

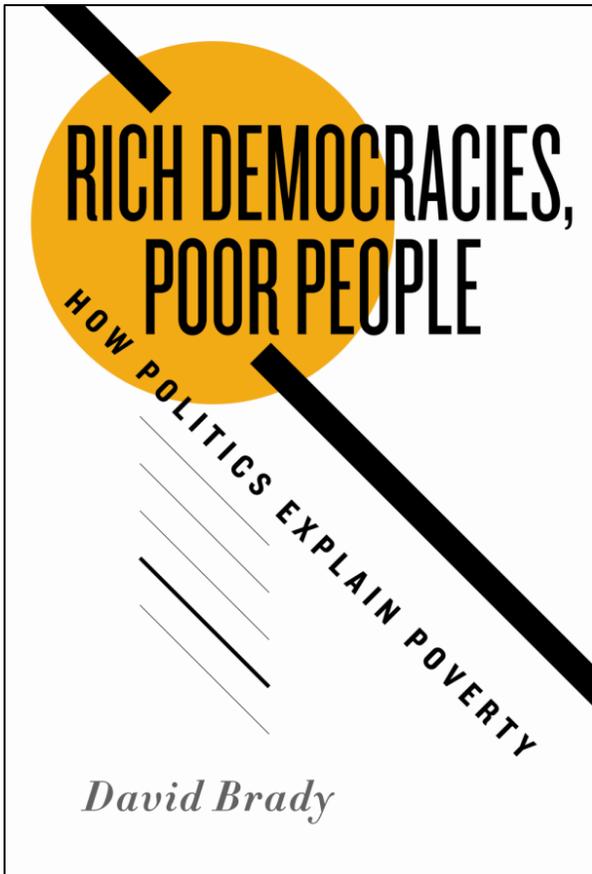
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Rich Democracies, Poor People

How Politics Explain Poverty

“David Brady has written a masterful book on understanding how such a wide variation in poverty can exist in rich, democratic societies....It will stand as the definitive explanation of institutional variation in poverty for political economists and sociologists for a long time to come.”

--Timothy Smeeding, University of Wisconsin-Madison



David Brady

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About the Book:

Poverty is not simply the result of an individual's characteristics, behaviors or abilities. Rather, as David Brady demonstrates, poverty is the result of politics. In *Rich Democracies, Poor People*, Brady investigates why poverty is so entrenched in some affluent democracies whereas it is a solvable problem in others. Drawing on over thirty years of data from eighteen countries, Brady argues that cross-national and historical variations in poverty are principally driven by differences in the generosity of the welfare state. An explicit challenge to mainstream views of poverty as an inescapable outcome of individual failings or a society's labor markets and demography, this book offers institutionalized power relations theory as an alternative explanation. The power of coalitions for egalitarianism, Leftist political groups and parties, and the social policies they are able to institutionalize shape the amount of poverty in society. Where poverty is low, equality has been institutionalized. Where poverty is widespread, exemplified by the U.S., there has been a failure to institutionalize equality. A comprehensive and state-of-the-art study, *Rich Democracies, Poor People* places the inherently political choices over resources and the political organization of states, markets, and societies at the center of the study of poverty and social inequality.

About the Author:

David Brady is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Duke University and is a widely-published author of articles on poverty, inequality, and globalization.

Advance Praise:

“With this book, David Brady punctures a number of American myths about the causes of poverty in a sophisticated and highly accessible way. Brady finds that welfare state generosity and its political antecedents ultimately drive variations in levels of poverty—thus, poverty, he argues, is a result of political choice. Brady's book is essential reading for scholars and policy makers interested in poverty in the United States and other affluent democracies.”

—John D. Stephens, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

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