

The Psychology of Poverty Alleviation

In order to design, enact, and protect poverty alleviation policies in developing countries, we must first understand the psychology of how the poor react to their plight, and not just the psychology of the privileged called upon for sacrifice. This book integrates social and psycho-dynamic psychology, economics, policy design, and policy-process theory to explore ways to follow through on successful poverty-alleviation initiatives, while averting destructive conflict. Using eight case studies across Latin America, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, William Ascher examines successes and failures in helping the poor through affirmative action, cash transfers, social-spending targeting, subsidies, and regional development. In doing so, he demonstrates how social identities, attributions of deservingness, and perceptions of the policy process shape both the willingness to support pro-poor policies and the conflict that emerges over distributional issues.

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Challenges in Developing Countries

WILLIAM ASCHER
Claremont McKenna College



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To the memory of Jennie Litvack, an extraordinary person

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