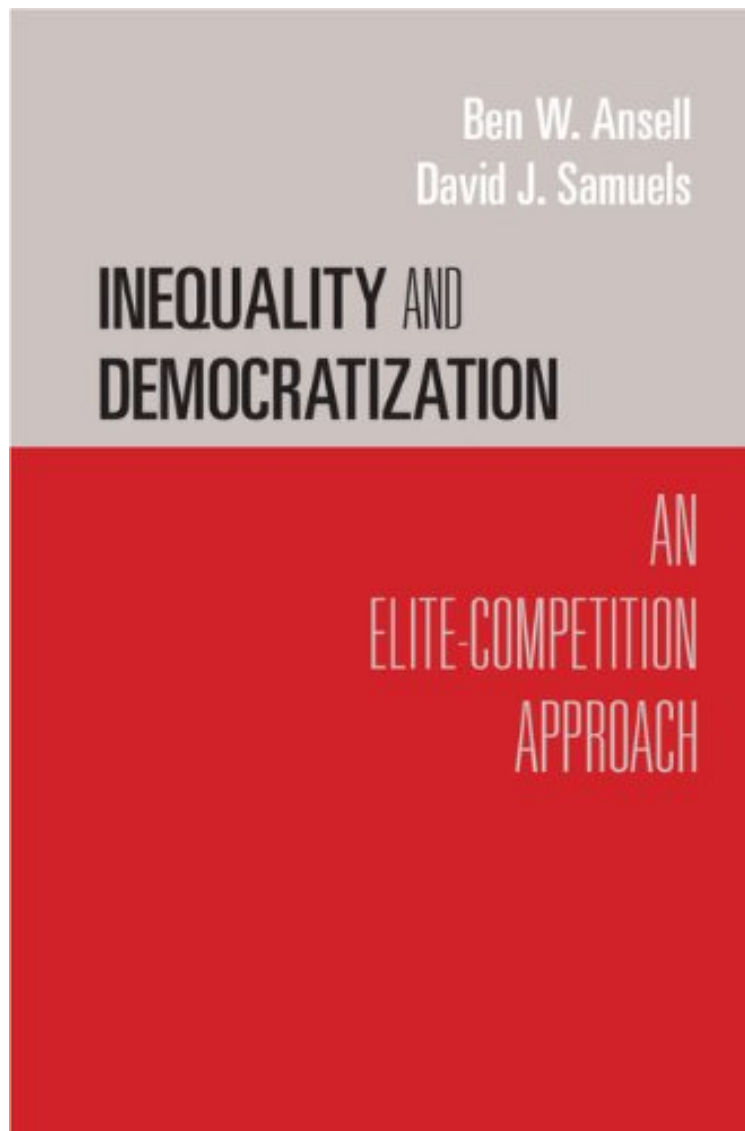


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## **Inequality and Democratization: An Elite-Competition Approach (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)**

*Ben W. Ansell, David J. Samuels*

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**Ben W. Ansell, David J. Samuels : Inequality and Democratization: An Elite-Competition Approach (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Inequality and Democratization: An Elite-Competition Approach (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting thesis, great overview of the debateBy Luis-DurhamAt

the time of writing this review, this is probably the most up to date work on the topic of democratization and how it relates to income. Most thesis up to now suggested that democracy emerged under certain economic condition to make the commitment of the rich to redistribute income to the poor credible (if you change to a democracy, people can always vote). Ansell and Samuels suggest that this is not always the case, in fact, you observe that inequality may increase. The reason for this is that you should look not just the rich elite vs the poor, but instead at an emerging middle class. Sometimes the poor may not be the main actors (this is actually the case most of the time), instead the bourgeoisie is. Democracy is then not a conflict not between the rich and the poor but between the old and the new elites. The book mobilizes a huge amount of evidence and is very well written. I am giving it five stars, not because I think it says things that are clearly correct, but they will make you think and it engages the literature in a rigorous fashion. If you want to read a single book on this topic (democratization and income distribution), this is the one I would choose. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By JessZarkGreat book to compare to traditional median voter theories

Research on the economic origins of democracy and dictatorship has shifted away from the impact of growth and turned toward the question of how different patterns of growth - equal or unequal - shape regime change. This book offers a new theory of the historical relationship between economic modernization and the emergence of democracy on a global scale, focusing on the effects of land and income inequality. Contrary to most mainstream arguments, Ben W. Ansell and David J. Samuels suggest that democracy is more likely to emerge when rising, yet politically disenfranchised, groups demand more influence because they have more to lose, rather than when threats of redistribution to elite interests are low.

"This gem of a book engages with one of the fundamental relationships in political economy: the relationship between democratization and inequality. The received wisdom is that inequality serves as a brake on democratization because the autocratic elites fear the redistributive demands of the poor median voter. Ansell and Samuels offer an illuminating new approach - the elite-competition approach - and rigorously argue that rising income inequality, in fact, fosters democratization as emerging economic groups demand political influence to insure against the old autocratic elite's power to expropriate their income and assets. The book is a major contribution to the field of political economy that will inspire and challenge researchers and students alike." Toke Aidt, University of Cambridge "[Inequality and Democratization] challenges the widely believed claim that demand for redistribution motivates democratization. Ansell and Samuels assemble very persuasive evidence to support their arguments. This is path-breaking research that will change the way social scientists think about one of the really big questions." Barbara Geddes, University of California, Los Angeles "In this book, Ansell and Samuels explicitly challenge received wisdom about democratization based on redistributive motives. These works emphasize democracy as a threat to property. Ansell and Samuels draw on ideas of liberalism and the enlightenment, such as Locke on the need to control the arbitrary behavior of governments. This approach suggests that democratization may result when property interests seek constraints on arbitrary or predatory government. Ansell and Samuels are sure to join the ranks of Acemoglu and Robinson, Boix, and Przeworski in furthering our understanding of democratization." Barry R. Weingast, Stanford University "... an important and much-needed contribution to the study of inequality and democratization ... a must-read for students and scholars interested in inequality ..." Nils B. Weidmann, s and Critical Commentary About the Author Ben W. Ansell is Professor of Comparative Democratic Institutions at Nuffield College, Oxford, and co-editor of Comparative Political Studies. His work on education, democracy, and housing markets has appeared in the American Political Science , Comparative Political Studies, World Politics, and International Organization. His book From the Ballot to the Blackboard (Cambridge, 2010) was awarded the 2011 William Riker Prize by the Political Economy Section of the American Political Science Association. David J. Samuels is Distinguished McKnight University Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota. He is the coauthor of Presidents, Parties, and Prime Ministers (Cambridge, 2010); the author of Ambition, Federalism, and Legislative Politics in Brazil (Cambridge, 2003); and the co-editor of Decentralization and Democracy in Latin America (2004). His work has appeared in the American Political Science , the American Journal of Political Science, Comparative Politics, Comparative Political Studies, Legislative Studies Quarterly, and the British Journal of Political Science. He currently serves as co-editor of Comparative Political Studies.