



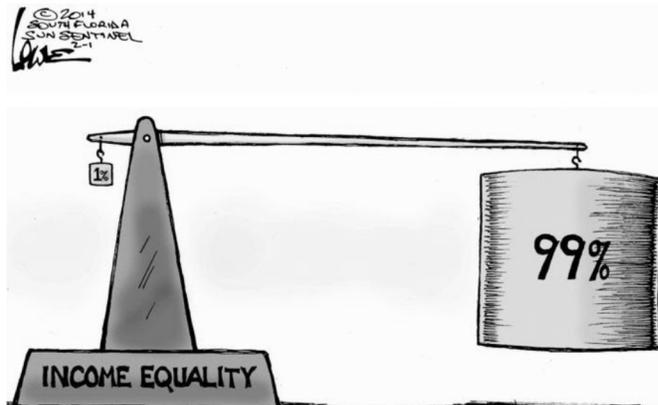
Introduction to the UIL Fall Topic 2023

Resolved: Wealth inequality in the United States is detrimental to democracy.

1

Evaluating the Topic

Resolved: Wealth inequality in the United States is detrimental to democracy.



2

Resolved: Wealth inequality in the United States is detrimental to democracy.

What is “wealth inequality?”

Thomas Mitchell, professor of law at the University of Wisconsin Law School, offers the following explanation of how “wealth” statistics are compiled: “Family wealth, also known as net worth, is the gross assets a family owns minus the financial liabilities the family has incurred. Assets fall into two categories: consumable assets, which include equity in homes and vehicles; and financial assets, such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, 401(k) accounts, rental property, the equity in a business, and assets one owns that are held by a bank or other financial institution. Liabilities may be secured, such as is the case with mortgages on real estate one owns or vehicle loans, or unsecured, such as credit card debt or student loans.” (Howard Law Journal, Spr. 2013, p. 856)

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Resolved: Wealth inequality in the United States is detrimental to democracy.

What is meant by “detrimental?”

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the term as “obviously harmful” (<http://beta.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/detrimental>).

Cambridge English Dictionary defines “detrimental” as “causing harm or damage” (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/detrimental>).

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Resolved: Wealth inequality in the United States is detrimental to democracy.

What is meant by “democracy?”

This resolution specifies the core value of “democracy.” So, what is democracy?

The late Robert Dahl, distinguished professor of political science at Yale, summarized the central tenets of democracy: “Democracy, as an institutional arrangement, ought to ensure the following conditions: (1) Freedom to form and join organizations; (2) Freedom of expression; (3) Right to vote; (4) Eligibility for public office; (5) Right of political leaders to compete for support; (6) Alternative sources of information; (7) Free and fair elections; (8) Institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preferences” (quoted in Otto Davis, Encyclopedia of Public Choice, 2003, p. 167).

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Criterion for Democracy: Equal Voice

Christian Welzel, (Pres., World Values Survey Association), WHY THE FUTURE IS DEMOCRATIC, Apr. 2021. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/why-the-future-is-democratic/>

That people should be able to live in freedom and have an equal voice and vote in the public sphere is the core idea of modern democracy. This idea has firm roots in the Enlightenment view of human nature. According to this view, all humans are equipped with the faculty to think for themselves, make reasonable judgements, and tame their self-interest in light of the common good. Furthermore, people are entitled, simply by virtue of their humanity, to be trained in these faculties and to utilize them to participate in the political process and to determine their own futures.

AFF Issue No. 1: Wealth inequality undermines political voice.

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Wealth Inequality Is Now at Record Levels

Sam Ben-Meir, (Prof., Philosophy, City University of New York), FREEING AMERICA FROM THE QUAGMIRE OF INEQUALITY, Mar. 15, 2023. Retrieved Apr. 7, 2023 from <https://citywatchla.com/index.php/cw/voices/26619-freeing-america-from-the-quagmire-of-inequality>

The levels of wealth inequality we are currently witnessing in this country are unprecedented and alarming. The very richest among us have succeeded in grabbing ever more of the proverbial pie, and the trend is only worsening. Wealth inequality is proving disastrous for America. On both collective and individual levels, we are suffering because of the ever-growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a tiny few.

AFF Issue No. 1: Wealth inequality undermines political voice.

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Wealth Inequality Is Widening

Katherine Schaeffer, (Analyst, Pew Research Center), INCOME INEQUALITY, 2022, 29.

The wealth gap between America's richest and poorer families more than doubled from 1989 to 2016, according to a recent analysis by the Center. Another way of measuring inequality is to look at household wealth, also known as net worth, or the value of assets owned by a family, such as a home or a savings account, minus outstanding debt, such as a mortgage or student loan.

AFF Issue No. 1: Wealth inequality undermines political voice.

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Citizens United Decision Gives Corporations Unequal Voice

John Hammond, (Prof., Sociology, Hunter College), TAX THE RICH, BECAUSE INEQUALITY IS BAD FOR ALL OF US, Mar. 14, 2023. Retrieved Apr. 7, 2023 from jacobin.com/2023/03/tax-the-rich-invest-in-our-new-york-dsa-inequality

Inequality inhibits democracy by financing capitalists' campaign contributions, lobbying, and control of the media, giving them the power to impose policies that favor their interests at the expense of others. The Supreme Court's 2013 Citizens United decision allows corporations to make unlimited campaign contributions. They can support lobbyists in Washington and in state capitals, working day in and day out, maintaining continuous personal contacts, providing information, incentives, and pressure to persuade legislators and regulators to support their interests.

AFF Issue No. 1: Wealth inequality undermines political voice.

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Wealthy Americans Have Unequal Voice in Campaign Financing

Brennan Center for Justice, INFLUENCE OF BIG MONEY, Aug. 1, 2023. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from <https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/reform-money-politics/influence-big-money>

Today, thanks Supreme Court decisions like Citizens United, big money dominates U.S. political campaigns to a degree not seen in decades. Super PACs allow billionaires to pour unlimited amounts into campaigns, drowning out the voices of ordinary Americans. Dark money groups mask the identities of their donors, preventing voters from knowing who's trying to influence them. And races for a congressional seat regularly attract tens of millions in spending. It's no wonder that most people believe the super-wealthy have much more influence than the rest of us.

AFF Issue No. 1: Wealth inequality undermines political voice.

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Wealthy Americans Have Unequal Voice in Legislation

Douglas Amy, (Prof., Emeritus of Politics, Mount Holyoke College), SECOND-RATE DEMOCRACY, Nov. 9, 2022. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from <https://secondratedemocracy.com/private-money-in-campaigns/>

The question of whether donations influence floor votes on bills used to be hotly debated by political scientists. But as Clayton Peoples has noted, the most recent and largest studies have found compelling evidence for a causal connection between campaign donations and the way some politicians vote on bills. And not surprisingly, contributors' influence over votes tends to increase on "low visibility" bills—where constituents are less likely to know about the bill or how their representative voted on it. Every so often, the trading of contributions for votes on bills is done explicitly.

AFF Issue No. 1: Wealth inequality undermines political voice.

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AFF Issue No. 1: Wealth inequality undermines political voice.

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The Democratic Ideal Calls for Elimination of Social Classes Based on Race

William Justice Brennan, Jr., (U.S. Supreme Court Justice), UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH LAW REVIEW, Spr. 1986, 707.

The democratic ideal has been variously stated. One of the best definitions we owe to Professors Lasswell and McDougal: “The supreme value of democracy is the dignity and worth of the individual; hence a democratic society is a commonwealth of mutual deference -- a commonwealth where there is full opportunity to mature talent into socially creative skill, free from discrimination on grounds of religion, culture, or class. It is a society in which such specific values as power, respect and knowledge are widely shared and are not concentrated in the hands of a single group, class or institution -- the state -- among the many institutions of society.”

AFF Issue No. 2: Racial Inequality Threatens Democracy.

13

The Greatest Wealth Disparities in the U.S. Are Based on Race

Mark Barnum, (Reporter, Chalkbeat), INCOME INEQUALITY, 2022, 32.

America's racial wealth gap is massive. The median Black household with children has a net worth of \$300, compared to \$47,250 for the median white family. Those Black families have 1%, and Hispanic families have 8%, of the average white family's wealth.

AFF Issue No. 2: Racial Inequality Threatens Democracy.

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The Greatest Wealth Disparity Undermines Political Power

David Mitchell et al., (David Mitchell, Dir., Government Relations, Washington Center for Equitable Growth), THE CONSEQUENCES OF POLITICAL INEQUALITY AND VOTER SUPPRESSION FOR U.S. ECONOMIC INEQUALITY AND GROWTH, Feb. 3, 2021. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from <https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/the-consequences-of-political-inequality-and-voter-suppression-for-u-s-economic-inequality-and-growth/>

As a result, higher-income citizens of the United States are more likely to vote than their lower-income counterparts. This disparity is exacerbated because lower-income Americans are less likely to get paid time off from work, more regularly move their places of residence, are incarcerated at higher rates, and are more likely to face unstable transportation and child care arrangements.

AFF Issue No. 2: Racial Inequality Threatens Democracy.

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Economic Instability Is Detrimental to Democracy

Edward S. Herman, (Economist), Z MAGAZINE, Mar. 2005. Retrieved Nov. 10, 2011 from http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Class_War/Bush_Class_Warfare.html.

It was a longstanding democratic ideal to have property widely owned, with a world of small proprietors, hopefully making for social stability and a substantive democracy, one not overpowered by economic inequality.

Richard Bessel, (U. of York), DEMOCRATIZATION, 1997, 82.

Economic instability undermines democratic government by making it more difficult to set social and economic priorities, which is the fundamental task of government.

AFF Issue No. 3: Economic Instability Threatens Democracy.

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Wealth Inequality in America Is Extensive

Raoul Martinez, (Philosopher & Documentary Filmmaker), ON EQUALITY AND FREEDOM, 2022, 13.

Within nations, wealth inequality is far worse than income inequality. In the United States, wealth inequality has risen rapidly and consistently since the mid-1980s. The top 10 percent now own 77 percent of all wealth; the top 0.1 percent own about as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent of the population combined.

Raoul Martinez, (Philosopher & Documentary Filmmaker), ON EQUALITY AND FREEDOM, 2022, 28.

According to one estimate, [Jeff Bezos] makes over \$8 million an hour. It would take an average Amazon employee—on the minimum wage, working 12 hours a day, every day—over 136 years to pocket 1 hour's worth of Bezos's income.

AFF Issue No. 3: Economic Instability Threatens Democracy.

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Wealth Inequality Creates Economic Instability

Sam Ben-Meir, (Prof., Philosophy, City University of New York), FREEING AMERICA FROM THE QUAGMIRE OF INEQUALITY, Mar. 15, 2023. Retrieved Apr. 7, 2023 from <https://citywatchla.com/index.php/cw/voices/26619-freeing-america-from-the-quagmire-of-inequality>

The intensifying concentration of wealth, and unjustifiable level of income inequality is proving disastrous in many ways. Here are just a few of them. First, less equal societies typically have more unstable economies, and this country is no exception. “The United States experienced two major economic crises over the past century—the Great Depression starting in 1929 and the Great Recession starting in 2007. Both were preceded by a sharp increase in income and wealth inequality.”

AFF Issue No. 3: Economic Instability Threatens Democracy.

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Economic Instability Puts American Democracy at Risk

Anshu Siripurapu, (Analyst, Council on Foreign Relations), THE U.S. INEQUALITY DEBATE, Apr. 20, 2022. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2022 from <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-inequality-debate>

Inequality is a drag on economic growth and fosters political dysfunction, experts say. Concentrated income and wealth reduces the level of demand in the economy because rich households tend to spend less of their income than poorer ones. Reduced opportunities for low-income households can also hurt the economy. “When those at the bottom of the income distribution are at great risk of not living up to their potential, the economy pays a price not only with weaker demand today, but also with lower growth in the future,” economist Joseph Stiglitz writes.

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AFF Issue No. 3: Economic Instability Threatens Democracy.

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Economic Freedom Is Essential to American Democracy

William Dunkelberg, (Prof., Emeritus of Business, Temple U.), ECONOMIC FREEDOM IS ESSENTIAL TO DEMOCRACY, June 6, 2018. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from www.forbes.com/sites/william_dunkelberg/2018/06/06/democracy-and-small-business/?sh=716ea3a654b3

Political freedom and the right to express views openly as well as to vote free of coercion are critical, but economic freedom, the right to use the fruits of our labor every day without political influence, is essential for democracy to thrive.

NEG Case 1: Wealth Inequality Is an Essential Counterpart to Economic Freedom

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Enforced Equality Results in Despotism

Deirdre McCloskey, (Prof., Economics, Emeritus, U. of Illinois at Chicago), GROWTH, NOT FORCED EQUALITY, SAVES THE POOR, Dec. 23, 2016. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/23/business/growth-not-forced-equality-saves-the-poor.html>

We need to allow for rewards that tell the economy to increase the activity earning them. If a brain surgeon and a taxi driver earn the same amount, we won't have enough brain surgeons. Why bother? An all-wise central plan could force the right people into the right jobs. But such a solution, like much of the case for a compelled equality, is violent and magical. The magic has been tried, in Stalin's Russia and Mao's China. So has the violence.

NEG Case 1: Wealth Inequality Is an Essential Counterpart to Economic Freedom

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Wealth Inequality Is an Inevitable Result of Allowing People to Make Choices

John Tamny, (Editor of Real Clear Markets, for Prager University), INCOME INEQUALITY IS GOOD, Mar. 26, 2022. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from https://assets.ctfassets.net/qnesrjodfi80/yH7we4V3nEq6UcKOWcmku/f657cc2e889beb0ec8ffc845cb7d6659/tamny-income_inequality_is_good-transcript.pdf

In a country like the United States, you are free to pursue a path in life that you believe best suits your talents. That talent might be teaching, or making music, or banking, or starting a small business, or raising a family. Whatever it is, this freedom helps to make life enjoyable, exciting and meaningful. But it's also an expression of inequality. This is simply because we're all different. We have different talents, different temperaments, different ambitions. That's okay because – again in a free society – we can seek out opportunities that play to our personal strengths; that distinguish us from others. If you find what you're really good at and work hard, you might have great success and make a lot of money.

NEG Case 1: Wealth Inequality Is an Essential Counterpart to Economic Freedom

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Economic Freedom Means That Compensation Is Determined by the Marketplace

Kenneth Hersh, (President, George W. Bush Presidential Center), TRUST OUR MARKET INSTITUTIONS BECAUSE THE ROAD FROM BUDAPEST TO CARACAS IS A SHORT ONE, Winter 2022. Retrieved Aug. 20, 2023 from <https://www.bushcenter.org/catalyst/restoring-trust-in-institutions/hersh-trust-our-market-institutions>

One of our governing philosophies has been that human beings realize their fullest potential by maximizing political and economic freedom. Market economies innovate and allocate resources better than any other system. When people are free to work and innovate, dignity rises along with productivity and income. Democratic capitalism has led to world-changing advances and has lifted billions out of poverty. Of course, no system is perfect, but empirical evidence supporting freedom, democracy, and capitalism is just too hard to ignore.

NEG Case 1: Wealth Inequality Is an Essential Counterpart to Economic Freedom

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Wealth Accumulation at the Top Is a Reward for Innovative Ideas That Benefit All Americans

Deirdre McCloskey, (Prof., Economics, Emeritus, U. of Illinois at Chicago), GROWTH, NOT FORCED EQUALITY, SAVES THE POOR, Dec. 23, 2016. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/23/business/growth-not-forced-equality-saves-the-poor.html>

Another eminent philosopher, John Rawls of Harvard, articulated what he called the Difference Principle: If the entrepreneurship of a rich person made the poorest better off, then the higher income of the entrepreneur was justified. It works for me.

NEG Case 1: Wealth Inequality Is an Essential Counterpart to Economic Freedom

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Wealth Equality Can Leave Everyone Worse Off

Edward Stringham, (Prof., Economic Organizations and Innovation, Trinity College), DECRYING INCOME INEQUALITY IS A HARMFUL TACTIC THAT WILL MAKE US ALL WORSE OFF, Nov. 20, 2019. Retrieved Jan. 27, 2023 from <https://www.independent.org/news/article.asp?id=12989>

Consider choosing between the following two actual countries. Country A has much more inequality than Country B. On the Gini measure of inequality where 0 indicates perfect equality and 100 perfect inequality, Country A has a Gini index of 45 (the 103rd least-equal country) and Country B has a Gini index of 26 (among the top-ten most equal countries). In Country A, the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is \$62,000, while in Country B, the GDP per capita is \$5,700. In Country A, income in the highest quintile averages \$143,000 and in the lowest quintile \$15,500. In Country B, income in the highest quintile averages \$10,300 and in the lowest quintile \$2,900. Country A describes the United States, and Country B describes the far more equal former Soviet state of Belarus. While everyone in Belarus is relatively much more equal, they are certainly not better off. In fact, relative to the rest of the world, the citizens of Belarus are for the most part, much poorer.”

NEG Case 1: Wealth Inequality Is an Essential Counterpart to Economic Freedom

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Americans at All Levels Are Better Off Now Than in Earlier Decades

James Elwell, (Economist, Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation), UNITED STATES INCOME, WEALTH, CONSUMPTION, AND INEQUALITY, 2021, 91-92.

When we adjust for government taxes, include cash and in-kind transfers, but exclude the value of Medicare, Medicaid, and ESI benefits—thus creating a lower bound measure of disposable income—we find that all five quintiles have experienced gains of more than 100 percent since 1959, with the highest gains among the top and bottom quintiles. When we include the market values of Medicare, Medicaid, and ESI (the former two of which are programs that only began in 1966) in our upper bound measures of disposable income, the bottom quintile of the income distribution registers the greatest gains since 1959 and there are much smaller differences in gains across the other quintiles.

NEG Case 1: Wealth Inequality Is an Essential Counterpart to Economic Freedom

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Official U.S. Poverty Statistics Are Misleading

John Early, (Former Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics & Adjunct Scholar, Cato Institute), THE MYTH OF AMERICAN INCOME INEQUALITY, Sept. 20, 2022. Retrieved Jan. 27, 2023 from <https://www.cato.org/study/myth-american-income-inequality>

The Census Bureau excludes more than 100 transfer programs, such as the Treasury Department checks that pay low-income households refundable tax credits in excess of their tax liabilities, food-stamp debit cards, and doctor bills paid by Medicaid. Adding those missing transfer payments increases earned income in the bottom quintile by almost 700 percent and in the second quintile by more than 70 percent.

NEG Case 1: Wealth Inequality Is an Essential Counterpart to Economic Freedom

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When All Government Transfers Are Included, Poverty Rates Have Plummeted

Phil Gramm, et al. (Former Prof., Economics, Texas A&M U.; Former U.S. Senator, Current Sr. Fellow, American Enterprise Institute), THE MYTH OF AMERICAN INEQUALITY, 2022, 38.

Children and seniors within the ranks of poor families are frequently a focus of special concerns in the debates over poverty. Correcting the measure of income to include all transfer payments improves the pictures for these two groups significantly. The percentage of children living in poverty drops from 17.5 percent to only 3.1 percent. For people age sixty-five and over, the proportion in poverty falls from 9.2 percent to only 1.1 percent. Social Security, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income, food stamps, and other transfer payments have virtually eliminated poverty among seniors.

NEG Case 1: Wealth Inequality Is an Essential Counterpart to Economic Freedom

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Americans Are Not Concerned About Wealth Inequality

Eamonn Butler, (Dir., Adam Smith Institute), ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, 2022, p. 94.

There is little indication that the public share the academics' ideal of an equal, uniform, uncompetitive society. Rather, they seem to prefer a diverse society in which they can aspire to rise up.

Karlyn Bowman & Eleanor O'Neil, (Sr. Fellow, American Enterprise Institute/Former Dir., Congressional Budget Office), UNITED STATES INCOME, WEALTH, CONSUMPTION, AND INEQUALITY, 2021, 250.

While polling evidence clearly indicates that Americans believe inequality is a big or moderately big problem and that it is growing, the issue is rarely mentioned spontaneously as a top or even middling level problem facing the country. In Gallup's 2019 monthly surveys between January and August, when people were asked to name the most important problem facing the country, dissatisfaction with the government and immigration were generally the top problems. No more than 2 percent mentioned the gap between rich and poor.

NEG Case 2: Political Participation Is Strong Regardless of Wealth Inequality

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Small Donations Play a Major Role in U.S. Politics

Ollie Gratzinger, (Staff, Open Secrets), SMALL DONORS GIVE BIG MONEY IN 2020 ELECTION CYCLE, Oct. 30, 2020. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2020/10/small-donors-give-big-2020-thanks-to-technology/>

It isn't just presidential candidates gaining big from small contributions. Donations under \$200 make up 78 percent of New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's (D-N.Y.) \$16.6 million fundraising haul. Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) and GOP House challengers in deep blue districts such as Lacy Johnson, Aja Smith and Joe Collins all get around 75 percent of their money from small donors.

NEG Case 2: Political Participation Is Strong Regardless of Wealth Inequality

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Political Participation Has Increased Rather than Decreased

Drew DeSilver, (Analyst, Pew Research Center), TURNOUT SOARED IN 2020 AS NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF ELIGIBLE U.S. VOTERS CAST BALLOTS FOR PRESIDENT, Jan. 28, 2021. Retrieved Aug. 28, 2023 from <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/01/28/turnout-soared-in-2020-as-nearly-two-thirds-of-eligible-u-s-voters-cast-ballots-for-president/>

Americans voted in record numbers in last year's presidential election, casting nearly 158.4 million ballots. That works out to more than six-in-ten people of voting age and nearly two-thirds of estimated eligible voters, according to a preliminary Pew Research Center analysis. However you measure it, voter turnout jumped in 2020. Nationwide, presidential election turnout was about 7 percentage points higher than in 2016, regardless of which of three different turnout metrics we looked at: the estimated voting-age population as of July 1, that estimate adjusted to Nov. 1, and the estimated voting-eligible population, which subtracts noncitizens and ineligible felons and adds overseas eligible citizens. Based on these measures, turnout was the highest since at least 1980, the earliest year in our analysis, and possibly much longer.

NEG Case 2: Political Participation Is Strong Regardless of Wealth Inequality

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The Internet Has Democratized the Political Process

Matt Hammar, (Dept. of Journalism, Carleton U.), SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF AUTHORITY, Dec. 1, 2018. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from <https://carleton.ca/align/2018/millennials-voices-social-media-and-the-democratization-of-authority/>

Firstly, there is the new empowerment of the average person for civic action. Essentially, social media is democracy in action as it allows for anyone to now have a voice and influence the discourse within their society the way they see fit. Communication scholars such as Jürgen Habermas would argue that this is the next major stepping stone to creating a world-wide 'public sphere' due to instantaneous and undisturbed messages with relatively little 'noise' interfering. Social media is this public sphere manifested in a relatively tangible virtual realm—an online coffeehouse of billions, if you will. Social media, and the Internet in general, allow for this because as Kriess notes, “with the lowered cost of producing and disseminating political communication, ‘the Internet is creating a more open and fluid political opportunity structure’”.

NEG Case 2: Political Participation Is Strong Regardless of Wealth Inequality

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Wealth Inequality Does Not Control Election Outcomes

Chris Edwards & Ryan Bourne, (Analysts, Cato Institute), EXPLORING WEALTH INEQUALITY, Nov. 5, 2019. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/exploring-wealth-inequality>

The wealthy have always been involved in politics, but politicians ultimately need votes, not money, and billionaires represent few votes. Consider that wealth inequality was higher across many Western countries in the 19th century and early 20th century to the extent we can measure it, but that was precisely when many nations were widening the voting franchise under pressure from the general public.

Rainer Zitelmann, (Ph.D. in both Political Science and Sociology & Analyst, Foundation for Economic Education), THE MYTH THAT THE RICH DOMINATE POLITICS AND RULE AMERICA, Sept. 28, 2021. Retrieved Aug. 18, 2023 from <https://fee.org/articles/the-myth-that-the-rich-dominate-politics-and-rule-america/>

And if money alone could buy political power, Joe Biden would not be president today. Perhaps it would be Michael Bloomberg, who at the time of his bid for the Democratic candidacy was the eighth richest man in the world, worth \$61.9 billion, according to Forbes.

NEG Case 2: Political Participation Is Strong Regardless of Wealth Inequality

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Upward Mobility Is Essential to Vibrant Democracy

Lani Guinier, (Prof., Law, Harvard Law School), HARVARD LAW REVIEW, Nov. 2003, 137-138.

Upward mobility and individualism are both core values of the American Dream; they legitimate our democratic ideal of equal opportunity for all. In his history of the French Enlightenment, Marshall Berman describes individualism in perhaps its most favorable light: the right to be yourself, particularly the right not to have your role or status ascribed to you, but to find it for yourself. Individualism was forged in a revolt against feudalism, a system based entirely on ascribed roles. Thus conceived, individualism is deeply connected to democratic ideals of opportunity and upward mobility. Likewise, mobility in America means not just moving out, but also moving up; it refers to sociological as well as geographical relocation in order to take advantage of opportunity.

NEG Case 3: Democracy Requires Opportunity for Advancement and Mobility

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Wealth Inequality Best Promotes Social Mobility

Eamonn Butler, (Dir., Adam Smith Institute), ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, 2022, p. 96.

Unequal societies work: they have been around for millennia, they are still around, and are found everywhere. That is a more convincing record than the short-lived equalization experiments of say, the Soviet Union, or Mao's China, or Pol Pot's Kampuchea or countless other socialist states in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The question is why unequal societies work. It might be that inequality motivates people to train, to get skills and improve their productivity, or that the prospect of entrepreneurial reward encourages risk-taking and innovation – all of these things in turn boosting progress and prosperity.

NEG Case 3: Democracy Requires Opportunity for Advancement and Mobility

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Social Mobility Is Alive and Well in American Democracy

John Early, (Former Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics & Adjunct Scholar, Cato Institute), THE MYTH OF AMERICAN INCOME INEQUALITY, Sept. 20, 2022. Retrieved Jan. 27, 2023 from <https://www.cato.org/study/myth-american-income-inequality>

The American dream of rising income is alive and well. Almost all children grow up to earn more real income than their parents and experience rising incomes within their own lifetimes. Individuals who start life in the lowest-income households benefit the most from upward mobility.

NEG Case 3: Democracy Requires Opportunity for Advancement and Mobility

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Wealth Inequality Does Not Harm the Poor

Eamonn Butler, (Dir., Adam Smith Institute), ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, 2022, p. 103.

If you could push a button that would make the world's poorest twice as rich – but as a result make the world's richest three times as rich – would you not push it?

David Henderson, (Research Fellow, Hoover Institute of Stanford U.), INCOME INEQUALITY, 2022, 102.

Inequality can grow even while the poor and almost everyone else are becoming better off. Indeed, in the last half-century, while U.S. income inequality grew, the poor and the middle class became substantially better off.

NEG Case 3: Democracy Requires Opportunity for Advancement and Mobility

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Gender-Based Inequality Is Decreasing in America

Eamonn Butler, (Dir., Adam Smith Institute), ECONOMIC INEQUALITY, 2022, p. 51.

However, there is good evidence that (in the advanced countries at least), there is currently no significant gender gap, and that policies based on it are ill-founded. There is certainly a gender gap between older workers, but that is because those people began working some decades ago, a time of discrimination and large gender pay gaps; and when employees got annual increases, those pay gaps persisted. But those entering the workforce today are more likely to be paid equally. For the under-thirties, the gap has largely faded (and in some countries, such as the US, documented by the Pew Research Center in 2013, it has almost wholly disappeared.

NEG Case 3: Democracy Requires Opportunity for Advancement and Mobility

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Race-Based Inequality Is Decreasing in America

Phil Gramm, et al. (Former Prof., Economics, Texas A&M U.; &Former U.S. Senator, Current Sr. Fellow, American Enterprise Institute), THE MYTH OF AMERICAN INEQUALITY, 2022, 150.

Counting all of the \$1.9 trillion in transfer payments that have been omitted by Census dramatically reduces the poverty rate. Table 9.1 shows a comparison of the official poverty rates from the Census Bureau with rates using a complete accounting of all earning and transfer payments. The Black poverty rate falls to 3.5 percent, and the White poverty rate falls to 2.3 percent in 2017, leaving a gap of only 1.2 percent. Using more accurate price indexes as described in Chapter 6 to calculate poverty thresholds causes the Black and White household poverty rates to fall to only 1.7 percent and 1.1 percent, respectively, in 2017, virtually eliminating the gap in poverty based on race. Getting the data right makes a big difference.

NEG Case 3: Democracy Requires Opportunity for Advancement and Mobility

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