

On Poverty

Is poverty the default state of mankind? In one sense, yes, but in another sense, no. Yes, everyone is born naked and penniless. Then, through gift, trade, and production we build wealth. Some build a lot, others a little. What enables this escape from poverty is a certain level of security and stability for property rights, the ability and relative freedom to exchange with others, leading to the creation of markets and the division of labor. However, markets have only existed among mankind since the Agricultural Revolution. Before then, mankind was not materially or technologically wealthy, but neither was it impoverished. It seems to me that poverty did not become one of mankind's problems until mankind stopped living cooperatively with nature and started living exploitatively. Agriculture allowed for the advent of two of the worst practices seen among mankind all over the world: statism and slavery. First nature became exploitable, then mankind. Perhaps poverty is the result of mankind's crimes against mankind, and only removing and preventing those crimes by allowing markets and what that entails can poverty be eradicated. And that's today's two cents.