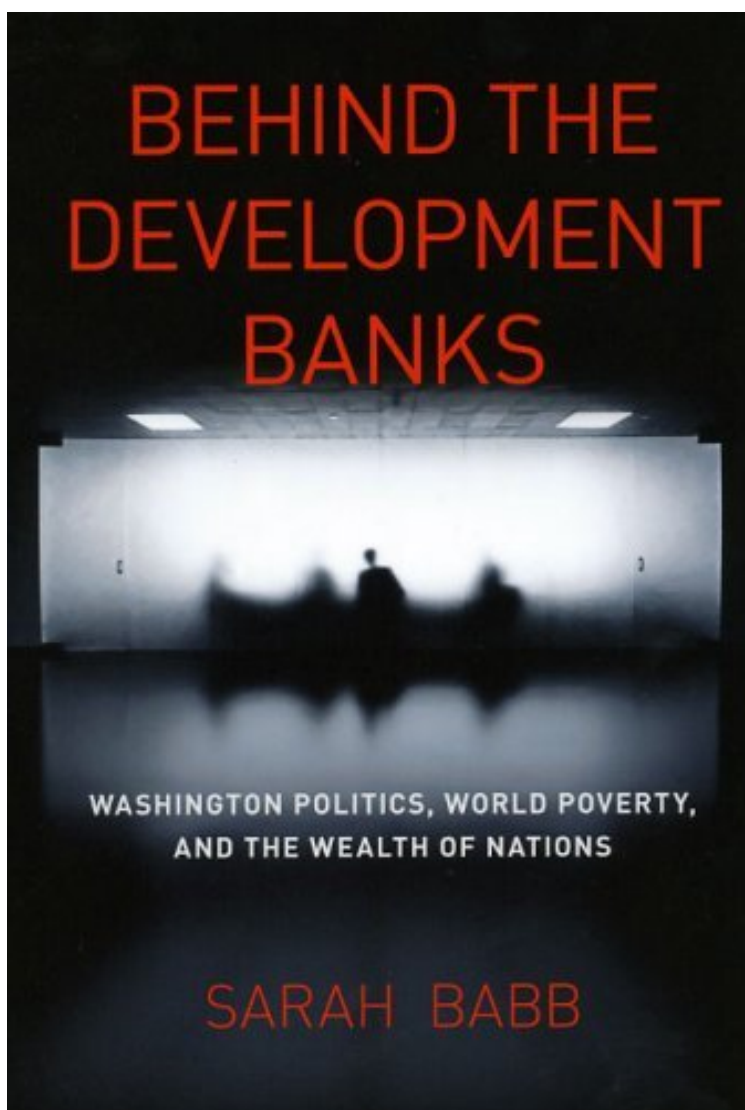


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## Behind the Development Banks: Washington Politics, World Poverty, and the Wealth of Nations

*Sarah Babb*

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intellectual nonfiction. Professor Babb's book interview ran here as cover feature on August 17, 2009.

The World Bank and other multilateral development banks (MDBs) carry out their mission to alleviate poverty and promote economic growth based on the advice of professional economists. But as Sarah Babb argues in *Behind the Development Banks*, these organizations have also been indelibly shaped by Washington politics—particularly by the legislative branch and its power of the purse. Tracing American influence on MDBs over three decades, this volume assesses increased congressional activism and the perpetual “selling” of banks to Congress by the executive branch. Babb contends that congressional reluctance to fund the MDBs has enhanced the influence of the United States on them by making credible America’s threat to abandon the banks if its policy preferences are not followed. At a time when the United States’ role in world affairs is being closely scrutinized, *Behind the Development Banks* will be necessary reading for anyone interested in how American politics helps determine the fate of developing countries.

"I know of no other book which examines full-on the impact of Washington politics - and especially the unique split between executive branch and legislative branch in the American polity - on the functioning of a multilateral organization. Sarah Babb has delved deeply into archival sources and supplemented them with more academic literature and some interviews. The result is a well-written book, accessible to a wide readership and not just to students and scholars." - Robert H. Wade, London School of Economics and Political Science  
About the Author Sarah Babb is associate professor of sociology at Boston College. She is the author of *Managing Mexico: Economists from Nationalism to Neoliberalism* and coauthor of *Economy/Society: Markets, Meanings, and Social Structure*.