

The Experts' War on Poverty

Social Research and the Welfare Agenda in Postwar America

ROMAIN D. HURET

TRANSLATED BY JOHN ANGELL

AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIETY

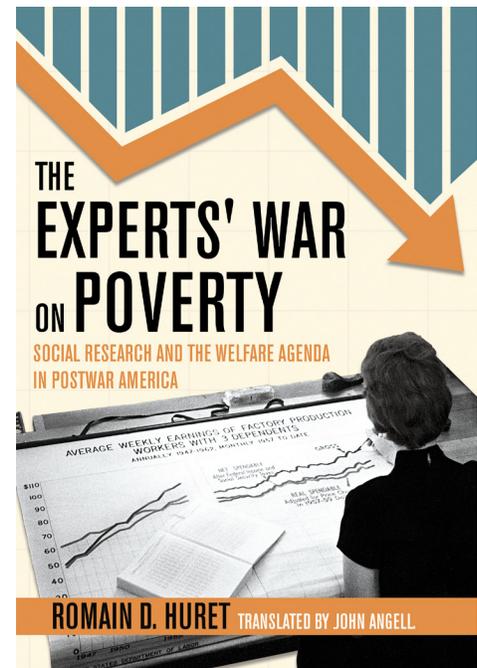
\$49.95 | 246 PAGES | HARDCOVER

In the critically acclaimed *La Fin de la Pauvreté*, Romain D. Huret identifies a network of experts who were dedicated to the post–World War II battle against poverty in the United States. John Angell's translation of Huret's work illuminates for an English-speaking audience this critical set of intellectuals working in federal government, academic institutions, and think tanks. Their efforts to create a policy bureaucracy to support federal socio-economic action spanned from the last days of the New Deal to the late 1960s when President Richard M. Nixon implemented the Family Assistance Plan. Often toiling in obscurity, this cadre of experts waged their own war on poverty and the American political establishment. Their policy recommendations, as Huret shows, often militated against the unscientific prejudices and electoral calculations that ruled Washington, DC, politics.

The Experts' War on Poverty highlights the metrics, research, and economic and social facts these social scientists employed, and reveals the unstable institutional foundation of successive executive efforts to grapple with gross social and economic disparities in the United States. Huret argues that this internal war, at a time of great disruption due to the Cold War, undermined and fractured the institutional system officially directed at ending poverty. The official War on Poverty was thus fomented and maintained by a group of experts determined to fight poverty in radical ways that outstripped both the operational capacity of the federal government and the political will of a succession of presidents.

ROMAIN D. HURET is Professor at the School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (France) and director of the Center for North American Studies (*Mondes Américains*). He is the author, most recently, of *American Tax Resisters*.

JOHN ANGELL is a translator for Vice Versa Language Services and teaches English at Paris 3/Sorbonne Nouvelle.



“The Experts' War on Poverty is a fascinating book. Romain Huret offers a refreshing perspective on a time when the U.S. and its economists cared a lot about poverty and inequality. This is a great combination of political, economic, and intellectual history.”

—Thomas Piketty, author of *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*

“This carefully researched book adds a great deal to our understanding of the war on poverty and should command the attention of policy historians on both sides of the Atlantic.”

—Edward Berkowitz, Professor Emeritus, George Washington University

“Romain Huret offers a compelling take on the politics of drawing attention to inequality in the proverbial age of affluence.”

—Alice O'Connor, author of *Social Science for What?*

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