Rethinking Poverty

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Published by Bristol University Press

Knight, Barry.
Rethinking Poverty: What makes a good society?
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In our society, a wealthy minority flourish, while around one-fifth experience chronic poverty and many people on middle incomes fear for their futures.

Social policy has failed to find answers to these problems and there is now a demand for a new narrative to enable us to escape from the crisis in our society.

With the aim of ending poverty, this book argues that we need to start with the society we want, rather than framing poverty as a problem to be solved. It calls for a bold forward-looking social policy that addresses continuing austerity, under-resourced organisations and a lack of social solidarity.

Based on a research programme carried out by the Webb Memorial Trust involving leading organisations, academics, community activists, people in poverty, children and surveys of more than 12,000 people, a key theme is power. The research shows that the way forward is to increase people’s sense of agency in building the society that they want.

Barry Knight is a social scientist and statistician, and Director of the Webb Memorial Trust. Having advised the Ford Foundation and the CS Mott Foundation, he now works with the Global Fund for Community Foundations, the Arab Reform Initiative and the European Foundation Centre. He is co-chair of the Working Group on Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace and is the author or editor of 14 books on poverty, civil society, community development and democracy.