



Politics as Usual: What Lies Behind the Pro-Poor Rhetoric

Thomas W. Pogge

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Worldwide, human lives are rapidly improving. Education, health-care, technology, and political participation are becoming ever more universal, empowering human beings everywhere to enjoy security, economic sufficiency, equal citizenship, and a life in dignity. To be sure, there are some specially difficult areas disfavoured by climate, geography, local diseases, unenlightened cultures or political tyranny. Here progress is slow, and there may be set-backs. But the affluent states and many international organizations are working steadily to extend the blessings of modernity through trade and generous development assistance, and it won't be long until the last pockets of severe oppression and poverty are gone.

Heavily promoted by Western governments and media, this comforting view of the world is widely shared, at least among the affluent. Pogge's new book presents an alternative view: Poverty and oppression persist on a massive scale; political and economic inequalities are rising dramatically both intra-nationally and globally. The affluent states and the international organizations they control knowingly contribute greatly to these evils - selfishly promoting rules and policies harmful to the poor while hypocritically pretending to set and promote ambitious development goals. Pogge's case studies include the \$1/day poverty measurement exercise, the cosmetic statistics behind the first Millennium Development Goal, the War on Terror, and the proposed relaxation of the constraints on humanitarian intervention. A powerful moral analysis that shows what Western states would do if they really cared about the values they profess.

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