differences make the past moral sentences difficult to apply to the new context.

Table 2: Comparison between both concepts of wealth

	Wealth according to the Gospel according to Luke	Wealth as capital in modern sense
type of economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ advanced agricultural ancient political economic system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ capitalism
basis of wealth creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ created and produced from land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ capital
social relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ honour-shame ▪ patron-client relationship ▪ limited-good ▪ zero-sum game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ employer-employee ▪ market-competition ▪ positive-sum game
generating profit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ generation of profit in a limited way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ generate unlimited profit and gain – to generate a flow of goods and services and create value
intertwining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ politics, kinship, economics and religion are intertwined and embedded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ not necessary intertwined
communitarian aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ communitarian/family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ more individual
human work factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ labour effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ human and social capital
ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Caesar and local elites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there is economic freedom
time characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ land is a natural resource – no time factor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ in capital there is a gradual past production ▪ acceleration produced by technology
place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ localised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ globalised

6.2 Comparison

The following is an analysis of both definitions through a comparison of the ten factors, as outlined in Table 2.

6.2.1 Type of economics

The type of economics, put to practice in each of the two settings, provide the framework within which to evaluate an understanding of wealth. This raises the question: “Was the ancient economic system like that of modern, Western, capitalist societies?” The answer to which is negative. The ancient system was agrarian and not industrial. It was also based on the essential bifurcation of its society into aristocrats and peasants. On the other hand; modern capitalist societies focus their energies on capital accumulation.

A close reading of the Gospel according to Luke, guided by social-scientific criticism, revealed that it is not “the rich” per se, who were criticised in the Gospel but rather the abuses inherent in the ancient patronal system as well as the values into which both patrons and clients were socialized. Thus, Jesus criticized not the ancient economic system as such but rather the aristocrats on whom the economy was founded. They accumulated “wealth for themselves while denying just redistribution to their poor clients”³²⁶.

Today’s most widely practiced economic system is capitalism. The evolution of this economic system over time has given rise to various forms of capitalism. The aim of this study is not however, to delve into the history and the types of capitalism. The main feature of capitalism is a system of capital accumulation, where capital is used to produce more capital. Hence seizure of capital accumulation causes crises within the system. Another feature of capitalism is profit making. Thus, the key characteristics of capitalism are not to be identified with those of a market system. This is because the latter is essentially a system of exchanges. Furthermore, as Porritt argues “markets

³²⁶ J. A. SZUKALSKI, *Tormented in Hades: The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and other Lucan Parables for Persuading the Rich to Repentance*, Picwick Publications, Eugene/OR, 2013, 35.

existed long before the emergence of capitalism, and even today can and do exist without capitalism”³²⁷. On a different note, Porritt argues that “the opposite is not true: capitalism cannot exist without the marketplace as the principal mechanism for the exchange of goods and services”³²⁸. This is not always the case however. For instance, capitalism of the State in communist countries, reigns supremely even though it has neither a market, nor private property.

Although the bases of the two economies are different, there seems to be a similarity between those who control them. In ancient times, the aristocrats controlled the economy whereas today, 1% of the world population owns almost half of the world’s wealth³²⁹.

This factor of type of economics provides solid foundations for the comparison of the two definitions in light of the remaining factors.

6.2.2 Basis of wealth creation

Wealth in the Gospel according to Luke is created and produced from land because land can be transformed into food by human work. Thus, land is precious and it gives security. For the elite in the Gospel, land reaped money which in turn reaped power and privilege.³³⁰ In comparison to this, today’s basis of wealth is no longer land but capital. Even though land is still somewhat valuable nowadays, a quick glance at the world economic figures shows that other aspects, mainly capital, are the basis for wealth.

This is particularly evident in trading in OTC (over-the-counter) interest rate derivatives markets, the interest rate swaps, trading in foreign exchange markets, the FX swaps, and much more. It is estimated that the value of all goods and services

³²⁷ J. PORRITT, *Capitalism: As if the World Matters*, Earthscan, London-Washington/DC, 2011, 90.

³²⁸ Id.

³²⁹ OXFAM, “Working for the few”, https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp-working-for-few-political-capture-economic-inequality-200114-en_3.pdf (accessed 15 November 2015).
CREDIT SUISSE, *Global Wealth Report 2015*, <http://publications.credit-suisse.com/tasks/render/file/?fileID=F2425415-DCA7-80B8-EAD989AF9341D47E> (accessed 15 November 2015).

³³⁰ Cf. P. BROWN, *Through the eye of a needle: wealth, the fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550AD*, Princeton University Press, Princeton-Oxford, 2012, 3.

produced in the world amounted to \$75 trillion in 2013³³¹ whereas the financial market with regards to securitized derivatives and to trading in foreign exchange markets was between 8 and 25 times the value of all goods and services respectively³³². Furthermore, an interesting study by the World Bank, *Where is the Wealth of Nations?*, finds out that 78% of the world's wealth resides in intangible capital, which according to this study includes human capital, social capital, and other factors such as the quality of institutions.³³³

This paradigm shift and the change of the basis, is acknowledged by Pope John Paul II, in his 1991 social Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* in which he pointed out that:

Whereas at one time the decisive factor of production was *the land*, and later capital — understood as a total complex of the instruments of production — today the decisive factor is increasingly *man himself*, that is, his knowledge, especially his scientific knowledge, his capacity for interrelated and compact organization, as well as his ability to perceive the needs of others and to satisfy them.³³⁴

Although the definition of capital in the quoted paragraph differs from the definition of capital established in this study, the Pope's emphasis on the importance of intellectual capital is in line with our understanding. Intellectual capital is further discussed in one of the subsequent sections, titled; Human work factor. Further into the same Encyclical Letter, the Pope points out that "in our time, in particular, there exists another form of ownership which is becoming no less important than land: *the possession of know-how, technology and skill*. The wealth of the industrialized nations is based much more on this kind of ownership than on natural resources"³³⁵. This sheds light on how our definition of wealth in modern sense vis-à-vis capital excludes natural capital from the equation.

³³¹ THE WORLD BANK, "World Development Indicators database", <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/GDP.pdf>, 4 (accessed 1 July 2015).

³³² BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENTS, *Triennial Central Bank Survey OTC interest rate derivatives turnover in April 2013: preliminary global results*, <http://www.bis.org/publ/rpfx13ir.pdf>, 3 (accessed 1 November 2015). Trading in OTC interest rate derivatives markets averaged \$2.3 trillion per day. This results in approximately \$600 trillion in a particular year, which is 8 times of the \$75 trillion. BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENTS, *Triennial Central Bank Survey, Foreign exchange turnover in April 2013: preliminary global results*, <http://www.bis.org/publ/rpfx13fx.pdf>, 3 (accessed 1 November 2015). Trading in foreign exchange markets averaged \$5.3 trillion per day. This results in approximately \$1900 trillion in a particular year, which is 25 times of the \$75 trillion.

³³³ THE WORLD BANK, *Where is the wealth of the nations? Measuring Capital for the 21st Century*, World Bank, Washington/DC, 2006, 4.

³³⁴ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 32. Emphasis in the original.

³³⁵ *Id.*

All this has profound implications on Catholic Social teaching as Charles E. Curran correctly argues that:

Contemporary Catholic social teaching grounds the universal and social destiny of the goods in the doctrine of creation itself. God created the world to serve the needs of all of God's people, not just a few. God put into the world what is necessary to supply the basic needs of all who have been created. There is a significant problem, however, with such a grounding of the teaching that material goods exist to serve the needs of all. Such an approach betrays an older, more agriculturally based world and does not really deal with property and material goods as we know them today. The universal destiny of the goods of creation to serve the needs of all implies that the Creator put into the world natural resources that human beings could then tap into through their labour. These natural resources – such as earth, rain and sun – provide the basic material that human beings use to produce food, clothing and shelter. Human beings cultivate the God-given natural resources to produce goods and wealth.³³⁶

He then proceeds to evolve his argument further, by pointing out that there is a paradigm shift in the basis of wealth. He stated that:

The production of material goods and wealth, today, however, has little or no dependence on natural or created goods. The computer age only intensifies what has been happening in the past 200 years. The production of wealth depends primarily and to an overwhelming degree on human skills, creativity, and entrepreneurship, together with good old-fashioned hard work and discipline. Because the production of wealth and material goods does not depend on the natural goods of creation, the universal and social nature of material goods based on creation does not really apply to material goods and wealth produced today. With a greater emphasis on human creativity, co-creation, and entrepreneurship, it seems that the individual is more and more the source of what she or he makes or produces in terms of goods, services, and wealth.³³⁷

6.2.3 Social relationship

As has been explained, in the first century AD, the social values in the economy were honour and shame. Honour was another form of wealth. This social value was exhibited in patron-client relationships, which was inherently unequal. In spite of this, there were benefits to this relationship. "Patrons have instrumental, economic, and political resources and can offer clients support and protection. Clients, in turn, can offer non-tangible resources such as solidarity and loyalty and provide an outlet for public expressions of generosity that enhance the patron's honour"³³⁸. In the Gospel according to Luke, this was highlighted in the parable of the dishonest steward in which the master, whose wealth was originally doing him no good in the honour-shame system,

³³⁶ C. E. CURRAN, *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present, A Historical, theological and ethical analysis*, Georgetown University Press, Washington/DC, 2002, 181.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 181-182

³³⁸ J. A. SZUKALSKI, *Tormented in Hades*, 35.

was pleasantly surprised when the manager had shrewdly converted the wealth into public acclaim.

Today's social framework is market-competition. The social relationship, especially within an enterprise, is an employer-employee relationship in a competitive framework, even though nowadays various enterprises are trying to practice diverse business models and managerial styles. There is a move towards the fact that both the employee and the employer "have workplace rights and responsibilities"³³⁹ and more importantly; they both benefit from the right "participate actively in the decisions which affect their lives"³⁴⁰. This differs greatly from the 1st century patron-client relationship that has been previously outlined. Today, people no longer harbour the same perspective about the client who offers solidarity, loyalty and enhancement of the patron's name.

The honour and shame values worked well for a limited-good economy. In the first century economy, the zero-sum game was viable, because the land was the main source of wealth. There was a fixed amount of land divided into private parcels and this provided a static view of the world. As the paradigm shifted from the basis of one source of wealth to another, capitalism started shaping itself. In an industrial and informational economy, a zero-sum game is no longer viable and is inevitably replaced by a positive-sum game. Although there is widespread belief that the economic pie is fixed, it is not accurate to make such a generalised conclusion because wealth is constantly being created rather than merely distributed. In dynamic open economies, such as capitalism, wealth is not static as the pie grows. This creates a win-win situation for all the players in which the total gain, that is the sum of winnings and losses, is overall positive.

Today's major value is competition. If there is a market, there will be competitors in which firms, products and people can enter and exit freely. Competition and choice go together in a choice-competition paradigm. When a firm ceases to be the people's choice, the firm ceases to stay in business. Without this context, one is deprived of freedom of choice. This leads to the fact that in circumstances where freedom of choice is present, the individuals who have something to offer will compete. A classic example

³³⁹ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (LE), n 16-20.

³⁴⁰ Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (GS), n 67-68.

would be when a particular individual offers a higher payment than another individual for a product or service on the market. Contrary to competition is monopoly. A monopoly firm owns its markets and set its own prices, while producing with a combination of price and quantity for profit maximization. This leads us to conclude that an economy based on land is much easier to be a monopolistic economy rather than an economy based on the individual creation of value. There is less freedom of choice in the former situation where land control and ownership are highly concentrated amongst the ruling ancient elites who in turn make it their mission to block any entry points other people could use to obtain honour³⁴¹. Moreover, as Moxnes points out, a patron, in a patron-client relationship, “has a monopoly on certain positions and resources that are of vital importance for his client”³⁴².

At the same time, one notices that competition in the NT agricultural world was fundamental external to the system. Wealth was used to have armies to take control of more land, which in turn increased prestige, privilege and power. In the modern world, competition is internal: there is competition in accumulating more capital, for which capital is used. This leads to an economic dynamic that did not exist before: success in the accumulation of capital leads to greater capital accumulation, whereas in the past, success in war led to further accumulation of land. This was the case in the difference between the Netherlands and Spain economy in the 17th century. Spain held an old concept of accumulation of wealth: land was conquered and mines were exploited looking for silver and gold. On the other hand, the Netherlands developed a pre-capitalist economy in which wealth was used to create new means of production, where more wealth was produced. When the 18th century technological revolution occurred, it was evident of which of the two nations was stronger.

³⁴¹ Cf. D. E. OAKMAN, “The Ancient Economy”, 130.

³⁴² H. MOXNES, *The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke’s Gospel*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1988, 42.

6.2.4 Generating profit

In line with this, when studying the Gospel according to Luke in Chapter 4, it was noted that F4 is the typical function of money in capitalism; that is reproducing itself as capital. Risk is taken to generate profit. Following the examination carried out in Chapter 4, the extent to which this function is present or absent in the Gospel according to Luke could be determined thereby addressing one of the main objectives of this study.

Whilst carrying out a detailed analysis of the Gospel according to Luke, in Chapter 4, three parables were selected for a more thorough examination due to their relatability to this study. In the parable of the rich fool, the investment made to build new large barns was not to generate profit but for consumption and future security, which is not as such an F4. In the parable of the dishonest manager, the landlord is not concerned about the manager's profit but with the decline in the landlord's expected yield. The third and last parable that was studied in greater depth is the parable of the pounds. In this parable the head of the household leaves home to increase his investments. Meanwhile, two of his servants manage to successfully negotiate and provide gain on the pound he left in their responsibility. The third servant however, hides it and did not invest it in a bank, not even to secure a low profit margin, as pointed out in the socio-scientific study. It transpires that the use of the F4 function of money in the Gospel according to Luke was limited.

Today's sense of capital is connected to generate unlimited profit and gain, contrary to the limited way of generating profit in the ancient economy under study through the Gospel according to Luke. For instance, in financial services there exist the "short futures"³⁴³ with an unlimited profit following a fall in the price of an underlying. The future trader stands to unlimited profit as long as the asset price goes down. Furthermore, the buyer of a put³⁴⁴ has unlimited potential gain, which comes from the

³⁴³ A financial contract obligating the buyer to purchase an asset (or the seller to sell an asset), such as a physical commodity or a financial instrument, at a predetermined future date and price

³⁴⁴ A put is a form of option contract where the option holder has the right to sell an underlying asset at a specified date for a specified price

stocks' unlimited downside potential. Depending on the amount of profit desired, there is a connection between capital and risk, ranging from low to high risk.

6.2.5 Intertwining

The politics, kinship, economics and religion in the ancient economy were intertwined and embedded whereas in capitalism the economy is “an abstracted domain that directs exchange toward individual maximization of returns or profit”³⁴⁵. The agrarian system was rooted in political or kinship contexts and not in independent institutions.

In fact, the ancients did not discuss the economy and economic issues in the way the moderns do. Ancient economies were more political economies. The institutions were interrelated and cannot be distinguished. The situation is generally that of compartmentalization in today's world. Whilst appealing for a world-wide authority in his encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI, argues for a non-detachment of the economic and political realms:

Every economic decision has a moral consequence. The social sciences and the direction taken by the contemporary economy point to the same conclusion. Perhaps at one time it was conceivable that first the creation of wealth could be entrusted to the economy, and then the task of distributing it could be assigned to politics. Today that would be more difficult, given that economic activity is no longer circumscribed within territorial limits, while the authority of governments continues to be principally local.³⁴⁶

Every form of capitalism operates within an appropriate political and societal framework, and in this respect, quite often the institutions are not necessarily intertwined. Separate spheres exist especially with regards to religion. On the other hand, politics and economics are at times intertwined with the term political economy. This is because decisions made in politics are bound to have an effect in economy.

³⁴⁵ F. MCCORMACK; K. BARCLAY, “Insights on Capitalism from Oceania”, in *Engaging with capitalism: cases from Oceania* edited by Fiona MCCORMACK, Kate BARCLAY, Emerald, Bingley, 2013, 14.

³⁴⁶ BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 37. Emphasis in text.

6.2.6 Communitarian aspect

Human beings live in societies, which are anything but abstract in their composition. Explaining certain social phenomena requires a view of the whole picture rather than just the sum of its parts. In fact, “most of the wealth and material goods produced today come from individual and group creativity and initiative”³⁴⁷. Due to the fact that we are social beings, wealth also has a social dimension that requires the owners to consider the common good in the use of capital. In the 1st century AD view of wealth, the communitarian aspect was highly present. The definition of wealth that has been acquired from the Gospel according to Luke for the purpose of this study emphasises kinship relations and family households, where the community might be a family unit. In the modern sense, the communitarian aspect is far more concerned with the interactions among individuals in a given location or the sharing of a common interest in trading as well as the transfer of capital.

6.2.7 Human work factor

The human person must be accredited and allowed to retain a central position in this attempt to compare an economy based on our concept of capital from the industrial revolution to date and an economy based on the ancient notion of wealth. Similar treatment should be given to human work since this is an activity of the same human person. Human work in the 1st century AD society was of high importance. Through human work, land was transformed creating wealth in the process.

As the economic perspective changed over the years, human work started to be viewed as both a productive factor and a cost. The trend to minimise cost led to a greater investment in machinery and technology rather than in the employment of human beings. There is a trend to automate the processes without involving human work, but without human work there is no advancement in capital. It is true that the use of technology boosts efficiency and makes work easier; however behind every creative idea there is a human being who is using his capabilities and skills to create wealth in a

³⁴⁷ C. E. CURRAN, *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present*, 182.

different way, such as the financial instruments. Everything that is at the service of work, including modern technology, is within itself the result of human work. A characteristic of modern capital is the ability to strengthen human work in its capacity for an added value. While in the first century transformation was mostly acquired through physical, manual work, nowadays it is more frequently acquired through human and social capital. Human capital involves the skills, competences, knowledge and other attributes embodied in individuals.³⁴⁸ Social capital focuses on “networks, norms and trust, and the way these allow agents and institutions to be more effective in achieving common objectives”³⁴⁹.

6.2.8 Ownership

Land, which was considered to be a source of wealth in first-century Palestine, was directly or indirectly under the political control of Caesar or the local elite of Palestine who acted as Roman agents³⁵⁰. Property tended to be in the hands of fewer large landowners or a bureaucracy that ran the country, at the expense of peasants. As Rostovtzeff notes, “the land was owned by men who were not themselves experts in agriculture but were townsmen for whom land was a form of investment”³⁵¹. This means the economic freedom was lacking.

In today’s world, whoever owns capital enjoys great economic freedom, as there exist opportunities that allow one to undertake the necessary economic actions. One is free to enter the market as an investor or a producer. Moreover, capital is not solely owned by the wealthy few. It is also distributed amongst a large number of individuals who are not as financially established and are not necessarily experts in the field. The owner of capital has the right of control, even after seeking professional advice, regarding how capital is to be used by taking the necessary production or investment decisions, of increasing, maintaining or decreasing the capital. What must be kept in mind however is

³⁴⁸ OECD, *Human Capital Investment: An International Comparison*, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, Paris, 1998, 9.

³⁴⁹ T. SCHULLER, “The Complementary Roles of Human and Social Capital”, <http://www.oecd.org/innovation/research/1825424.pdf> 4 (accessed on 15 November 2015).

³⁵⁰ Cf. D. E. OAKMAN, “The Countryside in Luke-Acts”, 164.

³⁵¹ M. I. ROSTOVITZEFF, *The Social & Economic History of the Roman Empire*, Biblio-Moser, 1926, 297.

that capital cannot be reinvested once the decision to consume it is taken. Thus wealth is generated in the form of “capital”, through capital accumulation.

6.2.9 Time characteristic

Another factor is the time characteristic. Our definition of capital, which is the source of today’s wealth, includes the characteristic of gradual past production. On the other hand, land which is portrayed as a source of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke is a natural resource and does not have the characteristic of past production. Land includes only the result of past and present human activity, and is not in itself past produced. It is for this very reason that it was not included in our definition of capital.

The comparison has to be made between land and modern accumulated capital aided by technology, as the accumulation of capital is being accelerated by technology. Two interrelated dynamics are present here, namely; capital and technology. Investment is made to accumulate capital. Investment is also made to develop new technology. In fact, for this reason Heidegger calls technology the *Ge-Stell*, translated as “enframing” or “set-up”. As Karabarounis and Neiman wrote in a paper, these interrelations between capital and technology are causing a shift in labour. The two explained how “the decrease in the relative price of investment goods, often attributed to advances in information technology and the computer age, induced firms to shift away from labour and toward capital”³⁵². Hence, technology is enhancing in the profitability of capital.

6.2.10 Place of generating wealth

The last factor to be considered is the place where wealth is generated. Wealth generated in the first century was generally confined to a certain space, such as Palestine in the case of the Gospel according to Luke. This is due to the obvious fact that neither land nor its properties can ever be transferred from a place to another. Although, as discussed in Chapter 3, the main source of wealth in the 1st century AD was

³⁵² L. KARABAROUNIS, B. NEIMAN, *The Global decline of the labor share*, <http://faculty.chicagobooth.edu/brent.neiman/research/KN.pdf> (accessed 15 November 2015).

land, there were also merchants who generated wealth by transporting the goods reaped from one location to another location where they could be exchanged or sold.

Today, capital is extensively spread within a globalised world and an era of global corporate competition. Effectively, capital is less attached to a particular place or more accurately, territory. This is in fact highlighted in CV 37, which has also been quoted in one of the preceding sections. CV 37 exclaims that today the “economic activity is no longer circumscribed within territorial limits”³⁵³. The owner of capital is rightfully a citizen of the world where it is easy and seamless to move capital. Thus, capital mobility is far more extensive than it was in the first century, as land is not mobile, whereas capital is. However, definitive perfect capital mobility does not exist as there are various restrictions including tariffs, taxes, foreign exchange control and volatility.

6.3 Conclusion

Personal ethics are often assumed. In fact some harbour the idea that the Bible is all about human nature which has remained essentially the same. This is not always the case for contemporary social issues, however. Frequent speculations arise about the applicability of the ideas and solutions provided in the New Testament where contemporary social issues are concerned especially when one takes into consideration the drastic changes that are occurring in society. Some argue in favour of following the NT personal ethics as far as circumstances allow, whilst making some compromises when these are absolutely necessary and inevitable. As a result, uncertainties arise regarding the place of the NT in forming a Christian social consciousness.³⁵⁴

Following our analysis and discussion about the differences between the two concepts of wealth, two questions are in order, namely; why and at what point do the phrases on wealth in the Gospel according to Luke apply to today’s situations when there is a paradigm shift from land to a modern concept of capital as the source of wealth.

³⁵³ BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 37.

³⁵⁴ Cf. R. LONGENECKER, *New Testament Social Ethics*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI, 1984, ix.

Through our study, we have experienced another culture (Chapter 2 and 3), interpreted the Bible texts through a socio-scientific approach (Chapter 4), summarised the characteristics of capital (Chapter 5), and discussed the differences between both concepts in the first part of this chapter. Through hermeneutics we can possibly derive an answer to the first question, that is why do the phrases on wealth serve to today's reality. Hermeneutics are essentially the science and art of interpretation and whilst they do not provide simple answers, they do however suggest a way forward. Better still, it must be kept in mind that, this is not biblical fundamentalism to do exactly what is thought. The way forward is to read the views (as done in Chapters 2, 3 and 4), compare them with the ones held at present (Chapter 5), and discern what those texts mean in light of our type of economics.

The statements on wealth, especially those quoted in the Gospel according to Luke, are not to be considered out of context, or as a trivial matter. Statements are to be interpreted in relation to the whole Gospel's message and in relation to the Bible's message as well, since this is where and when theology and ethics become intricately bound together. Furthermore, judgments about the ancient texts are to be made within their own context. We may conclude that a statement does not provide us with adequate analysis, or that something is not morally accepted today. However, at the same time, we stand "under this tradition [Christian living tradition] and its texts and thus we have a responsibility to attend to the views articulated there that critique our own assumptions and relationships"³⁵⁵, in order to shape our views.

Furthermore, biblical ethics are of "the nature of a response to a holy and loving God"³⁵⁶; they "reflect a different value system than do those ethical systems which spring only from social needs"³⁵⁷. However, at the same time, the statements are always set in relational contexts. The moral statements are not expressed or received in isolation. Thus, in this case, wealth is more than an economic measure. For the American biblical scholar, Green; "wealth is intricately spun together with issues of status, power, and social privilege. Wealth is a way of life. Wealth is relational. For this

³⁵⁵ D. K. FINN, *Christian Economic Ethics: History and implications*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2013, 28.

³⁵⁶ R. LONGENECKER, *New Testament Social Ethics*, 10.

³⁵⁷ Id.

reason, issues of wealth are inescapable for the people of God, according to Luke”³⁵⁸. Issues of wealth are inescapable for all the people of God in today’s economic situation. The statements on wealth are an indication of the direction we are to take, stemming from the teachings and examples of Jesus, and applied to specific, present circumstances through discernment and direction of the Holy Spirit, who is love.

The width of the gaps between the original hearers and us today cannot be determined until the text is understood within its social context, time, setting, geography, language and culture as well as what it meant to the original hearers. These differences must then be taken into account when attempting to apply the statements. With regards to the gaps, bridges can be built to connect converging elements in order to make the statements on wealth applicable to this day and age.

As has been previously indicated, the second and last question is concerned with the degree of relevance that the statements on wealth in the Gospel according to Luke carry, now that the paradigm has shifted to better fit today’s realities. One must primarily establish whether the differences identified in the comparison between both concepts of wealth hinder the applicability of the past moral biblical sentences to the present context. In an attempt to answer this question as concisely as possible, the nine factors outlined in Table 2, must primarily be divided into categories. Furthermore, it is of utmost importance to exclude the type of economics from the equation as this point provides the framework within which to evaluate the understanding of wealth. There is a general agreement that it is not possible to place all the moral statements found in the Bible on the same level, nor can there be an equal attribution to all of the examples about morality presented in the Scriptures³⁵⁹. Inspired by this; with discernment, prudence and caution, the nine factors shall be divided into three categories according to how easy, fair or difficult it is to apply them to today’s reality. Extensive analysis of the difficult factors and the impact they have on the relevance of the statements to today’s situation are points for future studies.

³⁵⁸ J. B. GREEN, “Wealthy...who me”, 19.

³⁵⁹ Cf. PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, “The Bible and Morality, Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct”, n. 150.

The factors that I, as the researcher would place in the low difficulty category are:

- 1) Intertwining. Since politics and economics were intertwined in the ancient economy and are still intertwined in modern economy to some extent. The way they intertwine with religion however, is no longer constant. In ancient times economy intertwined with religion, whereas nowadays religion dialogues with economics. Nations' wealth is emerging as partially dependent on seemingly abstract concerns like theology - and sometimes on quite nuanced points of belief or religious fervour"³⁶⁰.
- 2) Place of creating wealth. Whether wealth is created localised or globalised, the effect is more on a political sphere rather than an economic one.
- 3) Communitarian aspect. The only apparent difference influencing this aspect, is the kind of interactions people had in the first century as opposed to the ones people have today. Nowadays, people no longer restrict themselves to interactions within the family; they also interact with people who harbour similar interests.

The following factors have been rated as, fairly difficult to apply, namely:

- 1) Social relationships. Even though there are some differences in the way honour and also the monopoly issue were viewed in the 1st century, there are still some reminiscences in today's world. The difference between zero-sum and positive-sum game is more important. However, in comparing land, which is in itself static, to capital, which is not something fixed; it is not a strict like-with-like comparison, as land in itself could not be expanded. This does make it fairly difficult for one to apply the moral statements as having something fixed that could not be expanded, is totally different from having something which, like capital, can get bigger, simply by being invested.
- 2) Human work factor. The major difference between both time-frames is the importance given to the presence of the human work factor. While in the ancient economy, labour was highly present, today it has diminished, albeit not to the extent of an automation of capital from labour. The application of moral

³⁶⁰ M. FITZGERALD, "Satan, the great motivator: the curious economic effects of religion", *Boston.com*, 15 November 2009, http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2009/11/15/the_curious_economic_effects_of_religion/?page=1 (accessed 15 November 2015).

statements in light of the differences between physical manual labour and knowledge, skills and other attributes appears to be of medium difficulty when compared to the applicability of the other factors.

- 3) Ownership. The main difference between the two time-frames in this regard, is that economic freedom was highly lacking in the first century whereas today's people enjoy utmost economic freedom.
- 4) Time characteristic. The emergence and evolution of technology which accelerated capital, poses major difficulties in the application of statements in light of this factor. This is because in the ancient economy there was no such technology.

Last but not least, the most difficult factors to apply are:

- 1) Basis of wealth creation. This factor is far more difficult to apply since the basis has changed. There is a paradigm shift with a fundamental change in the underlying assumption - from having land as the main source of wealth in the Gospel according to Luke to having capital in today's understanding of wealth.
- 2) Generating profit. From our study of the Gospel according to Luke, it transpired that profit generation in the first century was very limited. On the contrary, profit generation in today's world is unlimited and also the presence of the fact that the generating profit function nowadays is neither limited.

In spite of the different difficulties outlined above regarding the application of the moral statements to today's situation, there is still relevance of the moral biblical statements with regards to wealth in the Gospel according to Luke, especially in the symbolic and transcendental discourse. At the same time, the actualization of the Bible needs the contemporary act of the Holy Spirit. Here, the community is an essential element in the interpretation of the Bible, being the primary source within which the word is actualized. However, more cooperation and dialogue is needed at the level of hermeneutics between biblical scholars, moral theologians, economists and other disciplines, in an interdisciplinary approach, to avoid irrelevance and at the same time secure enrichment of moral theology as a Christian theological discipline.

6.4 Future direction for studies

At last, we would like to indicate some points for possible future studies. Following these pages in this dissertation there are other various questions that need to be addressed. The following are some of them:

- As we have studied, there is a paradigm shift in the basis and source of wealth, from land to capital. What dialogue is needed in those difficult areas of applying the biblical moral statements to today's economic framework? Furthermore, the differences in the concepts of wealth, can affect Catholic Social Teaching (CST). Does this paradigm shift is duly reflected in Catholic Social Teaching? Does the basis of certain principles of CST need to be changed to reflect today's situation?
- There is also the theoretical issue of the differences between wealth and related terms and the impact of all this on CST and the way Pope's statements are pronounced. This is an epistemological question of pointing out to a term (such as wealth, money, affluence, richness, profit) when it has a different meaning in an economic situation, while risking the non-dialogue and non-encounter with the economic world as there are no common grounds.
- Although a general point was made regarding capitalism, we did not delve deeply into the contemporary capitalism and whether some principles and points are in conflict with the Gospel's views or teachings on wealth. On the same lines, if there are conflicting views, further studies need to be carried out on how to reconcile and dialogue on these aspects.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLE

Bible NRSV (New Revised Standard Version), <https://biblia.com/books/nrsv/Lk1.1>

La Biblia TOB (Traduction Oecumenique de la Bible), Elledici, 2010.

COUNCIL, PAPAL, PONTIFICAL, VATICAN, BISHOPS' CONFERENCE SOURCES

VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*,
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (accessed 15 November 2015).

BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*,
http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html (accessed 15 November 2015).

JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html (accessed 15 November 2015).

JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html (accessed 15 November 2015).

JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html (accessed 15 November 2015).

PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, "The Bible and Morality, Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct",
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20080511_bibbia-e-morale_en.html (accessed 19 March 2015).

PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church",
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/PBCINTER.HTM> (accessed 13 March 2015), [Introduction].

PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church",
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/PBCINTER.HTM> (accessed 13 March 2015), [Introduction].

UNITED STATES CATHOLIC BISHOPS, "Economic Justice for all", 1986, available online:
http://www.usccb.org/upload/economic_justice_for_all.pdf (accessed 13 March 2015).

OTHER SOURCES:

ADCNIYI ADCWALC, Olubiyi, "An Afro-Sociological Application of the Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16,19-31)", *BT* 4/1 (2006), 27-43.

ALEXANDER, Loveday, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1*, (SNTSMS 78), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

ALFORD, Helen et al, "The Nature of Wealth: Introduction", in *Rediscovering Abundance: Interdisciplinary Essays on Wealth, Income, and Their Distribution in the Catholic Social Tradition*, edited by Helen ALFORD et al, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame/IN, 2006, 1-22.

ALLEN, Ronald L., "Beyond the Ambiguity of Wealth", *The Living Pulpit* April-June 2003, 20-21.

APPELBAUDM, Shimon, "Judea as a Roman Province: The Countryside as a Political and Economic Factor", *ANRW* 2/8 (1977), 355-396.

ARENS, Eduardo, *Asia Menor en tiempos de Pablo, Lucas y Juan, Aspectos sociales y económicos para la comprensión del Nuevo Testamento*, Ediciones el Almendro, Cordoba, 1995.

BAERGEN, Rudy, "The Motif of the Renunciation of Possessions in the Gospel of Luke", *The Conrad Grebel Review* 11 (1993), 233-247.

BAILEY, Kenneth E., *Poet and Peasant: A Literary Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI, 1976.

BALCH, David L. "Rich and Poor, Proud and Humble in Luke-Acts", in *The Social World of the First Christians: essays in honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, edited by L. Michael WHITE, O. Larry YARBROUGH, Fortress, 1995, 214-233.

BARTUSCH, Mark W., *Understanding Dan: An Exegetical Study of a Biblical City, Tribe and Ancestor*, Sheffield Academic Press, London, 2003.

BITTASI, Stefano, "Usare la Bibbia nella riflessione sociale: una proposta", *Aggiornamenti Sociali* 12 (2010), 755-764.

BÖHM-BAWERK, Eugen V., *Capital and Interest*, Libertarian Press, South Holland, 1959.

BÖHM-BAWERK, Eugen V., *Capital and interest: A critical history of economical theory*, 1890, available online:

<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/bawerk/Capital/index.html> (accessed 1 October 2015).

BOHM-BAWERK, Eugen V., *The positive theory of capital*, G E Stechert, New York, 1930.

BOSKIN, Michael J; LAU, Lawrence J., "Capital, Technology and Economic Growth", in *Technology and the Wealth of Nations*, edited by Nathan ROSENBERG, Ralph LANDAU and David MOWERY, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1992, 17-55.

BRAUN, Adam F., "Reframing the Parable of the Pounds in Lukan Narrative and Economic Context: Luke 19:11-28", *Currents in Theology and Mission* 39/6 (2012), 442-8.

BREECH, James, *The Silence of Jesus*, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1983.

BROWN, Peter, *Through the eye of a needle: wealth, the fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550AD*, Princeton University Press, Princeton-Oxford, 2012.

BUSTO Saiz, José Ramón, "Los Bienes terrenales del evangelio de Lucas", Alonso Schökel, 11 de diciembre 2014, <http://catalogo.media.upcomillas.es/Mediasite/Play/4215a332401044a6a4a4af0bbd9a33e71d> (accessed 13 March 2015).

CABELLO MORALES, Pedro, "*Tened Cuidado y guardaos te toda codicia*". *Hacia una interpretación conciliadora del tema riqueza-pobreza en Lc-Hch a partir del análisis socio-retorico de Lc 12, 13-34*, Editorial Verbo Divino, Navarra, 2011.

CAMACHO ACOSTA, Fernando, "Jesús, el dinero y la riqueza", *Isidoriarum* (Sevilla) 6 (1997), 393-415.

CANTERBERY, E. Ray, *A Brief History of Economics: Artful Approaches to the Dismal Science*, World Scientific Publishing, Singapore, 2011.

CÁRDENAS PALLARES, José, "De cómo ganarle a Don dinero (Lc 16,1-13)", *EfMex* 18 (2000) 79-91.

CARNEY, Thomas, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity*, Coronado Press, Lawrence/KS, 1975.

CLARK, Charles M. A., "Economic Life in Catholic Social Thought and Economic Theory, *Reflections on Compendium Chapter 7*," in *Catholic Social Thought: American Reflections on the Compendium*, edited by D. Paul SULLINS; Anthony J. BLASI, MD Lexington Books, Lanham, 2009, 77-99.

CLARK, Charles M. A., "From *The Wealth of Nations* to *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples): Wealth and Development from the Perspective of the Catholic Social Thought Tradition", *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 71/4 (2012), 1047-1072.

CLARK, Charles M. A., "Promoting Good Wealth: CST and the link between Wealth, Well-Being and Poverty Alleviation", <http://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/johnaryaninstitute/conferences/2015-manila/ClarkBackgroundFinal.pdf> (accessed 10 February 2015).

CLARK, Charles M. A., "Wealth and Poverty: on the Social creation of scarcity", *Journal of Economic Issues* 36/2 (2002), 415-421.

CLARK, Charles M. A., "Wealth as Abundance and Scarcity: Perspectives from Catholic Social Thought and Economic Theory", in *Rediscovering Abundance: Interdisciplinary Essays on Wealth, Income, and Their Distribution in the Catholic Social Tradition*, edited by Helen ALFORD et al, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame/IN, 2006, 28-56.

CLARK, Gregory, *A Farwell to Alms: A brief economic history of the world*, Princeton University Press, 2007.

COMBRINK, Hans J. B., "A social-scientific perspective on the parable of the 'unjust' steward (Lk 16,1-8a)", *Neotestamentica* 30 (1996), 281-306.

CURRAN Charles E.; MCCORMICK Richard A., *Readings in Moral theology No 4: The use of Scripture in Moral theology*, Paulist Press, Ramsey, 1984.

CURRAN, Charles E., *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present, A Historical, theological and ethical analysis*, Georgetown University Press, Washington/DC, 2002.

DE SILVA, David A., "The Parable of the Prudent Steward and Its Lucan Context", *CriswellTheolRev* 6 (1993), 255-268.

- DE STE CROIX, Geoffrey E. M., *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*, Cornell University, Ithaca/NY, 1981.
- DEAN, Alison; KRETSCHMER, M., "Can Ideas be capital? Factors of production in the post-industrial economy: a Review and Critique", *Academy of Management Review* 32/2 (2007), 573-594.
- DEFINA, Roberto H.; WALL, Barabara, "Economic and philosophical reflections on private wealth",
<https://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/johnaryaninstitute/conferences/2005-vatican/DeFinaWall.pdf> (accessed 10 February 2015).
- DERRETT, J. Duncan M., "Law in the New Testament: The Parable of the Talents and Two Logia", *ZNW* 56 (1966), 185-195.
- DONAHUE, John R., "Tax Collectors and Sinners", *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33 (1971), 39-61.
- DOWNES, David J., "Economics, Taxes, and Tithes", in *The world of the New Testament: cultural, social, and historical contexts*, edited by Joel B. GREEN and Lee Martin McDONALD, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids/MI, 2013, 156-68.
- DUNCAN-JONES, Richard P., "Some Configurations of landholding in the Roman Empire", in *Studies in Roman Property*, edited by M. I. FINLEY, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976, 7-33.
- DUNCAN-JONES, Richard. P., *The Economy of the Roman Empire: quantitative studies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1974.
- DURKIN, Jeffrey, "A cultural reading of Luke 16:1-9", *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa* 31/2 (2007), 7-20.
- DVORAK, James D., "John H. Elliott's Social-Scientific Criticism", *Trinity Journal* 28/2 (2007), 251-278.
- ELLIOTT, John, *A home for the homeless: a sociological analysis of 1 Peter, its situation and strategy*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991.
- ELLIOTT, John, *Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament: An introduction*, SPCK, London, 1995.
- ELLIOTT, John, *What is social-scientific criticism?*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1993.
- ENDERLE, Georges, "Business Ethics and Wealth Creation: Is there a Catholic Deficit?", <http://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/johnaryaninstitute/conferences/2003-bilbao/Enderle.pdf> (accessed 10 February 2015).
- ESLER, Philip F., "The Mediterranean Context of Early Christianity", in *The Early Christian World, Vol I-II*, edited by Philip F. ESLER, Routledge, London-New York, 2002, 3-25.
- ESLER, Philip F., *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (SNTSMS 57), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987.
- ESLER, Philip F., *The First Christians in their Social Worlds. Social-scientific approaches to New Testament interpretation*, Routledge, London-New York, 1994.
- FIENSY, David A., "Ancient Economy and the New Testament", in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, edited by Dietmar NEUFELD and Richard E. DEMARIS, Routledge, London-New York, 2010, 194-206.

- FIENSY, David A., *Christian Origins and the Ancient Economy*, James Clarke & Co, Cambridge, 2014.
- FIENSY, David A., *Jesus the Galilean: Soundings in a first century life*, Gorgias Press, Piscataway, 2007.
- FIENSY, David A., *The Social History of Palestine in the Herodian Period: The Land is Mine*, Mellen, Lewiston, 1991.
- FINLEY, Moses I., *Ancient Economy*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1973.
- FINLEY, Moses I., *Land and Credit in Ancient Athens, 500–200 BC*, New York, 1952, reprinted 1973.
- FINN, Daniel, “Preface”, in *Rediscovering Abundance: Interdisciplinary Essays on Wealth, Income, and Their Distribution in the Catholic Social Tradition*, edited by Helen ALFORD et al, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame/IN, 2006, ix-xi.
- FINN, Daniel, *Christian Economic Ethics: History and implications*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2013.
- FISHER, Irving, “What is capital?” *The Economic Journal*, December 1896, 509-618.
- FISHER, Irving, *The Nature of Capital and Income*, Macmillan, New York, 1906.
- FREYNE, Sean, “Herodian Economics in Galilee: Searching for a Suitable Model”, in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context*, edited by Philip F. ESLER, Routledge, London-New York, 1995, 23-46.
- GALE, James R., “A note on Capital as a Concept in Principles of Economics Textbooks”, *Journal of Economics* 30/2 (2004), 97-104.
- GARCÍA FERNÁNDEZ, José. M., *El dinero en la Sagrada Escritura*, Universidad Católica San Antonio, Murcia, 2004.
- GARRETT, Susan R., “Beloved Physician of the Soul? Luke as Advocate for Ascetic Practice”, in *Asceticism and the New Testament*, edited by L.E. VAAGE and V.L. WIMBUSH, Routledge, London, 1999, 71-96.
- GONZALEZ, Justo L. *Faith and Wealth. A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money*, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1990.
- GOODWIN, Neva R., “Five Kinds of Capital: Useful concepts for Sustainable Development”, Global Development and Environment Institute, Tufts University, Medford/MA, http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/publications/working_papers/03-07sustainabledevelopment.pdf (accessed 21 September 2015).
- GOTSIS George N.; MERIANOS, Gerasimos, “Early Christian Representations of the Economy: Evidence from New Testament Texts”, *History and Anthropology* 23/4 (2012), 467-505.
- GREEN, Joel B. (ed.), *Methods for Luke*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.
- GREEN, Joel B., “Wealthy...who me, surprising perspectives on faith and wealth from Luke-acts”, *The Living Pulpit* April-June 2003, 18-19.
- GRILLI, Massimo; LANDGRAVE GANDARA, D.; LANGNER Cordula (eds), *Riqueza y Solidaridad en la Obra de Lucas*, Editorial Verbo Divino, Navarra, 2006.

GUNNEMANN, Jon P., "Capital, Spirit, and Common Wealth" in, *The True Wealth of Nations: Catholic Social Thought and economic life*, edited by Daniel FINN, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, 289-317.

HANSON Kenneth C.; OAKMAN Douglas E., *Palestine in the time of Jesus: Social structures and Social Conflicts*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1998.

HARLAND, Philip A., "The Economy of first-century Palestine: State of the Scholarly Discussion", in *Handbook of Early Christianity Social Science: Social Sciences Approaches*, edited by Anthony BLASI et al, Altamira Press, Walnut Creek-Lanham-New York-Oxford, 2002, 511-527.

HARRINGTON, Daniel. J., "Biblical Perspectives", in *Jesus and virtue ethics: building bridges between new Testament studies and moral theology*, edited by Daniel J. HARRINGTON; James F. KEENAN, Sheed & Ward, Chicago/IL, 2002, 8-13.

HARTSOCK, Chad, "The Healing of the Man with Dropsy (Luke 14:1-6) and the Lukan Landscape", *Biblical Interpretation* 21-3 (2013), 341-354.

HATCHER, Karen M., "In Gold We Trust: The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)", *Review and Expositor* 109 (2012), 277-283.

HAYS, Christopher M., "Beyond Mint and Rue, the implications of Luke's interpretive controversies for modern consumerism", *Political Theology* 11/3 (2010), DOI:10.1558/poth.vlli3.383, 383-398.

HAYS, Christopher M., "Engaging with New Testament Wealth Ethics in the 21st Century: Some Constructive Considerations on Personal Piety and Public Progress", 2013, <http://theceme.org/sites/www.theceme.org/files/Hays%20NT%20Wealth%20Ethics.pdf> (accessed 19 March 2015).

HAYS, Christopher M., "Hating wealth and wives, an examination of discipleship ethics in the third gospel – Luke", *Tyndale Bulletin* 60/1 (2009), 47-68.

HAYS, Christopher M., *Luke's Wealth Ethics: A study in their coherence and character*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2010.

HAYS, Daniel J., "Sell everything you have and give to "the poor": the Old Testament Prophetic Theme of justice as the connecting motif of Luke 18,1-19,10", *JETS* 55/1 (2012), 43-63.

HEEN, Erik M., "Radical Patronage in Luke-Acts", *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33:6 (2006), 445-458.

HERZOG, William R., *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville/KE, 1994.

HOLLENBACH, Paul, "Defining rich and poor using the social sciences", in *Society of Biblical Literature 1987 Seminar Papers*, edited by K. RICHARDS, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, 1987, 30-63.

HORNSBY-SMITH, Michael P., *An introduction to Catholic Social Thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006.

JEREMIAS, Joachim, *The parables of Jesus*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1972.

JOHNSON Luke Timothy; TODD, Charles, *The Writings of The New Testament: An Interpretation*, SCM, London, 1999.

- JOHNSON, Luke Timothy, *Sharing Possessions, What Faith Demands*, William B. Eerdmans Grand Rapids/MI–Cambridge/UK, 2011
- JOHNSON, Luke Timothy, *The Gospel of Luke*, (=Sacra Pagina 3), Liturgical Press, Collegeville/MN, 1991.
- JOHNSON, Luke Timothy, *The life of faith and the faithful use of possessions*, The Centre on Philanthropy at Indiana University, Indianapolis/IN, 2006.
- JOHNSON, Luke Timothy, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts*, Scholars Press, Missoula/MT, 1977.
- KAUTSKY, John H., *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1982.
- KENNEDY, Robert J., "Business and the Common Good", in *Catholic Social Teaching and the Market Economy*, edited by Philip BOOTH, St Pauls, London, 2014.
- KENNEDY, Terence, *Doers of the Word*, St Pauls, London, 2002.
- KERR, Gordon, *Timeline of World History*, Canary Press, 2001, kindle edition.
- KIM, Kyoung-Jin, *Stewardship and almsgiving: a study in Luke's theology of wealth*, PhD thesis, 1998.
- KLOPPENBORG, John S., "The Dishonoured Master (Luke 16:1-8a)", *Biblica* 70/4 (1989), 474-493.
- KRAYBILL, Donald B., "Possessions in Luke-Act: A Sociological Perspective", *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 10 (1983), 215-239.
- KRÜGER, René, "Lucas 16,1-13. La opción decisiva: por la ley de Dios o por la ley del capital", *Cuadernos de Teología* [Buenos Aires] 15 (1996), 97-112.
- LANDRY David T.; MAY Ben, "Honor Restored: New Light on the Parable of the Prudent Steward (Luke 16:1-8a)", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119/2 (2000), 287-309.
- LENSKI, Gerhard E., *Power and privilege: A theory of social stratification*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill/NC, 1966.
- LOADER, William, "Jesus and the Rogue in Luke 16,1-8a: The Parable of the Unjust Steward", *RevBib* 96 (1989), 518-532.
- LONGENECKER, Richard, *New Testament Social Ethics*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI, 1984.
- LOTZ, Christian, "Is Capital a Thing? Remarks on Piketty's Concept of Capital", *Critical Sociology* 41/2, 2005, 375-383.
- MALHEBRE, Abraham J., "The Christianization of a topos (Luke 12:13-24)", *Novum Testamentum* XXXVIII/2 (1996), 123-135.
- MALINA, Bruce J., "Grace/Favor" in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, edited by Bruce J. MALINA and John J. PILCH, Hendrickson, Peabody/MA, 1998, 89-92.
- MALINA, Bruce J., "Wealth and poverty in the New Testament and its world", *Interpretation* 41 (1987), 354-367.
- MALINA, Bruce J., "Reading Theory Perspective: Reading Luke-Acts", in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, edited by Jerome H. NEYREY, Hendrickson, Peabody/MA, 1991, 3-23.

MALINA, Bruce J., "Wealth and Poverty in the New Testament and Its World", *Interpretation. A Journal of Bible and Theology* 41/4 (1987), DOI: 10.1177/002096438704100403, 354-367.

Malina, Bruce J., *The New Testament world: Insights from cultural anthropology*, John Knox, Louisville, 1993.

MALINA, Bruce J., *The social world of Jesus and the Gospels*, Routledge, London-New York, 2003.

MALINA, Bruce J.; NEYREY, Jerome H., "Honor and shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal values of the Mediterranean world", in *The social world of Luke-Acts: Models for interpretation*, edited by Jerome H. NEYREY, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, 1991, 25-65.

MALINA, Bruce J.; ROHRBAUGH, Richard L., *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis/MN, 2003.

MANILA, Bruce J., *The New Testament world: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, Westminster John Knox, Louisville/KY, 2001.

MANKIW, N. Greg, *Principles of Microeconomics*, Cengage Learning, Stamford/CT, 2015.

MATTINGLY David J.; SALMON John, "The Productive Past: Economies beyond agriculture", in *Economies beyond Agriculture in the classical world*, edited by David J. MATTINGLY and John SALMON, Routledge, London and New York, 2001, 3-14.

MCCORMACK, Fiona; BARCLAY, Kate, "Insights on Capitalism from Oceania", in *Engaging with capitalism: cases from Oceania* edited by Fiona MCCORMACK, Kate BARCLAY, Emerald, Bingley, 2013.

MEIERI, John P. "Is Luke's Version of the Parable of the Rich Fool Reflected in the Coptic Gospel of Thomas?", *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 74 (2012), 528-47.

METZGER, James A. *Consumption and Wealth in Luke's Travel Narrative*, (=Biblical Interpretation Series 88), Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2007.

MEYER, Christopher; DAVIS, Stanley M., *Future Wealth*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, 2000.

MILLER, Amanda C., "Bridge Work and Seating Charts. A Study of Luke's Ethics of Wealth, Poverty, and Reversal", *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 68/4 (2014), DOI: 10.1177/0020964314540108, 416-27.

MOXNES, Halvor, *The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke's Gospel*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1988.

NADAL, Paul, "The Concept of Potentiality: On Agamben", <https://belate.wordpress.com/2010/04/04/agamben-on-potentiality/> (accessed 1 October 2015).

NEHRU GORANTLA, Jarwaharlal, *Riches: A source of blessing or Condemnation. An Exegetical and Theological Study of Jesus' Teaching of Wealth in Luke's Gospel*, an extract of the dissertation for the Doctorate in the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, 2008.

NEYREY, Jerome H., "Limited Good" in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, edited by Bruce J. MALINA and John J. PILCH, Hendrickson, Peabody/MA, 1998, 122-127.

- NEYREY, Jerome H., "Loss of wealth, loss of family and loss of honour", in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social Scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context*, edited by Philip F. ESLER, Routledge, London-New York, 1995, 139-158.
- NOISET, Luc, "An expanded concept of capital in Development Economics", *World Economics* 9/4 (2008), 201-208.
- NORTH, Gary, *Treasure and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Luke*, Point Five Press, 2012.
- NOVAK, Michael, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, The Free Press, New York, 1993.
- OAKMAN, Douglas E., "Money in the Moral Universe of the New Testament," in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, edited by Wolfgang STEGEMANN, Bruce J. MALINA, and Gerd THEISSEN, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2002, 335-348.
- OAKMAN, Douglas E., "The Ancient Economy in the Bible", *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 21 (1991), 34-39.
- OAKMAN, Douglas E., "The Ancient Economy", in *The social sciences and New Testament interpretation*, edited by Richard L. ROHRBAUGH, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody/MA, 1996, 126-143.
- OAKMAN, Douglas E., "The Countryside in Luke-Acts", in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, edited by J. H. NEYREY, Hendrickson, Peabody, 1991, 151-179.
- OAKMAN, Douglas E., *Jesus and the Economic Questions of His Day*, Mellen, Lewiston, 1986.
- OAKMAN, Douglas E., *Jesus and the peasants*, Cascade Books, Eugene, 2008.
- OAKMAN, Douglas E., *The Political Aims of Jesus*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2012.
- OECD, "Insights: Human Capital", <http://www.oecd.org/insights/37966934.pdf> (accessed 1 October 2015).
- PARROTT, Douglas M., "The Dishonest Steward (Luke 16,1-8a) and Luke's Special Parable Collection", *NTStud* 37 (1991), 499-515.
- PASTOR, Jack, *Land and Economy in Ancient Palestine*, Routledge, London-New York, 1997.
- PATRUTI, Alexandru, "The two conflicting approaches to the concept of capital within economic thought", *Economic Insights - Trends and Challenges* 65/4 (2013), 83-91.
- PHILLIPS, Thomas E., "Reading Recent Readings of Issues of Wealth and Poverty in Luke and Acts", *Currents in Biblical Research* 1/2 (2003), DOI: 10.1177/1476993X0300100207, 231-269.
- PICKETT, Raymond, "You cannot serve God and Mammon: Economic Relations and Human Flourishing in Luke", *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 52/1 (2013), 37-46.
- PIKETTY, Thomas, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, Harvard University Press, Cambridge/MA, 2014.
- RATZINGER, Joseph CARDINAL, "The Renewal of Moral theology: perspectives of Vatican II and *Veritatis splendor*," *Communio* 32 (2005), 357-368.
- RINDGE, Matthew S., "Luke's Artistic Parables: Narratives of subversion, imagination, and transformation", *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 68/4 (2014), 403-415.

- RINDGE, Matthew S., *Jesus' Parable of the Rich Fool. Luke 12,13-34 Among Ancient Conversations on death and Possessions*, Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta, 2011.
- ROHRBAUGH, Richard L., "Honor, Core Value in the Biblical World", in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, edited by Dietmar NEUFELD and Richard E. DEMARIS, Routledge, London-New York, 2010, 109-125.
- ROHRBAUGH, Richard L., "The Jesus Tradition: the gospel writers' strategies of persuasion", in *The Early Christian World I-II*, edited by Philip F. ESLER, Routledge, London-New York, 2000, 198-230.
- ROHRBAUGH, Richard L., "The Pre-Industrial City in Luke-Acts: Urban Social Relations", in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, edited by J. H. NEYREY, Hendrickson, Peabody, 1991, 125-149.
- SCEPANTI, Ernesto; ZAMAGNI, Stefano, *An Outline of the History of Economic Thought*, translated by David Field and Lynn Kirby, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.
- SCHMIDT, Thomas E., "Burden, Barrier, Blasphemy, Wealth in Mt 6,33, Lk 14,33 and Lk 16,15", *TrinJ* 9 (NS) 9/(1998) 171-189.
- SCHMIDT, Thomas E., *Hostility to Wealth in the Synoptic Gospel*, (=Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 15), JSOT Press, Sheffield, 1987.
- SCHNEIDER, Gerhard; BALZ, Horst R., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, I*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI, 1990.
- SCHNEIDER, Gerhard; BALZ, Horst R., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, II*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI, 1990.
- SCOTT, Bernard Brandon, *Hear Then the Parable: A commentary on the Parables of Jesus*, Fortress, Minneapolis, 1989.
- SHEROUSE, Alan P., "The One Percent and the Gospel of Luke", *Review and Expositor* 110, Spring 2013, 285-293.
- SPOHN, William C., *What are they saying about Scriptures and Ethics*, Paulist Press, New York 1984.
- STEGMAN, Thomas D., "Reading Luke 12:13-34 as an Elaboration of a Chreia: How Hermogenes of Tarsus Sheds Light on Luke's Gospel", *Novum Testamentum* 49 (2007), 328-352.
- STORY, Lyle J., "Twin Parables of Stewardship in Luke 16", *American Theological Inquiry* 2/1 (2009), 105-120.
- SZUKALSKI, John A., *Tormented in Hades: A Socio-Narratological Approach to the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)*, a doctoral thesis, The Catholic University of America, Washington/DC, 2012.
- SZUKALSKI, John A., *Tormented in Hades: The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and other Lucan Parables for Persuading the Rich to Repentance*, Picwick Publications, Eugene/OR, 2013.
- TAYLOR, Lester D., *Capital, Accumulation, and Money: An Integration of Capital, Growth, and Monetary Theory*, Springer Science+Business Media, New York, 2000.
- THE WORLD BANK, *Where is the wealth of the nations? Measuring Capital for the 21st Century*, World Bank, Washington/DC, 2006.

ULRICH, Dave, "Intellectual capital = competence x commitment", *Sloan Management Review* 39/2 (1998), 15-26.

USHER, Dan, *The measurement of capital*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1980.

VAN ECK, Ernest, "Socio-rhetorical interpretation: Theoretical points of departure", *HTS Teologiese Studies* 57/1&2 (2001), 593-611.

VAN ECK, Ernest, "Interpreting the parables of the Galilean Jesus: A social-scientific approach", in *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 65/1 (2009), <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102v65i1.308>.

VAN ECK, Ernest, "When patrons are not patrons: A social-scientific reading of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26)", *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 65/1 (2009), DOI: 10.4102/hts.v65i1.309.

VAN ECK, Ernest, "When patrons are patrons: A social-scientific and realistic reading of the parable of the Feast (Lk 14:16b-23)", *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 69/1 (2013), <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i1.1375>.

WERPEHOWSKI, William, "Labor and Capital in Catholic Social Thought", *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, edited by Judith A. DWYER, Liturgical Press, Collegeville/MN, 1994, 516-527.

WHITELAM, Keith W., "Palestine during the iron age", in *Biblical World I*, edited by John BARTON, Routledge, London-New York, 386-410.

WOLF, Eric R., *Peasants*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs/NJ, 1966.

WRIGHT, Stephen I., "Parables on Poverty and Riches", in *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables*, edited by Richard N. LONGENECKER, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI, 2000, 217-239.