

## **Poverty: Theories on the Cause of Nature of Poverty (Nonfiction)**

- *The Truly Disadvantaged : The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (1987)  
William Julius Wilson  
Utilizing demographic data from his native Chicago, Wilson details his theory of spatial mismatch and social isolation as the cause of poverty among African-Americans in urban environments.
- *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (1996) – William Julius Wilson  
The author expands on his theories of spatial mismatch and social isolation, and outlines a series of programs that can help the urban poor and middle class.
- *The Other America* (1962) – Michael Harrington  
Credited with “rediscovering” poverty in the 1960’s , this is Harrington’s classic account of an isolated and self-perpetuating underclass.
- *Beyond Entitlement: The Obligations of Citizenship* (2001) – Lawrence M. Mead  
Mead argues the problem with the welfare system is not its size, but is permissive nature, and advocates making welfare benefits conditional upon a beneficiary’s willingness to work.
- *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980* (1995) – Charles Murray  
Murray, most famous for co-authoring *The Bell Curve*, maintains the social programs of the Great Society missed the mark: instead of helping the poor, they often made things worse.
- *Poor Support* (1988) – David T. Ellwood  
Ellwood rejects the arguments made by Charles Murray and Lawrence Mead, and, instead offers his own interpretation of what causes poverty and how the government can remedy it.
- *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (1971) – Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, eds.  
Considered by many a social science classic, Piven and Cloward mix history, politics, and sociology in their analysis of social welfare programs.
- *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present* (1996) – Mimi Abramovitz  
Abramovitz provides analysis of the role of gender in social welfare programs, and the “feminization of poverty.”