3

EXTREME POVERTY AS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

Moral Duties and Public Engagement in the Global North

Vincent Fang

Extreme Poverty: Justice Not Charity

Humanity has made rapid progress in poverty reduction in recent decades, lifting more than 1 billion people out of extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015. However, today more than 700 million people, or 10% of the world population, are still living below the extreme poverty line — currently defined as $1.90 a day. Lack of income means lack of everything: People experiencing poverty often lack clean water, safe and stable shelter, health care and basic education. They are more likely to experience social exclusion and discrimination; they are also more vulnerable to conflicts and climate change. Every year, more than 5 million children, mostly in the Global South, die before they turn five years old (What are the Sustainable Development Goals? 2020). It is simply impossible to overstate the significance of this avoidable mass suffering in an affluent and hugely unequal world.

Extreme poverty is rarely just caused by domestic factors. Admittedly, often issues at home, such as corruption and weak governance, play important causal roles. However, many such domestic causes have been found to be exacerbated, incentivized and sustained by international causes; for instance, unfair terms of global trade (Hulme, 2015). It is, therefore, uncontroversial to claim that efforts to eradicate global poverty should extend beyond merely addressing domestic issues in Southern countries. It is necessary to have coordinated reforms so that the global community as a whole manages international monetary flow and trade justly, distributes natural resources fairly and uses them sustainably and regulates immigration to the benefit of all, to name a few (Academics Stand Against Poverty [ASAP], n.d.; Cimadamore & Lange, 2015; Pogge & Sengupta, 2014). The problem of extreme poverty is essentially one of “politics, politics, politics” and must be resolved within the framework of justice on a global scale (Cimadamore & Lange, 2015, p. 22).

Political rhetoric on this issue has been strong. After successfully halving extreme poverty, the United Nations and its member states adopted a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015, whose top priority is to eradicate extreme poverty. But actions so far have fallen short of commitments. Although the “last mile” in eradicating extreme poverty will be treacherous with the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and other challenges (Chandy, Kato, & Kharas, 2015), official development assistance (ODA) has actually experienced a slight drop in recent years, from $147,554 million in 2016 to $143,724 million in 2018. Most Northern countries are far from meeting the target of giving 0.70% of their gross national incomes (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2020). It is projected that we are likely to fail to meet
SDG-1 by 2030 without fundamental shifts in political will and policy (Chandy, Ledlie, & Pencickova, 2013; World Bank, 2018).

The sad reality is that the Global North still predominantly regards extreme poverty as a matter of mere charity (Kirk, 2012). Northern citizens are familiar with appeals from development organizations, such as Oxfam, suggesting that painless charitable donations from their pocket are the quick fix. Private donations are regarded as admirable and morally supererogatory; failing to give would generally not raise eyebrows, as few Northern citizens see themselves morally implicated in the destitution of distant foreign lands. They tend to have an oversimplified understanding of poverty reduction. They are quite skeptical about whether aid funds are effective, and they largely attribute poverty to domestic and natural causes, such as corruption, poor governance and drought (Darnton & Kirk, 2011; Glennie, Straw, & Wild, 2012; McDonnell, Solignac, & Wegimont, 2003; OECD, 2012).

Consequently, as Pogge (2008) observed, they typically believe that the persistence of extreme poverty requires no moral attention and certainly has nothing to do with “our conduct, policies, and the global economic institutions we forge” (p. 5). The charity paradigm underlying this belief sustains the unsettling imagination of a “powerful giver” and a “grateful receiver” (Darnton & Kirk, 2011; Dogra, 2013; Voluntary Service Overseas, 2002). As Kirk (2012) observed:

In this paradigm, agency lies almost exclusively with the powerful givers; the grateful receivers are simply understood as poor, needy, and without control over their own destiny. Further, “the poor” are understood as an undifferentiated group without intrinsic strength, often referred to through the shorthand of “Africa,” where nothing ever changes. … A corollary to this paradigm is that radical or transformative political, corporate, or social change is beyond reach. Charity operates within an understanding of the world as it currently is, and does not reach into realms of radical or systematic change, [which] fundamentally restricts the scale of action offered or demanded to a scale incommensurate with the job of alleviating poverty. (p. 248)

If SDG-1 is to be taken seriously, the comfortable Global North must be alerted to this silent, manmade catastrophe in a way that counters these prevailing beliefs. A change of public perception would inevitably involve the news media: They can channel unheard voices from the South to the North, educate the general public, expand public debate on development issues, influence policy making, promote a more inclusive cultural understanding and change ordinary citizens’ attitude and behavior (Deane, 2008). For instance, for decades, changes in U.S. poverty policy have reflected changing media frames on the issue (Rose & Baumgartner, 2013). Unfortunately, media so far have been found to feed into the charity narrative, attributing poverty to internal factors and strengthening, rather than challenging, stereotypical images of global poverty (Dogra, 2013; Lugo-Ocando, 2014; Vossen & Schulpen, 2019). We need a new public discourse and media frame to shift the dominant paradigm on extreme poverty from charity to justice and to energize more informed political participation on development issues.

### Politicizing Extreme Poverty as Human Rights Violations

The human rights discourse has received increasing attention from academia and the development sector as a politically effective framework to address extreme poverty. As an ethical lingua franca that enjoys a high level of global recognition, human rights are typically viewed as a set of legitimate entitlements to protection of essential human interests that every individual qua individual can reasonably expect. Government’s legitimacy is founded on respect for human rights, and violation of human rights is expected to trigger protective actions from the national government, or
failing that, sometimes intervention from foreign governments and the international community. Framing extreme poverty as a violation of human rights, therefore, has immense political and motivational potential:

If, however, poverty was declared to be abolished, as it should with regards to its status as a massive, systematic and continuous violation of human rights, its persistence would no longer be a regrettable feature of the nature of things. It would become a denial of justice. The burden of proof would shift. The poor, once they have been recognized as the injured party, would acquire a right to reparation for which governments, the international community and, ultimately, each citizen would be jointly liable. A strong interest would thus be established in eliminating, as a matter of urgency, the grounds of liability, which might be expected to unleash much stronger forces than compassion, charity, or even concern for one’s own security, are likely to mobilize for the benefit of others.

(Sane, 2004, pp. 271–275)

Extreme poverty is apparently in direct violation of Article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights endorsed by all United Nations member states in principle, if not in law:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

But the inherent multidimensional nature of extreme poverty means its relationship with human rights is not clear cut. Its causes and effects, which are complex and mutually reinforcing, inevitably create a spillover effect onto other human rights. For instance, it is not uncommon for discrimination to contribute to the disproportionate incidence of poverty among minority ethnic groups and women, as well as to their exclusion from “mainstream” social and employment activities. In this case, the human rights to be free from discrimination and to participate freely in the cultural life of the community are infringed. Or consider how extreme poverty and disenfranchisement often interact with each other in a vicious circle: In undemocratic states, citizens at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy may lack legally protected means to influence political decisions and thus find policies skewed toward their better-off compatriots. This bias further erodes their socioeconomic standing. Poverty and lack of educational opportunities, in turn, make the fight for political rights even harder. Extreme poverty not only directly violates the human right to an adequate standard of living, but also encroaches on many other civil, political and social rights.

It is common to divide human rights enumerated in the Declaration into two categories — civil political rights and socioeconomic rights. A key difference between the two groups of rights is the way they are realized. Civil and political rights are believed to be typical negative rights; they require only that the government and other agents refrain from certain actions that may violate them. In contrast, socioeconomic rights are positive rights requiring the government and other relevant political bodies to actively supply key resources (such as food, health care and housing) through taxation and redistribution.

Consequently, we can identify a sharp distinction in culpability between negative and positive human rights. Violation of civil and political rights, such as the right not to be tortured, would normally involve active actions from clearly identifiable agents, such as state agencies or certain individuals; this makes legal remedy and intervention feasible. In contrast, violation of socioeconomic rights often occurs when there is a lack of actions, inadequacy of measures and capacity and/or absence of responsible agents. In the case of extreme poverty, when state institutions cannot
effectively collect adequate revenue to redistribute, when prolonged violent conflict reduces a region to de facto anarchy or when natural disasters heavily incapacitate a state — to name a few typical scenarios — it is difficult to determine who should be held responsible and to what extent, or which agents should provide what kind of remedies.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognizes this practical difficulty and thus envisions incremental progress. In Article 2.1, it asks states to “take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights.” These words effectively reframe socioeconomic rights as mere goals or aspirations. Some theorists argue that doing so avoids unrealistic grandstanding and creates practical flexibility in incrementally fulfilling these important rights, so long as rigorous supervisory and implementation processes are in place (Nickel, 2019). However, socioeconomic rights phrased as goals inevitably lose the moral stringency that their civil and political counterparts enjoy. As a result, their “violation” equals failure to meet goals due to practical constraints — which is quotidian in politics and loses the political appeal of human rights.

One way to restore the stringency of poverty-related rights violations is to adopt a “political,” as opposed to “moral,” conception of human rights. The most prominent advocate of this approach is John Rawls (1999). For Rawls, human rights do not derive from abstract normative ideas about human interest, needs or agency (Etinson, 2018); rather, they are a special class of “urgent rights” that perform the important political function of specifying “limits to a regime’s internal autonomy” (Rawls, 1999, p. 79). Their fulfillment is a “necessary condition” of the decency of a state’s political and legal institutions, precludes intervention from other states and sets a limit to tolerable international pluralism (Rawls, 1999, p. 80). To ensure universality, Rawls rejected a Western understanding of human rights; instead, he advocated a controversially shortened list of human rights that are only a “subset” of the full rights enjoyed in typical liberal democracies: the right to life (to the means of subsistence and security); to liberty (to freedom from slavery, serfdom and forced occupation; and to a sufficient measure of liberty of conscience to ensure freedom of religion and thought); to property (personal property); and to formal equality as expressed by the rules of natural justice (that is, that similar cases be treated similarly) (p. 65).

On the political conception, violation of this smaller set of basic human rights is serious. Countries that fail to fulfill them put their legitimate internal autonomy in question, justifying appropriate interventions from the international community (“well-ordered peoples” in Rawls’s [1999] words). Societies facing unfavorable burdens and struggling to realize the right to subsistence have a rightful claim to intervention from well-ordered peoples, which, according to Rawls, have a corresponding duty of assistance. Rawls envisions a rather substantive duty diverging greatly from the current scheme of international aid: Well-ordered peoples need to provide comprehensive assistance to help burdened societies become self-supporting and join the ranks of well-ordered peoples. Rex Martin (2006) compared this demanding duty to a new Marshall Plan and believed it would significantly transform international aid if carried out as intended (p. 238).

**Motivating Political Change through a Discourse of Moral Duties**

Talk of rights must be validated by corresponding duties. This point is salient in the discussion on socioeconomic rights in the last section: Individual states’ incapacity to fulfill these rights downgrades these rights to the status of goals to be progressively realized. But why should each national government be the primary duty bearer of the essential human right to subsistence in its territory? Rawls (1999) clearly disagreed. In fact, even if we see the right to subsistence as a moral right, it is difficult to justify this monofocal distribution of responsibility, or what Pogge (2008) termed “explanatory nationalism.” In a world as deeply interconnected as ours, we still tend to see poverty
Vincent Fang

as each nation’s problem (pp. 17, 116–118). In doing so, we overlook the moral duties of the global community — particularly those of the Global North and its citizens. Connecting such moral duties in public discourse to poverty as a violation of human rights may serve as a wake-up call, causing the public to notice a neglected moral domain. Such efforts of public communication, if successful, might shift the global poverty paradigm away from charity toward justice, thereby motivating and energizing popular demand for much needed global political change. So, what moral duties exactly are owed by states and individuals in the Global North to those in extreme poverty in the Global South, and how are they justified?

The vast literature on this subject cannot be summarized easily. We can roughly divide the moral duties into two categories: positive duties and remedial duties. I have discussed Rawls’s (1999) account of a positive duty to assistance in the previous section. Below, I briefly outline four other philosophers’ arguments to represent the two positions.

**Peter Singer**

The utilitarian philosopher Peter Singer (1972, 2002, 2010) has advocated for positive duties on grounds of maximizing utility. Arguing that in an age of “instant communication and swift transportation,” physical distance makes no real difference, he famously drew an analogy between saving a drowning child as you walk by a pond and providing aid to distant individuals dying of hunger and poverty. The positive moral duties to save human lives at relatively little cost are equally strong in both cases (Singer, 1972, p. 232).

Critiquing the dominant charity-based approach, Singer (1972, 2002, 2010) has made a strong case for an overhaul of our moral belief system so that the line between charity and justice is redrawn: Providing substantial aid to those in extreme poverty should be regarded as morally obligatory, rather than supererogatory. Singer has called on individuals in affluence to give a substantial proportion of their wealth to alleviate poverty, and he is open to any institutional reforms that move us closer to the same goal.

**Tom Campbell**

Tom Campbell (1974, 2007) argued for positive duties grounded in beneficence or humanity. On this account, we need not overcomplicate extreme poverty’s dynamic relationships with human rights. Poverty is an evil to be eliminated simply by virtue of the multiple forms of severe human suffering it involves: hunger, pain, misery, sickness and death. Campbell did not dispute that many cases of poverty result from injustice. However, their humanity-based argument strategically overlooked the specific causes of poverty in order to skip the complex and constant political quibbles about who ought to assume what kind of responsibilities. Campbell believed this is more advantageous because it unites all parties in poverty reduction efforts.

The duty of humanity is proportional to each individual’s capacity. Campbell (1974, 2007) advocated a Global Humanitarian Levy that would tax all personal incomes over a certain threshold to be used toward poverty relief globally. Although he conceded that the language of humanitarianism is less persuasive than that of justice, Campbell believed that critical contemplation would lead to moral progress and growing recognition of the strong ethical implications of the idea of humanity.

**Thomas Pogge**

that the world order has benefited those experiencing poverty and that we have made substantial progress in reducing poverty, arguing that celebrating success on such a “diachronic” approach is analogous to praising a man for beating up a family member less often than before (pp. 20–23). Instead, Pogge (2008) adopted a “subjunctive” approach in which he compared the foreseeable consequence of the current global order against, not a historical baseline, but a hypothetical baseline — a minimally just alternative political order feasible at the time (pp. 20–25). Viewed this way, the current global political and economic order causes poverty systematically, and extreme poverty would largely be avoided if we had a fairer world order.

Pogge (2008) had two well-known examples to show the unjust nature of the global order: the international resource privilege and the international borrowing privilege. To oversimplify, both issues perpetuate extreme poverty at a local level in the following ways. The current international system recognizes any group in control of predominant coercive means in a country as its legitimate government, regardless of how it acquires and exercises power. Consequently, the ruling group is conferred with the privileges to borrow in the country’s name and to dispose of natural resources in its territory. These privileges then create the incentives for coups and civil wars in attempts to seize power (pp. 118–123). Over time, these countries are unjustly burdened with heavy debts borrowed by previous illegitimate governments and find the ownership rights of their natural resources transferred to other groups.

As participants in and beneficiaries of this global order, those in the Global North are, therefore, part of the process that harms those in poverty globally, and now owe them strong moral duties to remedy the harm. Northern citizens can “advocate for changes in national policies or global institutions, by publicising their unjust nature and harmful impact and by developing reform proposals” (Pogge, 2008, p. 150). Pogge (1994, 2008) put forward one such proposal: the global resource dividend (GRD). Based on diagnosing the uncompensated exclusion of those in poverty from using natural resources, Pogge (1994) proposed we set up a tax on any resources a country chooses to extract, pushing up the prices of crude natural resources, and let the owner of the resources, along with the purchasers and users, all share the burden. The proceeds of GRD would be used “toward the emancipation of the present and future global poor,” fulfilling their basic needs of education, health care and means of production (p. 201). Pogge (2008) believed the proposal was modest because just a small GRD would be sufficient in the long term to eradicate poverty. Pogge estimated that a mere 0.67% of the 2005 global product (about $300 billion) annually, if used wisely, could significantly reduce poverty within just a few years (p. 211).

David Miller

Miller (2007, 2012) also has argued in favor of remedial duties, but relied less on Pogge’s diagnosis of the causal institutional harm thesis. Miller has defined remedial responsibility as a special responsibility for certain agents to come up with remedies when a morally bad situation such as extreme poverty arises. Miller recognizes that it is often difficult to specify what actions from which agents led to what consequences. Seemingly benign actions might unpredictably cause poverty for distant others through some butterfly effect, and multiple actions from different agents often work together to cause suffering. But we should not let this indeterminacy hinder remedial efforts. Miller (2007) introduced six considerations to set out a framework of determining remedial responsibility:

1. Moral responsibility (when clear moral fault can be identified as contributor to poverty; e.g., when an agent defaults on a previous promise to help).
2. Outcome responsibility (when morally neutral or even good actions cause unintended and unpredictable bad outcomes; e.g., when an agent’s fair competition causes another agent to go bankrupt).
3  Causal responsibility (when actions directly cause deprivation).
4  Benefit (the extent to which an agent has benefited from others’ deprivation).
5  Capacity (an agent’s capacity to help).
6  Community (an agent’s cultural affinity with those in poverty).

These six criteria of remedial responsibility inform Miller’s analysis of what Northern citizens owe to Southern citizens. First, the three kinds of backward-looking responsibilities show that citizens of Northern countries, due to “past injustices that left its victims in continuing poverty,” should be picked out to remedy the effects of past injustice (Miller, 2007, p. 249). Second, Miller argued that Northern countries owe Southern countries fair terms of cooperation. Many Southern countries are “vulnerable to exploitation and other forms of injustice by powerful states, corporations and other agencies” and are owed “adequate opportunities to develop” (p. 253). Third, the “bare fact of poverty itself, independently of any prior interaction between rich and poor countries” is a reason to justify remedial duties that should be imposed upon the “capable” agents “most strongly connected” to those in poverty (p. 249).

Public Communication for Political Change: Caveat on Positive Duties

It is easy to confuse positive duties with duties of charity. A typical example is Peter Singer. Andrew Kuper (2002), critiquing Singer, said that “charity is never enough,” and that applauding charitable donations as the sole solution can even be “highly likely to harm the poor” (pp. 107–120). Singer has repeatedly stressed, from their earliest essay to their later publications, that their approach opposes the idea of charity. To give money away, rather than buy unnecessary luxuries, “is not charitable, or generous,” nor is it “supererogatory”; rather, it is wrong not to give money away (Singer, 1972, p. 235).

The resemblance between positive duties and duties of charity has important practical implications for achieving a paradigm shift. Analysis of the two most salient contrasts between charity and justice will shed light on this problem. First, calls for charitable donations often mirror a wrongly simplistic view of the world, suggesting a “false picture of a uniformly affluent Western world and a uniformly poor and hungry Third World” (Balakrishnan & Narayan, 1996, p. 233). This leads to the unwanted neocolonialist implication that the private donors in Western countries are the “Powerful Givers” with full agency, superior over the passive “Grateful Receivers” in developing countries (Darnton & Kirk, 2011; Kirk, 2012). This simplification prevents people from reflecting on both the complex moral relationships between those who live in affluence and those who live in poverty and on the causes of extreme poverty. In fact, charity suggests that the givers and receivers are only randomly related, as shown in Singer’s (1972) analogy with the drowning child. Put otherwise, the charity approach is “acontextual and ahistorical,” giving the impression that citizens from Northern countries are “merely distant witnesses of a problem unrelated to ourselves, with a weak, positive duty to help” (Pogge, 2008, p. 217). In contrast, the justice perspective takes better account of the causes of global poverty to change the global economic structure. (Jamieson, 2005; Kuper, 2002, 2012; Langlois, 2008)

Second, charity demands only voluntary actions and, therefore, lacks the moral stringency that justice commands. A common claim about charity is that it implies only imperfect duties, which are “indeterminate both with respect to the recipient of aid and the amount and kind of aid.” Imperfect duties understood this way cannot be enforced, as any such attempts would be “arbitrary and subject to abuse” (Buchanan, 1987, p. 561). Duties of justice, in contrast, are perfect duties, with determinate content and objects. The practical implication of this distinction is that the charity approach cannot sustain long-term aid. This is partly because it relies on voluntary actions driven by people’s compassion, which can lead to “fatigue, aversion, even
contempt” (Pogge, 2008, p. 218). Another reason why voluntary donation entailed by the charity perspective would fail in the long term has to do with fairness. A corollary of the unenforceable nature of duties of charity is that some Northern citizens and their governments would rally to the cause again and again while knowing full well that most others similarly situated contribute nothing or very little, that their contributions are legally optional, and that, no matter how much they give, they could for just a little more always save yet further children from sickness or starvation.

(Pogge, 2008, p. 218)

In contrast, the moral stringency of duties of justice requires institutions to enforce them on all eligible social members, regardless of their willingness. These two differences reveal how positive duties are likely to be confused with duties of charity. First, positive duty theories mirror charity appeals in argumentative structure: Both simply jump from the fact of suffering to calling for assistance and spend little effort on illustrating international causal mechanisms of extreme poverty, identifying culpable agents and demanding institutional reforms based on the causal diagnosis. Second, absent suitable institutions, positive duties resemble duties of charity in their fulfillment. Even if positive duties are deemed reasonable, they are still at each individual’s discretion if they are not legally enforceable.

As Campbell (1974) correctly observed, our everyday understanding of justice is fundamentally “meritorian” — the link “between justice and desert is deeply embedded in the moral and political discourse of everyday life” (p. 5). It is no wonder then that Campbell and Singer, both advocates of positive duties, call for a reform of our everyday moral compass. Perhaps, only after there is a radical transformation of this meritorian conception of justice can ordinary citizens be counted on to fulfill their positive duties. However, reforming our moral system is surely a more daunting task than tapping into our existing moral intuitions. It is for this reason that I believe that remedial duties, drawing on the current moral consensus, are more suitable for public communication.

**Remedial Duties in Journalistic Practice: Comparing Two News Stories**

In this last section, I present a comparative analysis of two media articles to shed light on how to communicate remedial duties in journalistic practice. Both articles concern the ramifications of the Trump Administration’s 2019 decision to cut aid to Central America to discourage migrants and asylum seekers from this region. As we shall see, selective presentation and omission of contextual information lead to very different ethical implications.

Reuter’s “Central America’s ‘poorest of the poor’ hit hard by U.S. aid cuts: Charities” (Maloney, 2019) reported that local charities had to reduce or postpone key projects that would have helped their most vulnerable clients because of the cut in U.S. aid to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. To contextualize the decision, the story mentioned that Trump blamed these countries for failing to reduce immigration flow. This was followed by charity organizations’ criticism of the decision as “short-sighted and counter-productive” (“Scaling back” section, para. 7), as it would only make it harder to tackle the “root causes of why people are pushed to leave, including high murder and crime rates, hunger and a lack of jobs” (“Scaling back” section, para. 6). The “poorest of the poor,” as well as farming communities struggling after “five years of drought” (“Scaling back” section, para. 8), would now be deprived of the “cash transfer” (“Scaling back” section, para. 6) and would not be able to “put food on the table” (“Child hunger” section, para. 4).

The story adopted a humanitarian frame, portraying Central American migrants as passive recipients of aid and victims of domestic policy failures and natural disasters. Failing to explore what role, if any, the United States had played in causing this deplorable situation, the article was unable
to tap into our moral intuition about injustice and remedial duties. As a result, the criticisms of the Trump Administration reflected only humanitarian grounds and left justice out of the picture.

In contrast, in The Guardian article “Fleeing a hell the US helped create: Why Central Americans journey north,” Borger (2018) discussed exactly the questions left out by Reuters. While acknowledging that many issues are indeed “homegrown,” the article cited expert opinion on the U.S. role:

When politicians or activists have come forward on behalf of its dispossessed, the US has consistently intervened on the side of the powerful and wealthy to help crush them, or looked the other way when they have been slaughtered. … Sometimes it has been a matter of unintended consequences. … More often US intervention in the affairs of these small and weak states has been deliberate, motivated by profit or ideology or both.

(paras. 4, 6, 8)

These words are followed by analysis of how the United States is linked to and benefits from severe poverty, insecurity and instability, respectively, in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Although not explicitly advocating that the United States recognize its remedial duties, this article’s justice-based frame invited readers to consider whether U.S. obligations to Central Americans are stronger than humanitarian ones.

It needs to be noted that consciously adopting justice-based frames that prompt reconsideration of habituated moral views should not be considered propaganda. Rather, in a world of profound background injustice, justice-based frames take the broader context into account and thus provide Northern citizens with a more thorough understanding of their moral duties to lessen the suffering of others.

Notes

1 There is significant controversy around this achievement. For critical voices, see Pogge (2010) and Hickel (2016).
2 For a typical “linkage” argument of this kind, see Shue (1996).
3 Most controversially, Rawls did not include the right to political participation. For the debate on Rawls’s controversial list of human rights, see Martin and Reidy (2008).

References


Extreme Poverty as Human Rights Violation


