

# Is Democracy Good for the Poor?

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*Many scholars claim that democracy improves the welfare of the poor. This article uses data on infant and child mortality to challenge this claim. Cross-national studies tend to exclude from their samples nondemocratic states that have performed well; this leads to the mistaken inference that nondemocracies have worse records than democracies. Once these and other flaws are corrected, democracy has little or no effect on infant and child mortality rates. Democracies spend more money on education and health than nondemocracies, but these benefits seem to accrue to middle- and upper-income groups.*