

# Philosophical Explorations into Poverty Alleviation

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Rationale:

The aim of this volume is to explore the philosophical, in particular ethical, issues concerning the conceptualization, design and implementation of poverty alleviation measures from the local to the global level. Our goal is to bring together these topics with the ongoing debates on (social and global) justice as well as to ask what an ethical or normative philosophical perspective can add to the social scientific, economic and political approaches that dominate the main debates on poverty alleviation. Many normative questions arise in the business of and politics of poverty measures. The volume is divided in three sections:

## (1) (Relative) Poverty and Poverty Alleviation in the Affluent State

In this section we include chapters that will explore poverty alleviation within affluent states, in particular welfare states that have already established a wide range of measures of support.

Some of the main question, we would like to shed some light on, are the following:

Are there any other particular agents responsible for poverty alleviation under such circumstances besides the State, i. e. wealthy citizens or companies?

What ethical issues arise because of the privatization of welfare services in some states? Poverty is known to be relevant in many different policy areas such as health, education, family, social interaction, economy or migration. Should poverty alleviation be a high priority given its detrimental effects on other important goods or capabilities?

It is also well known that child poverty is harmful for the whole future life course and a major obstacle to equality of opportunity. Does this justify extensive interventions in poor families?

Another important area is the responsibility of affluent states and its citizens towards poor migrants, asylum seekers or foreign beggars and homeless.

## (2) Global Poverty, Global Justice and International Institutions of Poverty Alleviation

In this section papers will address the question of poverty on the global level, if and how global justice can be an answer to it, and what role international institutions (like the World Bank, Monetary Fund or the UN) plays in the alleviation of poverty.

Theories of global justice have extensively dealt with the injustice or immorality of global poverty and they have also produced a wide range of suggestions in terms of how to overcome it, most of which are located on the global level itself. Can and should the international organizations that dominate poverty alleviation in poor countries be reformed in order to produce better results?

Besides such measures on the global level, actual poverty alleviation in poor countries also has to take place on the ground. In the context of poorer states this often involves different agents and institutions, which are ill-adapted to the tasks they face. Has philosophy something to say about the issues arising in local initiatives to combat poverty, about the building of social protection systems on the regional and state level?

How should we deal with the intersection of disadvantages and injustices based on health, age, race, gender or religion? Are there some groups within the global poor that demand the particular attention of poverty alleviation such as children, trafficked women and children or disabled persons? Poverty alleviation and aid is also a business, where private for-profit and non-profit organizations are involved. Do claims of justice apply to them in the same way as they apply to state actors and institutions?

### (3) The Poor and Poverty Alleviation: Questions of Agency, Empowerment and Paternalism

Chapters in the third section will explore the role of the poor within measures and policies of poverty alleviation. In this section we will address the issue about how their agency can be strengthened and how they can be empowered. Poverty alleviation seeks to help those who are poor but such measures can easily become paternalistic. Poverty alleviation is usually planned and carried out by experts, who are not poor themselves and in the context of global poverty these experts often come from abroad. To what extent should poor people be involved? What weight should their own preferences and wishes carry? To what extent is it justified introducing punitive measures, for example if people do not wish to work although they could as it is done in many welfare states? How can we build more inclusive institutions (on the local, state or global level), where the poor can be heard and offer their own expertise?

The issues mentioned in this short outline are in no way exhaustive, and we welcome paper proposals that deal with all different kinds of questions regarding the ethical and philosophical issues in poverty alleviation.

If you are interested to contribute a chapter please send us a short abstract of no more than 500 words until January 30, 2015. The deadline for full papers (about 7000 words) is the End of June.

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