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THE BOOK

“Brilliant and engagingly written, *Why Nations Fail?* answers the question that has stumped the experts for centuries: Why are some nations rich and others poor, divided by wealth and poverty, health and sickness, food and famine? Is it culture, the weather, geography? Perhaps ignorance of what the right policies are?

Simply, no. None of these factors is either definitive or destiny. Otherwise, how to explain why Botswana has become one of the fastest-growing countries in the world, while other African nations, such as Zimbabwe, the Congo, and Sierra Leone, are mired in poverty and violence?

James Robinson and Daron Acemoglu conclusively show that it is man-made political and economic institutions that underlie economic success (or the lack of it).

Based on fifteen years of original research, Robinson and Acemoglu marshal extraordinary historical evidence from the Roman Empire, the Mayan city-states, medieval Venice, the Soviet Union, Latin America, England, Europe, the United States, and Africa to build a new theory of political economy with great relevance for the big questions of today.”

THE AUTHOR

James A. Robinson, a political scientist and an economist, is the David Florence Professor of Government at Harvard University. A world-renowned expert on Latin America and Africa, he is currently conducting research in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Haiti and in Colombia where he has taught for many years during the summer at the University of the Andes in Bogotá.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

“You will have three reasons to love this book. It’s about national income differences within the modern world, perhaps the biggest problem facing the world today. It’s peppered with fascinating stories that will make you a spellbinder at cocktail parties—such as why Botswana is prospering and Sierra Leone isn’t. And it’s a great read. Like me, you may succumb to reading it in one go, and then you may come back to it again and again.”

—Jared Diamond, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the bestsellers *Guns, Germs, and Steel and Collapse*.

“Some time ago a little-known Scottish philosopher wrote a book on what makes nations succeed and what makes them fail. *The Wealth of Nations* is still being read today. With the same perspicacity and with the same broad historical perspective, Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson have retackled this same question for our own times. Two centuries from now our great-great-...-great grandchildren will be, similarly, reading *Why Nations Fail*.”

—George Akerlof, Nobel laureate in economics, 2001.