

ROMANTICISING THE POOR HARMS THE POOR

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Abstract: A libertarian movement that emphasises free markets to reduce poverty has grown strong in recent years. It views the poor as ‘resilient and creative entrepreneurs and value-conscious consumers’. This romanticised view of the poor is far from the truth and harms the poor in two ways. First, it results in too little emphasis on legal, regulatory and social mechanisms to protect the poor who are vulnerable consumers. Second, it results in over-emphasis on microcredit and under-emphasis on fostering modern enterprises that would provide employment opportunities for the poor. More importantly, the libertarian proposition grossly under-emphasises the critical role and responsibility of the state for poverty reduction. Copyright © 2008 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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1 INTRODUCTION

A libertarian movement that emphasises free markets to reduce poverty has grown strong in recent years. The think tank World Resource Institute advocates ‘development through enterprise’ and emphasises business models driven by a profit motive that engage the poor as producers and consumers. The Private Sector Development network, part of the World Bank, focuses on private sector led growth in developing countries. CK Prahalad (2005), a prolific exponent of this perspective, argues that selling to the poor people at the ‘bottom of the pyramid’ (BOP) can simultaneously be profitable and help eradicate poverty. The BOP proposition has caught the attention of senior executives and business academics. Many multinational companies (such as Unilever and SC Johnson) have undertaken BOP initiatives; the world’s top CEOs have discussed this topic at recent sessions of the World Economic Forum. Several business schools (such as University of Michigan and University of North Carolina) have set up BOP centres.

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This libertarian approach to reducing poverty necessarily assumes that the poor are fully capable and willing participants in the free market economy. Prahalad (2005) explicitly urges us in the very first paragraph of his book to recognise the poor as 'resilient and creative entrepreneurs and value-conscious consumers'. However, the rest of the book does not provide *any* empirical support for this assumption about the behaviour of the poor as consumers and as entrepreneurs. The United Nations, having designated 2005 as the International year of Microcredit, declares on its website, 'currently microentrepreneurs use loans as small as \$100 to grow thriving business and, in turn, provide (for) their families, leading to strong and flourishing local economies'. This is hype and the United Nations provides no empirical evidence to support its bold assertion.

I will argue that the view of the poor as 'resilient and creative entrepreneurs and value-conscious consumers' is empirically false. This romanticised view of the poor does not help them, and actually harms the poor. First, it results in too little emphasis on legal, regulatory and social mechanisms to protect the poor who are vulnerable consumers. Second, it results in overemphasis on microcredit and under-emphasis on fostering modern enterprises that would provide employment opportunities for the poor. More importantly, the BOP proposition grossly under-emphasises the critical role and responsibility of the state for poverty reduction.

This is not to advocate a return to statist policies that stifled economic growth for decades in countries such as India and China. Contemporary economic history clearly demonstrates that the free market system is the best way to achieve overall growth and development. But that does not mean that there is no role for the state. Rajan and Zingales (2003, p. 293) persuasively argue that 'markets cannot flourish without the very visible hand of the governments'. There is a need to impose some limits on free markets to prevent exploitation of the poor (Karnani, 2007b). Another vital role of the state is to provide basic services such as infrastructure, public health and education. Both these responsibilities of the state are even more critical in the context of poverty reduction.

2 POOR AS VALUE-CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS

The BOP proposition views the poor primarily as consumers, as untapped purchasing power. Providing increased consumption choices to the poor person will increase his welfare, assuming he is a rational consumer. It is almost an 'item of faith' among development economists that the poor act rationally (Economist, 2007a). Civil society organisations have often argued that targeting the poor as a market might cause them to wastefully spend part of their already meagre income on low priority products and services (e.g. Clay, 2005, Chapter 5). Hammond and Prahalad (2004) dismiss such arguments as patronising and arrogant; how can anybody else decide what is best for the poor? The BOP proposition argues that the poor have the right to determine how they spend their limited income and are in fact value-conscious consumers; the poor themselves are the best judge of how to maximise their utility.

Only the expenditure patterns of the poor, and not their utility preferences, can be directly observed. The BOP proposition assumes on ideological grounds, and without empirical evidence, that the poor must be maximising their utility preferences, and that these preferences are congruent with the true self-interest of the poor. This is free market ideology taken to a dangerous extreme, and harms the poor. Even a stalwart proponent of neoliberal policies like *The Economist* concludes that the poor do make choices, and the

empirical evidence suggests that 'they are not always the best ones' (The Economist, 2007). I will argue below that the assumption that the poor are value-conscious consumers is empirically false; additionally, it is morally problematic.

The poor in fact are vulnerable by virtue of lack of education (often they are illiterate), lack of information, and economic, cultural and social deprivations. A person's utility preferences are malleable and shaped by his background and experience, especially so if he has been disadvantaged (Sen, 2000). It is not appropriate to assume that the expressed preferences are truly in the self-interest of the poor. We need to look beyond the expressed preferences and focus on people's capabilities to choose the lives they have reason to value. Amartya Sen (2000, p. 63), the Nobel Prize economist, eloquently states:

'The deprived people tend to come to terms with their deprivation because of the sheer necessity of survival, and they may, as a result, lack the courage to demand any radical change, and may even adjust their desires and expectations to what they unambitiously see as feasible. The mental metric of pleasure or desire is just too malleable to be a firm guide to deprivation and disadvantage. . . . Social and economic factors such as basic education, elementary health care and secure employment are important not only in their own right, but also for the role they can play in giving people opportunity to approach the world with courage and freedom'.

2.1 Empirical Evidence

Unfortunately there are few micro-level studies on the purchasing behaviour of the poor. In an excellent survey of research on the consumption choices the poor make, Banerjee and Duflo (2006) show that the poor spend a 'surprisingly large' fraction of their total income on alcohol, tobacco and entertainment (be it televisions, weddings or festivals). The poor enjoy such products as much as affluent people do, and maybe even more so given the rather bleak lives of the poor. It is easy to rationalise any particular consumption choice of the poor. But, it is problematic that the poor do not spend enough on their own nutrition, health and education.

One survey of the poor in Udaipur in India found that 55% of the adults were anaemic, and that 65% of adult men and 40% of adult women were underweight (Banerjee *et al.*, 2004). The typical poor household in Udaipur could spend up to 30 per cent more on food than it actually does, just based on what it spends on alcohol, tobacco and festivals. Meenakshi and Vishwanathan (2003) find that the poor are buying less and less calories over time. Partly as a result of this general weakness, the poor are frequently sick. Banerjee and Duflo (2006) speculate that one cause of this surprising under-spending on nutrition is the 'growing availability of consumption goods'.

The poor lack self-control and yield to temptation. A partial cause might be that the poor typically do not have bank accounts, and having cash at home makes it harder to exercise self-control. The poor seem to be aware of their vulnerability to temptation. In a survey in Hyderabad, India, the poor were asked to name whether they would like to cut particular expenses, and 28 per cent of the respondents named at least one item (Banerjee *et al.*, 2006). The top item that households would like to cut is alcohol and tobacco, mentioned by 44 per cent of the households that want to cut on items. Then came sugar, tea and snacks (9 per cent), festivals (7 per cent) and entertainment (7 per cent).

The data suggest that the poor lack self-control, yield to temptation and spend to keep up with their neighbours (Banerjee and Duflo, 2006). In this they are no different than people with more money, but the consequences of bad choices are more severe for the poor. Efrogmson and Ahmed (2001) tell a moving, but not uncommon, story of Hasan, a rickshaw puller, who spends \$0.20/day on tobacco. When asked if his three children ever eat eggs, he exclaimed, 'Eggs? Where will the money come from to buy them'? If Hasan did not buy tobacco, each of his children could eat an egg a day, or other nutritious foods, and be healthier as a result. For more affluent people the consequences of smoking are not as bleak as children's malnutrition.

There is much evidence (e.g. Luttmer, 2005, and Diener *et al.*, 1999) in economics and psychology showing that people derive satisfaction not just from their own consumption but also from faring better than their peers. Fafchamps and Shilpi (2008) show that this is equally true for the poor. Keeping up with the neighbours seems to be a pervasive trait cutting across income brackets. Poor people in Nepal were asked to assess whether their level of income as well as their levels of consumption of housing, food, clothing, health care and schooling were adequate. The answers to these questions were strongly negatively related to the average consumption of the other people living in the same village.

Spending on festivals is a surprisingly large part of the budget for many extremely poor households living on less than \$1 per day per person. In Udaipur more than 99 per cent of the extremely poor households spent money on a wedding, a funeral or a religious festival (Banerjee *et al.*, 2004). The median household spent 10 per cent of its annual budget on festivals. In South Africa, 90 per cent of the extremely poor households spent money on festivals. In Pakistan, Indonesia and Cote d'Ivoire, more than 50 per cent did likewise (Banerjee and Duflo, 2006). Spending on festivals is a form of entertainment, especially in the absence of movies and television. The need to spend more on entertainment appears to be a strongly felt need. One reason this might be the case is that the poor want to keep up with their neighbours.

Empirical data do not support the romanticised view of the poor as 'value-conscious consumers'. The problem is that the poor often make choices that are not in their own self-interest. The rich also often make choices not in their self-interest, but the consequences are not as severe in their case. Selling to the poor can in fact result in reducing their welfare. Therefore, there is a need to impose some limits on free markets to prevent exploitation of the poor (Karnani, 2007b). Markets work best when appropriately restricted to protect the vulnerable. To examine one example in depth, I study below the consumption choices of the poor with respect to alcohol.

2.2 Poverty and Alcohol

Alcohol consumption is a financial drain for the poor. The reported share of household income spent on alcohol and tobacco by the poor is high in all countries, ranging from 6% in Indonesia to 1% in Nicaragua (Banerjee and Duflo, 2006). The poor in India spend about 3% of their household income on alcohol and tobacco (Gangopadhyay and Wadhwa, 2004). These numbers understate the true consumption level since it is usually only the man in the household who engages in this consumption. Baklien and Samarasinghe (2004) in their in-depth field study find that 'money spent on alcohol by poor families and communities is underestimated to a remarkable degree. ... A large part of alcohol expenditure is unseen. ... Over 10% of male respondents report spending as much as (or

more than!) their regular income on alcohol'. Sadly, the poorer people spend a greater fraction of their income on alcohol than the less poor.

Aside from the direct financial cost, alcohol abuse imposes other economic and social costs such as work performance, health and accidents. 'Domestic violence and gender-based violence was almost taken for granted in nearly all settings as an automatic consequence of alcohol use. Deprivation of the needs of children due to the father's heavy alcohol use was regarded simply as a misfortune of the children concerned' (Baklien and Samarasinghe, 2004). There is much evidence showing alcohol abuse exacerbates poverty (e.g. Asunta, 2001).

The Economist (2006a) cites SABMiller which has succeeded in several African countries with Eagle, a cheaper beer made from locally grown sorghum (rather than imported malt). SABMiller is able to price the beer at a level below that of mainstream clear beers in Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe partly because it has obtained a reduction in excise duties from the governments involved. Andre Parker, managing director for Africa and Asia division says, 'the brand is reliant on the excise break, so we are working with the governments to lower the excise rate so that the retail price is below that of clear beer. The margin, though, is at least as good as our other brands' (Bolin, 2005). Eagle beer is profitable for SABMiller and a practical example consistent with the BOP proposition, but it is probably detrimental to the overall welfare of the poor consumers. Activist consumer organisations advocate higher (not lower) taxes on alcohol to support public education and rehabilitation programmes (e.g. Asunta, 2001).

Should the poor have the right to consume, and even abuse, alcohol? Yes. Is it in their self interest to do so? Undoubtedly, no—at least at the levels many drink. Should companies have the right to profit from sale of alcohol to the poor? Yes, but even in rich, capitalist economies the governments put some constraints on this right, such as 'sin taxes', restrictions on advertising, and sale to minors. Yet, in many developing countries, such constraints are sometimes missing; even when they do exist, they are poorly enforced, especially in the context of marketing alcohol to the poor. For example, in Malaysia, bottles of 'samsu' (the generic name for cheap spirits) advertise outrageous claims that it is 'good for health, it can cure rheumatism, body aches, low blood pressure and indigestion. Labels also claim it is good for the elderly, and for mothers who are lactating' (Asunta *et al.*, 2001). Even MNCs have got into the act. DOM Benedictine, which contains 40% alcohol, claims health giving and medicinal properties. Guinness Stout suggests it is good for male fertility and virility. Alcoholic drinks are easily available in coffee shops and sundry shops without a liquor license. Forty-five per cent of Malaysian youth under 18 consume alcohol regularly. In an ironic twist on the 'single serve packaging' idea often championed by the BOP proposition, samsu is available in small bottles of about 150 ml and 'sold for as little as \$0.40–0.80. . . . It is obvious that these potent drinks are packaged to especially appeal to the poor' (Asunta *et al.*, 2001).

Aside from the government, activist movements also play a role in protecting the consumer. Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, and help each other that they may solve their common problem with alcoholism. The poor in emerging economies usually do not have access to such rehabilitation programmes. In 1991 in the USA, Heilman Brewery introduced Power-Master, a malt liquor with high alcohol content, targeted to African-American youth. A campaign led by African-American leaders resulted in the product being withdrawn from the market within a few months. Such social mechanisms for consumer protection are often very weak in developing countries, and even more so with regard to the poor people. There

is a need for checks and balances on powerful companies, especially MNCs, marketing to the poor¹. The romanticisation of the poor as 'value conscious consumers' has resulted in too little emphasis on legal, regulatory and social mechanisms to protect the vulnerable consumers.

3 POOR AS ENTREPRENEURS

Many poor people are entrepreneurs in the literal sense: they are self-employed, raise the capital, manage the business and are the residual claimants of the earnings. But, the current usage of the word 'entrepreneur' requires more than the literal definition. Entrepreneurship is the engine of Joseph Schumpeter's dynamism of 'creative destruction'. An entrepreneur is a person of vision and creativity who converts a new idea into a successful innovation, into a new business model. Some poor people are certainly true entrepreneurs, and have created thriving businesses—these are the subjects of heart-warming anecdotes. But, the empirical evidence suggests that the vast majority of the poor lack the skills, vision, creativity and drive of an entrepreneur.

Banerjee and Duflo (2006) argue that the poor have a 'reluctance to psychologically commit themselves to the project of making as much money as they can'. In a study of farmers in Kenya, Duflo *et al.* (2006) find that few farmers use fertilisers, even after the benefits—average return on investment of over 100%—have been demonstrated to them. Not many Ghanaian farmers cultivate pineapples which would achieve returns of 250–300% (The Economist, 2007). This is perhaps understandable: the poor face such bleak circumstances that they come to believe the future is hopeless. Over a hundred years ago, George Orwell wrote that poverty 'annihilates the future'—that bleak trenchant observation is just as valid today.

The vast majority of self-employed poor are caught in subsistence activities with no prospect of competitive advantage. The self-employed poor usually have no specialised skills and often practice multiple occupations (Banerjee and Duflo, 2006). Many of these businesses operate at too small a scale. The median business operated by the poor has no paid staff; most of these businesses have very few assets as well. With low skills, little capital and no scale economies, these businesses operate in arenas with low entry barriers and too much competition; they have low productivity and lead to meagre earnings that cannot lift their owners out of poverty. There is no evidence to support Prahalad's (2005) assertion that the poor are 'resilient and creative entrepreneurs'.

This should not be too surprising. Most people do not have the skills, vision, creativity and persistence to be true entrepreneurs. Even in developed countries with higher levels of education and infrastructure, about 90% of the labour force are employees rather than entrepreneurs (International Labor Organization, 2007). Even with greater availability of financial services in developed countries, only a small fraction have used credit for entrepreneurial purposes. Most poor people are not self-employed by choice and would gladly take a factory job at reasonable wages if possible. The romanticised view of the poor as 'resilient and creative entrepreneurs' is far from the truth. The International Labor Organization (ILO) uses a more appropriate term 'own account workers'.

¹For another case study in this vein, Karnani (2007b) focuses on skin whitening cream marketed by Unilever.

This romanticisation of the poor as entrepreneurs has led to an overemphasis on microcredit as a way to reduce poverty. The Nobel Peace Prize for 2006 was awarded to the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and its founder Muhammad Yunus, a pioneer of the microcredit movement. The Nobel Committee affirmed that microcredit must play 'a major part' in eliminating poverty. Many governments subsidise microcredit. For example, P. Chidambaram, Finance Minister of India, is a supporter of microcredit. The United Nations designated 2005 as the International year of Microcredit. But, the reality of microcredit is less attractive than the promise (Karnani, 2007a). Even a supporter of neoliberal policies like *The Economist* (2006b) concluded that most studies suggest that microcredit is beneficial but only to a limited extent. The problem lies not with microcredit, but rather with microenterprises.

Creating opportunities for steady employment at reasonable wages is the best way to take people out of poverty. Governments in fragile states have limited political capital and capacity. They would be better off focusing on issues such public health and education, infrastructure and sound legal and banking systems that foster modern entrepreneurship, which in turn would provide employment opportunities for the poor (Bhide and Schramm, 2007). Microlending to marginal businesses is a distraction. Bateman and Ellerman (2005) go further and argue that microcredit actually undermines long-term sustainable development through fostering informalisation, marginalisation and de-industrialisation. Microcredit is very closely identified with the promotion of informal non-industrial enterprises overwhelmingly below efficient scale, which suggests problems in the long term. Bolivia and Bangladesh are the two countries that pioneered microcredit; after more than 30 years of much microlending, it is difficult to find its positive impacts on overall economic development. The microcredit approach is plausibly implicated in the evolution of disturbingly weak, unsophisticated and very fragmented economic structure. On the other hand, countries such as China, Vietnam and South Korea have achieved rapid growth and significant reduction in poverty by fostering modern entrepreneurship, and hence job creation, through emphasis on economic reforms, public services and infrastructure.

4 ROLE OF THE STATE

Amartya Sen (2000) says 'social and economic factors such as basic education, elementary health care and secure employment are important not only in their own right, but also for the role they can play in giving people opportunity to approach the world with courage and freedom'. The state is responsible for public services such as basic education, public health, water, sanitation, public safety and infrastructure, which help increase the productivity and the employability of the poor, and thus their income and well-being. There is much debate about whether the direct production of these services should be privatised. But, few would argue that the state can totally avoid its responsibilities. For example, if water supply is privatised, the government needs to regulate the rates or ensure that the poor have enough purchasing power to buy water. In the case of a 'public good' such as sanitation and public health, the market cannot solve the problem. Even late Milton Friedman advocated school voucher system, and not for the state to withdraw totally from the field of education. The state must be responsible for services when there is a natural monopoly (piped water), when it is a public good (public health), and for the sake of equity (education). When the state fails, the market might be a partial complement, but it cannot be a total substitute. The government in every developing country certainly professes to

accept responsibility for these traditional functions. Yet, it has failed dismally to deliver on its promises.

As an example of the failure of public services, consider the case of India. The Indian economy is growing rapidly, the stock market is rising, Indian companies are expanding abroad and a large middle class is emerging. It is the best of times. Contrast this with another India. There is persistent income inequality and gender inequality. Seventy-nine per cent of Indians are below the commonly used \$2/day poverty line. Thirty-nine per cent of adults are illiterate. Ten per cent of boys and 25% of girls do not attend even primary school. Forty-nine per cent of children are underweight for their age. Nine per cent of children die in the first five years of their lives (World Bank, 2006). Seventeen per cent of rural households and 5% of urban households do not have access to safe drinking water. Seventy-eight per cent of rural households and 41% of urban households do not have adequate sanitation facilities (UNICEF, 2008). A total of 500 000 children die of diarrhoea (a waterborne disease) every year (The Times of India, 2004). The boom in the private sector has been accompanied by a significant failure of the state. The cost of this failure is borne disproportionately by the poor.

The rich often purchase these services from private enterprises. The middle class are the main beneficiaries of the public service expenditures. The poor have no or little access to these services, or get very low quality public services, or pay very high prices for private services. For example, the rich go to world-class private hospitals and clinics. The middle class has access to reasonable public health facilities. While public health centres do exist to serve rural and poor areas, these centres are grossly under funded and understaffed. Even worse, the staff are under qualified, and often absent. Children of the rich go to exclusive private schools. The middle class uses a mix of private and public schools. Children of the poor often do not go to school or go to low quality public schools. In one survey, a quarter of the teachers were absent and another quarter were present but not teaching. Absentee rates for teachers and health workers are higher in poorer regions. The rich have ample access to clean water, they purchase bottled-drinking water, drill private tube wells and use booster pumps. The middle class settles for piped water even if only for a few hours a day. The poor have no or little access to clean public water supply. The rich hire private guards. The middle class live in reasonably well-policed neighbourhoods. The poor have little protection from thugs and criminals.

The burden of failure of public services is borne disproportionately by women, which exacerbates gender inequality. Lack of access to toilets poses a bigger problem for women because of anatomy, modesty and susceptibility to attack. Women often lose much time to hauling buckets of water over long distances. Women are more likely than men to need medical care; they are expected to care for sick family members, especially children. Girls attend school less often, especially in poor families.

There is no magic solution for the failure of the state to provide these basic services, but the starting point is passion and anger at this failure. Giving a 'voice' to the poor is a central aspect of the development process. In many developing countries, an autocratic government has denied a voice to the poor. Even in developing countries with a representative democracy, the political process has been hijacked by various vested interests. The business community, bureaucrats, politicians and the media are full of self-congratulations on the booming private sector—for example, on the increased penetration of cell phones. However, the representative image of a developing country is not a cell phone, but rather defecating in public. For example, in Mumbai, the business capital of India, about 50% of the people defecate outside.

5 BOP PROPOSITION UNDER-EMPHASISES THE ROLE OF THE STATE

In recent years, the political ideology of the world has shifted decisively towards an increased role for markets. There is a growing 'neoliberal' movement which seeks to decrease the role of the state and to 'marketise' all public sector functions. In particular, the BOP proposition argues that the private sector should play the leading role in poverty reduction (Prahalad, 2005). This is a dangerous delusion because it grossly under-emphasises the role and the responsibility of the state for poverty reduction.

Contrary to the BOP proposition, the empirical evidence supports a larger role for the state in social services in developing countries. Pattnayak (2006) calculates the public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP for developed countries to be 5.46% in 1980 and 5.54% in 1997; the comparable numbers for developing countries are 3.99 and 3.92%. World Bank (2006) data indicate public education expenditure to be 5.6% of GDP for developed countries and 4.1% for developing countries, in 2004. Similarly, public health expenditure accounted for 6.7% of GDP in 2004 in high income countries compared to 1.3% in low income countries. Governments in developing countries need to play a larger role in education and public health.

Prahalad and Hammond (2002) describe the impressive extent of business activity in the slums of Dharavi (in Mumbai), 'the seeds of vibrant commercial sector have been sown'. They argue that the poor accept that access to running water is not a 'realistic option' and therefore spend their income on things that they can get now that improve the quality of their lives. Prahalad has said 'if people have no sewage and drinking water, should we also deny them televisions and cell phones'? (Time, 2005). This opens up a market, and the BOP proposition urges private companies to make significant profits by selling to the poor.

But, we should be cautious about celebrating this entrepreneurship too much and romanticising the poor. Sharma (2000) in her emotive book about Dharavi states that while enterprise in the midst of deprivation is to be admired, there is absolutely 'nothing to celebrate about living in a cramped 150 sq ft house with no natural light or ventilation, without running water or sanitation'. The UN-habitat estimates that in Dharavi there is one public toilet for every 800 people. Writing about the slums of Kibera (in Nairobi), The Economist (2007b) observed, 'most striking of all, to those inured to the sight of such places through photography, is the smell. With piles of human faeces littering the ground and sewage running freely, the stench is ever-present'.

The real issue which the BOP proposition glosses over is: why do the poor accept that access to running water is not a 'realistic option'? Even if they do, why should we all accept this bleak view? Instead, we should emphasise the failure of government and attempt to correct it.

6 CONCLUSION

A libertarian movement that emphasises free markets to reduce poverty has grown strong in recent years, and has attracted the attention of business executives, academics and public officials. This approach explicitly views the poor as 'resilient and creative entrepreneurs and value-conscious consumers'. This romanticised view of the poor is far from the truth and harms the poor in two ways. First, it results in too little emphasis on legal, regulatory and social mechanisms to protect the poor who are vulnerable consumers. Second, it results in overemphasis on microcredit and under-emphasis on fostering modern enterprises that

would provide employment opportunities for the poor. More importantly, the BOP proposition grossly under-emphasises the critical role and responsibility of the state for poverty reduction. The support for the BOP proposition is intellectually problematic; the implications of the BOP proposition are morally problematic. The BOP approach relies on the invisible hand of free markets to alleviate poverty. We should instead require the state to extend a very visible hand to the poor to help them climb out of poverty.

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