



Broke and Patriotic: Why Poor Americans Love Their Country

Francesco Duina

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Winner of 2018 Independent Publisher Book Award (Current Events)

Why are poor Americans so patriotic? They have significantly worse social benefits compared to other Western nations, and studies show that the American Dream of upward mobility is, for them, largely a myth. So why do these people love their country? Why have they not risen up to demand more from a system that is failing them?

In *Broke and Patriotic*, Francesco Duina contends that the best way to answer these questions is to speak directly to America's most impoverished. Spending time in bus stations, Laundromats, senior citizen centers, homeless shelters, public libraries, and fast food restaurants, Duina conducted over sixty revealing interviews in which his participants explain how they view themselves and their country. He masterfully weaves their words into three narratives. First, America's poor still see their country as the "last hope" for themselves and the world: America offers its people a sense of dignity, closeness to God, and answers to most of humanity's problems. Second, America is still the "land of milk and honey: " a very rich and generous country where those who work hard can succeed. Third, America is the freest country on earth where self-determination is still possible.

This book offers a stirring portrait of the people left behind by their country and left out of the national conversation. By giving them a voice, Duina sheds new light on a sector of American society that we are only beginning to recognize as a powerful force in shaping the country's future.

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Jim says

I won this book on Goodreads. I am not surprised that the people interviewed responded the way they did, including those in the appendix. These people blamed themselves for their circumstances and they owned up to it. It wasn't anyone else that caused it, they didn't blame someone else for it. Sure they may have some misconceptions about other cultures and countries but their words ring true. I have been to over 60 different countries and see that even some developing countries have the same freedoms in America but also I see in Western Europe and Canada that the taxes are really high and the majority of their paycheck goes to people who aren't working and just looking for a handout on someone's hard earned money, and although everyone has healthcare in those countries, they have to wait a long time to get it and seeing a specialized doctor can take months or years. Just because everyone has healthcare doesn't mean it is good healthcare either. Most of those people interviewed just wanted government to stay out of their lives so they can live in freedom. America is the best country to live in. An interesting study.

Naomi says

A terrific exploration of what patriotism means to the poor Americans Duina interviewed, and leading us to questions for what that means for democracy and governance.

Janette McMahon says

Interesting interviews and look at a segment poor Americans. I had read Strangers in Their Own Land and feel this book makes a good companion and extended reading on this subject.

William Nist says

The work addresses the question of: why the poor in the US turn out to be more patriotic than other economic classes. After establishing this to be the case, the author interviews 63 members of this class in Alabama and Montana.

The answer turns out to be that they believe in the founding principles of the country i.e., INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM and EQUAL JUSTICE; they believe that their poverty is their OWN choice (fault); they believe that America is the LAST GREAT HOPE for the world; they believe that GOD has blessed and favored the United States; they believe that only America offers HOPE of a better life; and that America is truly the Land OF MILK AND HONEY. They identify with their country and it provides the basis for their self worth and pride.

There are many problems with this study, beginning with the two states in which these interviews were conducted. I think if the interviews were recorded in, say, Massachusetts and New Mexico, the finding may

be quite different!

The author does draw attention to some of the pitfalls in the findings of his study when he discusses the affect of a demagogue with captured media on the beliefs of this class of individuals, and the possibility of the erosion of some the suppositions of the interviewees with cultural change. But this was almost a footnote in the content of this work.

The bulk of the book was direct quotations from the interviewees, which I found tedious, next to unreadable and certainly unnecessary. This book could really be boiled down to a good article for the Atlantic!

Kathy Heare Watts says

I won a copy of this book during a Goodreads giveaway. I am under no obligation to leave a review or rating and do so voluntarily. I am paying it forward by passing this book along to a family member who I think will enjoy it too.

James Scheid says

A non fiction book about why the poor are patriotic and love their country. The book is interesting and some of the interviewees are amazingly perceptive. Other direct quotes meander and the author could of edited them or just give a general over view of their viewpoint. It seems that some of the people need to feel proud of their country for they need to feel good about something. The author limited his interviewees to people from Alabama and Montana. This is limited in its scope.
