

Poverty 3-D

“We now know both that the United States has a much more unequal distribution of income than other advanced countries and that much of this difference in outcomes can be attributed directly to government action.”

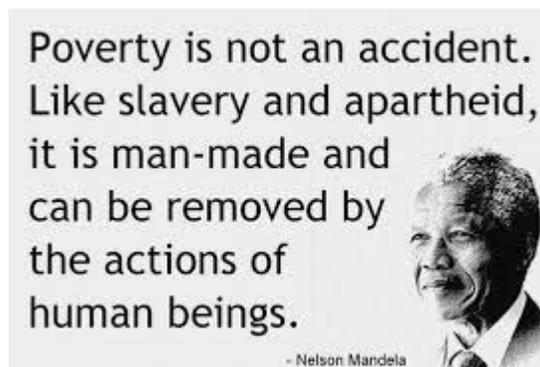
Paul Krugman, reviewing Thomas Piketty’s new book, Capital



A Controversy Paper for the 2014-15 CEDA Resolution

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This paper relies heavily on portions of previous controversy papers—much thanks to all of those collaborators: Sara Beth Brooks—CSU Fullerton, Christian Chessman—University of Florida, Malcolm Gordon—UMKC, Sam Maurer—Emporia State University, Kathryn Rubino—U.S. Military Academy, Dan Stanfield—CSU Fullerton



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To begin, let some evidence do the talking...

Flowers and Zeese, '13 (Capitalism in Crisis: Our Opportunity for a New System Wednesday, 19 June 2013 13:30 By Margaret Flowers and Kevin Zeese, Truthout | News Analysis, <http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/17083-capitalism-in-crisis-our-opportunity-for-a-new-system?tmpl=component&print=1>)

Combining the idea of transition towns with the concepts developed by meta-economists such as E. F. Schumacher can lead to the development of new systems that replace the old systems and that are not only sustainable but actually create a better quality of life. Re-localization of the economy is an opportunity to redefine what we value and build systems that support those values. If Not Capitalism, Then What? Alperovitz sees examples throughout the country of the beginning of a transformation to a new democratic economy that is different from corporate capitalism and state socialism. In the new economy, wealth is shared more equitably, workers own and manage the companies they work for, Wall Street finance is replaced by public banks, and an insurance-based sick-care system is replaced by a national public health program, among many other changes. **Control over the economy comes from the bottom, rather than the top. We are in the midst of revolutionary economic change,** a process that Alperovitz calls "evolutionary reconstruction." **This involves the gradual process of remaking the economy by creating new democratic economic institutions and recreating existing structures that will grow and replace the current system. This transformation is happening because the existing system is not working** for most Americans. **In a country where the wealthiest 100 people have wealth equal to 180 million people, the wealth divide has become so extreme that the economy is dysfunctional.** And unfettered investment-gambling by large financial institutions in derivatives worth trillions of dollars places the US and world economies at risk of another collapse. Fortunately, we are further along the path to transformation than most of the public realizes and further along than the corporate mass media reports. Alperovitz points out: "130 million Americans - 40 percent of the population - are members of one or another form of cooperative, a traditional collective ownership form that now includes large numbers of credit unions, agricultural co-ops dating back to the 1930s, electrical co-ops prevalent in many rural areas, insurance co-ops, food co-ops, retail co-ops (such as the outdoor recreational company REI and the hardware purchasing cooperative ACE), health-care co-ops, artist co-ops and many, many more." What are some of the ingredients of the new economy? Alperovitz calls it a "pluralist commonwealth." It includes cooperatives, worker-owned companies, neighborhood corporations, small- and medium-sized independent firms, municipal enterprises, state health efforts, new ways of banking and investing, regional energy, benefit corporations, land trusts and national public firms, and related democratic planning capacities like participatory budgeting. He notes that **the zeitgeist of the times is pushing a great economic debate upon us.** He highlights that the Merriam-Webster dictionary announced a few months ago that the two most looked-up words in 2012 were "socialism" and "capitalism." In addition, a Pew poll found that people age 18 to 29 have a more favorable reaction to the term "socialism" than to "capitalism" by a ratio of 49 to 43 percent. This demonstrates that Americans are looking for new answers. **There is an opening for a real and serious discussion about alternatives to the present system.** Alperovitz recognizes there is no full alternative in place at this time and that worker-owned cooperatives can fall under many of the same market pressures that capitalist-

owned businesses suffer. More development is needed to create improved models. One example Alperovitz points to is the Evergreen Cooperative model which links worker-ownership with community interest. He calls this "a 'mixed' model ... that involves worker co-ops that are linked together and subordinated to a community-wide, nonprofit structure." For larger models to learn from, Alperovitz looks abroad to the Mondragon cooperatives in Spain and the Emilia Romagna network of cooperatives in Italy. "Mondragon has demonstrated how an integrated system of more than 100 cooperatives can function effectively (and in areas of high technical requirement) - and at the same time maintain an extremely egalitarian and participatory culture of institution control. The Italian cooperatives have demonstrated important ways to achieve 'networked' production among large numbers of small units - and further, to use the regional government in support of the overall effort." Alperovitz urges us to get serious about this discussion and "engage in a far-reaching and thoughtful debate about how a new model might be created that is both systemically sophisticated and also appropriate to American culture and traditions - a model that nurtures democracy and a culture of inclusiveness and ecological sanity." And while we are figuring out this new comprehensive model, we can continue to experiment with new democratic models in the workplace and the economy at local and state levels. As we discover systems that function to empower people through more equitable sharing of wealth and greater control over their economic lives, these systems will be adopted in other places. This creates momentum that propels the new system forward. In What Then Must We Do? Alperovitz calls this "checkerboarding." Alperovitz acknowledges the dysfunction of the political system in Washington DC, but he points out that Congress is not the only place where reform is possible. In fact, throughout history the steady progression of city-by-city and state-by-state policy changes has led to change at the national level. When neighboring states adopt a new policy that works, then nearby states will see it and copy it. He points to how this is currently occurring with gay rights and the reform of marijuana laws. Banking and Health Care: Opportunities for Major Change At the national level, Alperovitz sees two major "hot spots" that could cause significant structural changes with big impacts on the economy. These are health care and banking. Both are major foundations of the big-finance economy. They have in common that both are failing tens of millions of people and that there are already state and local efforts to change them. US health care, which makes up 18 percent of the economy, is responsible for 100,000 preventable deaths each year. The number of uninsured has hovered around 46 to 50 million for years, and the number of people with insurance who are unable to afford health services is climbing. The implementation of the Affordable Care Act (a.k.a. Obamacare) does not address the fundamental problems of private health insurance, for-profit hospitals and the pharmaceutical industry's profiteering. It is like putting a very expensive Band-Aid on a fatal disease. The Congressional Budget Office now estimates that when Obamacare is fully implemented, 31 million people will still not have insurance. And those who do have insurance will be paying higher premiums for less coverage. The nation will become a nation of underinsured who, when they get seriously ill, are at an even greater risk of bankruptcy. Alperovitz notes that efforts to create single-payer health care systems are being pursued in nearly two dozen states. One state, Vermont, has come the closest to success by passing a health law that creates a path to a single-payer health system that would provide health care to everyone in the state. Even its incomplete success is already infectious: people in other states are organizing along a route similar to Vermont's, using the concept of health care as a human right to back their demand for a single-payer system. Economic pressure will encourage state legislators to appreciate the budget savings of a single-payer health system. Big bank finance is also an area that is dysfunctional. The banks are too big to regulate, too big to allow to fail and too big to prosecute. They were bailed out with trillions of dollars from the Federal Reserve and Department of Treasury and continue to receive \$85 billion each month from the Federal Reserve in virtually free loans. Yet small businesses are starved for cash and struggle to find banks that will extend credit to them, so the economy continues to falter. It has also come to light that the model used recently in Cyprus, of taking the savings of depositors during a financial crisis, is also the model of the big banks in the United States. Rather than a bailout, the banks are planning for a bail-in if their risky investments falter - that is, they are planning on turning savings into bank stock to bail themselves out. As a result of these factors, there is growing interest in public banks, with 20 states considering some form of legislation around the issue and some cities seriously looking at the option of a city bank. The rationale for this type of bank is hard to challenge - keep your government money in your city or state instead of giving it to Wall Street banks and use that money to leverage more funds for investment in your state. This essentially allows banks to operate in the public interest, investing in Main Street rather than Wall Street, for example through low-cost student loans, loans to entrepreneurs, responsible mortgages, greening the economy and rebuilding infrastructure. As a historian, Alperovitz knows the future is not predictable, but he sees models being developed, the desire for something new and the dysfunction of government and the economy creating a situation such that we could be on the verge of "the next American explosion." He sees the changes being put in place as "lay[ing] the foundation for something that could well become very important." Don't Save Capitalism, Change the System In the early 1900s, the capitalist economy was in a crisis. Decades of corruption and cronyism created conditions similar to today: mistreatment of workers, high unemployment and pollution of the environment were rampant problems. In response, a strong movement arose, made up of labor and the left, pushing for greater equality and rights. This frightened Big Finance and forced it to act. The response was New Deal policies that provided jobs and a safety net. Many view the New Deal not necessarily as a massive social program but as an effective tool to rescue capitalism. Labor and the left were pushing for socialization of the economy. The New Deal created just enough socialization through public jobs programs and Social Security and enough relief of popular suffering that people were placated. Of course, this is a simplified version of the story. There was still strong pushback by Big Finance to limit progressive policies, which led to ups and downs throughout the 1930s, and of course World War II created an economic boom. The point is that instead of a real transformation of the economy in the 1930s and 40s, we saw changes within the finance capitalist system to make it more palatable to the people. The overall system did not change, and over time is reverting back to the position of gross corruption and inequality, as well as the destruction of unions and the safety net that we see today. This presents another opportunity. There will be forces from the top that will try to rescue capitalism again. One current example is the new "B Team" announced by Arianna Huffington of The Huffington Post and run by wealthy financiers Sir Richard Branson of the Virgin Group and Jochen Zeitz, who rescued Puma from financial collapse. Their goal is to "prioritize people and planet alongside profit." The B Team uses language that is similar to what groups who are calling for progressive change use, such as "People and the planet before profit" and "Human needs, not corporate greed." But the B Team mission is to serve people, the planet and profit. To us, this sounds like another New Deal approach to throw fundamental change off track. We appreciate that these business leaders see the inequity, ecological destruction and unfairness of the present system and want to do something about it, but we believe **the real solution is greater systemic change. And so this is the challenge of the people. We can sit back and let Big Finance run the world economy based on profit as an important value, or we can get active and join with those creating a new economy that is democratic, grassroots and rooted in the values that are important to greater humanity. It is up to us to create the economy that serves the needs of people,** protects the planet and exploits neither people nor the Earth. **Capitalism is once again at a crossroads. We can determine the path. We can create a system that is neither corporate capitalism nor state socialism but that is defined by the limits of resources and by the desires of the people. This new system will have some features of both capitalism and socialism, but will be rooted in participatory democracy, fair sharing of economic wealth and ownership, and values such as cooperation and sustainability. The future is in our hands. A lot is already happening. Let's dig in, work together and create not just a new world, but a better place for all of us.**

Overview

This document is primarily an updated version of the “Poverty” paper submitted last season. In addition, the paper submitted for 2012-13 is still quite pertinent and could be read as a companion to this paper. The previous papers can be located here: <http://www.cedadebate.org/forum/index.php/topic,3599.msg7350.html#msg7350> and here: <http://www.cedadebate.org/forum/index.php/topic,4799.msg10522.html#msg10522>

The core of this controversy is that we should debate about the allocation of wealth in society and how to reverse the accumulation of more and more financial resources in fewer and fewer hands.

In sum, the rise and persistence of economic inequality/poverty should be substantially reduced/resisted/challenged.

Either the phrase “economic inequality” or “poverty” should be included in the wording. It could be both, but it should be at least one. The mechanisms vary depending on the agent of action and the potential list of areas to target, with the bulk of that work being done in the 2102 paper. The most obvious affirmatives are big national policies, but there is also substantial work on the Court as an actor, social movements as the agent, or a passive voice construction.

That’s it—fairly direct. We’ll get deeper into some wordings at the bottom of the paper, but that’s the agent/stem combination in a nutshell.

The impetus behind this style of controversy paper came from comments over the years at various meetings about the difficulty of assembling major research for a potential debate topic in the sliver of time after the national tournaments and before the deadline in the spring. Given the time constraints, many controversy papers do not come together at all and others are rushed and taken in a hasty direction. The best way to deal with that problem is to build on a controversial idea and improve it each year until the controversy gets selected. It is surprising how many topic papers are submitted just once. As an attempt to improve on past efforts, this paper points to the work done in previous papers and adds a few comments on the margin. More specifically,

1. Some controversies have to be submitted every year until we select them. In fact, some controversies should be built into a ten-year rotation so they appear at least once every decade. Education would be one of those topics as would environmental pollution and social justice. The poverty/economic inequality topic should be at the top of that list.

The Bread for the World website notes on its front page:

<http://www.bread.org/hunger/us/facts.html>, accessed April 20, 2014.

We live in the world's wealthiest nation. Yet 14.5 percent of U.S. households—nearly 49 million Americans, including 15.9 million children—struggle to put food on the table. In the United States, hunger is not caused by a scarcity of food, but rather the continued prevalence of poverty. Both issues must be addressed in our continued efforts to help those Jesus called “the least of these” (Matthew 25:45). **The most direct way to reduce hunger in the U.S. is through national nutrition programs.** But while food assistance to hungry people is vital, it is not enough. **We as a nation must come together to confront hunger and poverty in the United States.** Use our resources below to learn more about the causes of U.S. hunger, and what we can do to end it once and for all.

The website continues in the “Poverty” section:

[More than one in seven people in the United States lives below the poverty line](#), which is \$22,113 for a family of four in 2010. [More than one in five children in the United States lives below the poverty line](#).

- [Most Americans \(51.4 percent\) will live in poverty at some point before age 65](#).
- 65 percent of low-income families have at least one working family member, and 79 percent of single mothers who head households work.
- [In most areas, a family of four needs to earn twice the poverty line to provide children with basic necessities](#).
- Nationally, [more than 44 percent of children live in low-income working families](#) (families who earn less than twice the poverty line).
- [A person working full-time at the minimum wage earns about \\$14,500 a year. The official poverty line for a family of three—one parent with two children—is \\$17,568](#).

The Feeding America Website puts these impacts into perspective:

<http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger.aspx>, accessed 4/14

[A critical component to a healthy life is nutrition](#). From birth, the intake of vital nutrients is essential to the growth and development of a healthy individual. Good nutrition, particularly in the first three years of life, is important in establishing and maintaining a good foundation that has implications on a child’s future physical and mental health, academic achievement, and economic productivity. Unfortunately, food insecurity is an obstacle that threatens that critical foundation. [In the United States, more than one out of five children lives in a household with food insecurity](#), which means they do not always know where they will find their next meal. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), in 2012, [15.9 million children under 18 in the United States live in this condition – unable to consistently access nutritious and adequate amounts of food necessary for a healthy life](#). According to Map the Meal Gap, in 2011, the top five states with the highest rate of food insecure children under 18 are New Mexico, the District of Columbia, Arizona, Oregon, & Georgia. [20% or more of the child population in 38 states and D.C. lived in food insecure households in 2011](#).

2. It is time for this topic, we all know it, and we can come up with some good wordings that invite great debates. We need to debate about the rich-poor gap in this country, the unprecedented rise of economic inequality, and the causes and effects of poverty. The new Piketty book, *Capital in the 21st Century*, is just the tip of the iceberg. This is an area we have avoided for too long, the research is too deep and plentiful not to take the plunge.

3. How to read this paper

This paper provides transportation for a couple of older essays that have decided to hitch a ride to the controversy ballot. Baktin would approve in that the idea is to read this controversy paper as part of a coral reef. The shape of the reef is provided in the 2012 paper (151 pages), the holes in that paper were filled in by more organic matter in the 2013 version (50 pages), and this current paper is a recognition that the whole structure is covered in tiny, living holes. In this version, the goal is to signify the changes in the larger reef as certain pieces grow more vigorously and other pieces fall to the sea bed.

Updated Points



1. The race debate is central and provides ground on both sides

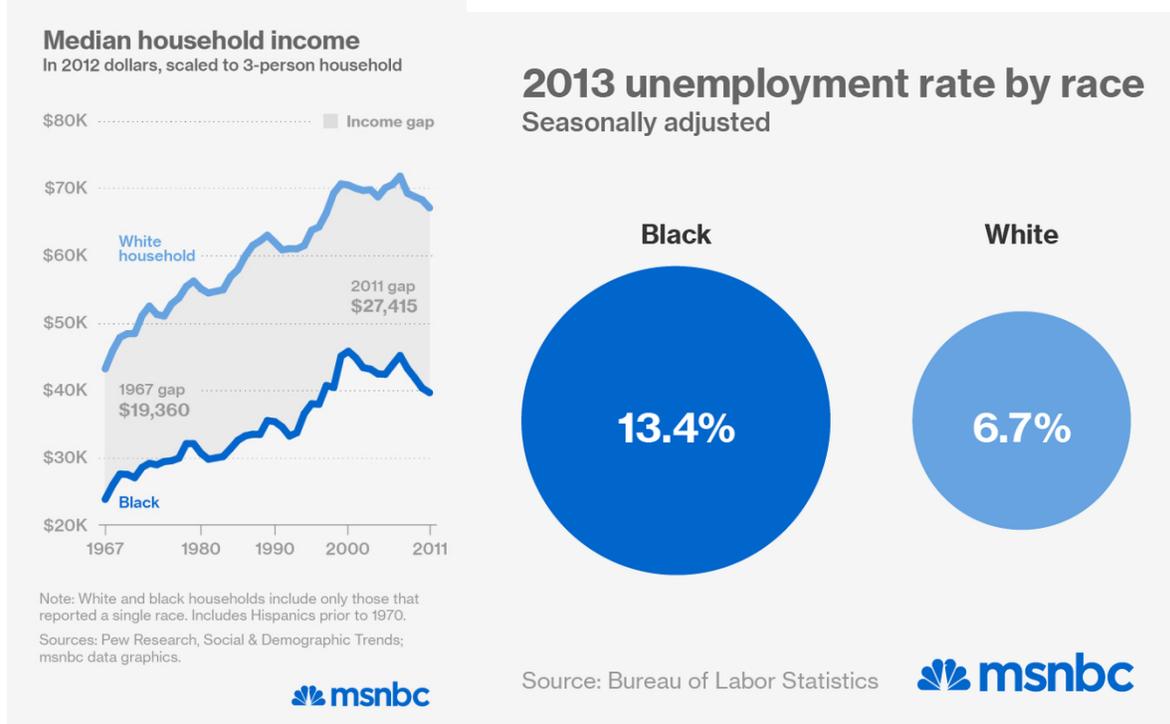
More of this work was done in the last two versions of the paper, including the problematic association of race and class when talking about solutions. It is not clear cut how to address the interlocking manifestations of race and class, but that it is an intersection worth pondering and debating.

Ned Resnikoff, '14 ("Race is the elephant in the room when it comes to inequality"
03/13/14 06:51 AM—Updated 03/13/14, <http://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/washingtons-silence-the-racial-wealth-gap>

In 1967, with the Civil Rights movement still in full swing and Jim Crow still looming in the rearview mirror, median household income was 43% higher for white, non-Hispanic households than for black households. But things changed dramatically over the next half century, as legal segregation faded into history. By 2011, median white household income was 72% higher than median black household income, according to a Census report from that year [PDF]. **To say that economic inequality is still a heavily racialized phenomenon, even a generation after the end of the Civil Rights era, would be an understatement. Yet both major parties continue to discuss inequality in largely color-blind terms, only hinting at the role played by race.**

The trend is even more startling when one looks at median household wealth instead of yearly income. In 1984, the white-to-black wealth ratio was 12-to-1, according to Pew Research Center. By 1995, the chasm had narrowed until median white income had only a 5-to-1 advantage over black income. But over the next 14 years the wealth gap began to grow once again, until it had skyrocketed up to 19-to-1 in 2009. Yet even a recent 204-page analysis of the federal War on Poverty, spearheaded by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., gives only passing mentions to racial disparity. In the first section of the report, which purports to explain the causes of modern poverty, Ryan and his co-authors bring up race only twice: Once to identify "the breakdown of the family as a key cause of poverty within the black community," citing Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and again to applaud the narrowing of the "achievement gap" between white and black schoolchildren. Weeks later, during a radio appearance, Ryan said poverty is in part to blame on the fact that "inner cities" have a culture of "men not working." **President Obama** went a step forward in December's major address on inequality, when he **noted that "the painful legacy of discrimination means that African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans are far more likely to suffer from a lack of opportunity—higher unemployment, higher poverty rates."** Yet that amounted to a footnote in a speech that also included the line, **"The opportunity gap in America is now as much about class as it is about race."** "I think it doesn't make for good politics," said Color of Change executive director Rashad Robinson of the racial wealth gap. "It's messy and requires us to be deep and think about much bigger and more long-term solutions than Washington's oftentimes willing to deal with." Yet **in a serious discussion about American inequality, the subject of race is essentially unavoidable. That's because most of the pipelines to a higher economic class—such as employment and homeownership—are "oftentimes not equally accessible to black folks,"** said Robinson. **Disparities in**

homeownership are a major driver of the racial wealth gap, according to a recent study from Brandeis University. According to the authors of the report, **“redlining [a form of discrimination in banking or insurance practices], discriminatory mortgage-lending practices, lack of access to credit, and lower incomes have blocked the homeownership path for African-Americans while creating and reinforcing communities segregated by race.”** Many of the black families that have successfully battled their way to homeownership over the past few decades saw their nest eggs get pulverized by the 2008 financial collapse. The Brandeis researchers found that “half the collective wealth of African-American families was stripped away during the Great Recession,” in large part due to the collapse of the housing market and the subsequent explosion in the nationwide foreclosure rate. Similarly, **employment discrimination has done its part to ensure that black unemployment remains twice as high as white unemployment**—a ratio that has stayed largely consistent since the mid-1950s. National Bureau of Economy Research fellows have found that resumes are significantly less likely to get a positive response from potential employers if the applicants have names that are more common in the black community. And an arrest for even a non-violent drug offense can haunt a job applicant for the rest of his life; combined with the fact that black people are nearly four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than whites, despite using the drug at roughly the same rate, criminal background checks have helped to fuel racial inequity in job hiring. Yet both parties have stressed personal responsibility to an outsized degree, said William Darity Jr., the director of Duke University’s Consortium on Social Equity. “The underlying narrative that many people share is that whatever inequities still exist, they’re due to the misbehavior or dysfunctional behavior of black folks themselves,” said Darity. “So there’s no reason to pay attention to racial disparities because one doesn’t believe they’re still significant, or there’s no need for public policy action by the government because it’s just a question of black folks changing their own behaviors.” Darity portrayed this as a bipartisan problem and criticized President Obama for “[playing] into that behavior” by emphasizing personal responsibility in the “My Brother’s Keeper” initiative to help young men of color. **The conservative notion of a “culture of poverty” is another example of the fallacy, he said. “I think a lot of people are really attracted to stories about personal uplift or social mobility, but these are very exceptional cases,” he said. “That’s not the norm. Most people who are born into deprived circumstances do not really have the capacity or support to come out of those deprived circumstances.” Instead, he argued that the only way to break self-perpetuating inequality was through wealth transfers. “People’s behaviors are largely shaped by the resources they possess, and if their resources altered, than they might change their behaviors,”** he said.



More links:

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412802-Less-Than-Equal-Racial-Disparities-in-Wealth-Accumulation.pdf>
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/personalfinance/2013/02/27/racial-wealth-gap-growing/1948899/>

To talk about economic inequality means needing to emphasize and prioritize the surge in the prison population and the disproportionate impact on blacks, particularly black males.

James **Kilgore, '12** ("The Politics of Theft: Economic Inequality and the Forgotten Work Force"
Dissent, Volume 59, Number 3, Summer 2012, pp. 70-74)

By now, most **leftists and much of mainstream America are familiar with the story of** what Representative Donna Edwards calls **"the greatest wealth transfer in the history of America in kind if not of mankind."** **They are not so familiar with the latest "great migration," the forced transfer of millions of men (and more and more women) of color out of their communities and into prisons.** Two recent works illustrate the dilemmas of both and point to the need to link these phenomena. Frances Causey and Donald Goldmacher's somewhat melodramatic documentary **Heist: Who Stole the American Dream? tells the story of modern-day robber barons, now known as the 1%.** It does an excellent job of showing how the 1% amalgamated its wealth over the past forty years. **Yet, to truly understand the current dilemma of America's 99%, we must add the puzzle pieces that Heist doesn't include, those of race and mass incarceration. For that story, we must turn to Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow and connect the dots.**

Poverty and whiteness students is a crucial intersection—race through "White Trash"

Barbara Ladd, 08 ("Poverty and the Boundaries of Whiteness" The Southern Literary Journal, Volume 41, Number 1, Fall 2008, pp. 131-134)

John Hartigan, Jr. and Matt Wray are among the growing list of contributors to **the field of whiteness studies**, which **traces its beginnings to the early 1990s** and the work of Alexander Saxton, David Roediger, Toni Morrison, Vron Ware, Ruth Frankenberg, Eric Lott, and Noel Ignatiev. **The healthy variety of disciplinary methodologies whiteness studies can claim (history, literary studies, ethnography, sociology, political science) makes it a rich field of study.** For both Hartigan and Wray **it is also a field with a few thorny issues to face** in what Wray calls its "adolescence." **Among them are the vagueness of the term whiteness; the tension between race and class, too often assumed to be analytical alternatives, resulting in an inability to negotiate connections and interdependencies; the reification of categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality in identity studies; and, for Hartigan, "the enormously influential model of Otherness, which prioritizes an attention to representation and ideological explanations" over social analysis and, via psychoanalysis, "projects a uniform collective consciousness, in contrast to a cultural view that comprehends subjects as composed by multiple (at times discrepant) discourses and responding to diverse, shifting sets of concerns."** ¶ Both **Hartigan**, an anthropologist and ethnographer, **and Wray**, a sociologist, **attempt to find a way around these problems by referencing boundary theory to shift the conversation from analyses based on reifications of identity to analyses of multiple processes of social differentiation within specific contexts.** In Wray's words, this is a "return to the unfinished classical project of social analysis—**understanding social differentiation and inequality as a single dynamic composed of multiple subprocesses.**" **"The key recognition here,"** writes Hartigan, **"is that social boundaries are asserted and contested in multiple registers simultaneously, sometimes stressing class over gender or race and sometimes, with a provocative epithet like white trash, condensing all three registers into a charged representation of those people."**

2. Access, Queer Theory, Critical Disability

Poverty and the culture of poverty allow us to connect to some significant and fascinating arguments happening in the literature. Articles about poverty's "visibility" or about the scholarship of "outlining the margins" or "speaking for others" are everywhere. One element that would reinforce and ground much of the debate community's discussion over identity, subjectivity, lived experience, and personal standpoint is

the intersection of poverty and the body. The impoverished body is important to take on and leads to the position that bodies always operate along multiple vectors.

Just a small taste of some of that work appears here, some thoughts on poverty and the “normal body.”

Representations of poverty in context of a visual culture and citizenship matter.

Wendy **Kozol, 05** (“Marginalized Bodies and the Politics of Visibility” *American Quarterly*, Volume 57, Number 1, March 2005, pp. 237-247)

In exploring marginalized bodies in national visual culture, these two books also provide methodological perspectives relevant to current developments in visual culture studies. **Finnegan's** analysis of Farm Security Administration photographs from the 1930s **convincingly argues for a methodological approach that includes the study of circulation in order to understand both the "specificity" and "fluidity" of meanings in the public sphere** (56). **Picturing Poverty challenges historical accounts that assume a monolithic voice in mainstream debates about poverty in the 1930s by focusing on the production of multiple visual rhetorics in the popular press. In this way, Finnegan studies how images operated within a broader scopic field at a key moment in the emergence of a national American culture. Studies of the role of visual culture in the production of national identity have primarily examined mainstream media and have been less attentive to alternative representational practices. To what extent, we need to ask, have alternative and oppositional visual practices worked with and against dominant visual rhetorics of citizenship?** In *Imaging Japanese America*, Creef examines a range of historical visual and literary sources that imaged and imagined Japanese America. She places mainstream media representations of the Japanese-American body in dialogue with alternative visual practices produced by Japanese-American artists and writers. Methodologically, then, Creef asks different questions about the public sphere that explore how alternative practices intervene, disrupt, and/or challenge hegemonic practices. *Picturing Poverty* reexamines the now-famous archive of photographs produced by the Historical Section of the Resettlement Administration/Farm Security Administration (hereafter referred to as the FSA) from 1934 to 1943. Although numerous scholars over the years have studied this archive,⁴ Finnegan argues that no one has examined the different sites of publication and how these sites produced multiple discourses on poverty. She employs a rhetorical analysis that examines specific photographs in their publication sites in order to “pay attention to their fluidity as material traces of history” (xii, author's italics). This methodological concern with circulation enables Finnegan to say something new in a rather crowded field of study.

In Critical Disability Studies, we find explorations of the “uplift” theory in critical whiteness and racial studies either criticizing or outlining the individual response to economic hardship. Creating a normalized body that makes the racial uplift theory even more problematic, critical disability studies needs to intervene in these arguments and help reconceptualize the “normal bodied” citizen.

Stephen **Knadler, '13** (“Dis-abled Citizenship: Narrating the Extraordinary Body in Racial Uplift” *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory*, Volume 69, Number 3, Autumn 2013, pp. 99-128)

In his essay, “Introducing White Disability Studies: A Modest Proposal,” Christopher **Bell questions the historical silence about disability in African American studies. Countering that invisibility**, Bell cautions, **however, involves more than adding able-bodiedness to the intersecting oppressions that many African Americans face based on race, class, gender, or sexuality. It requires challenging the whiteness within disability studies that assumes that the "language of disability" operates across different cultures and societies in the same way** (278). In what follows **I want to recover a historically specific narrative of disability that affected early formations of black subjectivity and shaped, in particular, the ideology of racial uplift.** Often associated with autobiographies of assimilationist citizenship such as Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* (1901), **racial uplift held that rights and freedom would accrue to African Americans who achieved economic self-sufficiency, manhood and respectability** (Gaines, *Uplifting* 16). **In her foundational work in disability studies Rosemarie Garland Thomson argued that throughout the nineteenth-century bodies that failed to achieve American national myths about self-reliance or industrial labor were classified as "disabled." Disability was/is not a physical or medical property in bodies, but a product of what bodies should do or be in society** (Extraordinary 44).

While disabled bodies, regardless of race, were excluded from the world of work, social life, and full participatory citizenship, this culturally determined identification of certain "extraordinary" bodies as "disabled" had a particular inflection in debates over African Americans' rights to full citizenship in the post-Reconstruction era that was different from a "white" disability history.

Much of these identity questions go to the core of "social construction" and interrogate how we mark ourselves and each other. When one of the most important social indicators and traits of both identity and identification is the very obvious social construction of "class" or "caste," it begs the question of multi-sectionality and how certain bodies are excluded in the first place.

Christine **Overall, '6** (Christine Overall is a Professor of Philosophy and University Research Chair at Queen's University, Kingston. Old Age and Ageism, Impairment and Ableism: Exploring the Conceptual and Material Connections NWSA Journal, Volume 18, Number 1, Spring 2006, pp. 126-137)

Among most philosophers and theorists, it is now a truism that identities, or at least some identities, are socially constructed. These identities include gender identity, racial identity, and what we might call ability identity, as a disabled or non-disabled person. To this list, **I also want to add age identity**, in particular, age identity as an elderly or aged person.¹ **To regard these identities as socially constructed is to say, first, that they are not "natural"; that is, they are not entities that exist in "nature" independent of human agency. As the work of Simone de Beauvoir revealed (1952), one is not born, let alone conceived, a woman, an Aboriginal, a disabled person, or an elderly person, but rather becomes a woman, an Aboriginal, a disabled person, or an elderly person. Second, to regard these identities as socially constructed is to say that they are created, reinforced, and sustained, although not necessarily with intention or full consciousness, through normative conventions, relations and practices.** On this much there is fairly general agreement. **However, many theorists are willing to take the social constructionist thesis only so far. Usually they insist that there is a biological "foundation" or "substratum" on which the social identity rests. In the case of disability, the biological substratum is said to be impairment, an organic injury to, defect in, or absence of a limb, organ, or physiological system. So, while being a disabled person is an identity that is socially acquired, people are thought to be born with, or at some point become the victim of, mutilating or injurious diseases and accidents whose results—impairments—are part of our biological condition. And in the case of aging, the biological substratum is almost universally thought to be the actual old age of the individual.** So, while being an elderly person is an identity that is socially acquired, on [End Page 126] a material level it is thought to be the actual number of years lived that provides the material foundation for this identity. Thus, in this analysis, impairment is the supposed biological foundation for disability, for the sake of which individuals may, unfortunately, experience ableism, and old age is the supposed biological foundation for aging, for the sake of which individuals may, unfortunately, experience ageism. **Yet, philosophers ranging from Alison Jaggar (1983) to Judith Butler (1990) have shown that this analysis, the idea of a social identity built upon a biological substratum, seriously underestimates and misconstrues the role of culture. For the so-called biological substratum in each case is, itself, socially constructed. It is not a natural entity, pre-existing human intervention and possessing an existence independent of human intervention. Instead, the so-called biological substratum is itself a product of social construction; that is, it is created, reinforced, and sustained, not necessarily with intention or full consciousness, through human relations and practices.** In her paper, "On the Government of Disability," Shelley Tremain clearly identifies and describes the social construction of impairment. She points out that the social model of disability, which is the standard view of disability and impairment, claims that disability is the social disadvantage imposed upon the "objective, transhistorical and transcultural" (2001, 617) **impairment, which is biologically given. But as Tremain argues, allegedly 'real' impairments must now be identified as constructs of disciplinary knowledge/power that are incorporated into the self-understandings of some subjects. . . . [I]mpairments are materialized as universal attributes (properties) of subjects through the iteration and reiteration of rather culturally specific regulatory norms and ideals about (for example) human function and structure, competency, intelligence, and ability.** (2001, 632)² I suggest that **there are two main ways in which the social construction of impairment occurs. First, the term "impairment" itself is given a definition by extension, by picking out certain**

states of physical features—limbs, organs, and systems—and attributing significance to them as fundamentally defining particular individuals and groups of individuals as abnormal or defective in ways that are believed to be "biological." Impairment also can be redefined or expanded, by picking out new arrays of features thought to be abnormal or defective. This is not to deny that real suffering—physical and/or psychological—may attach to the possession of features that are also picked out as defects. **My intention here is not to deny the reality of the body or the immediacy of discomfort, pain, fatigue, depression, and weakness. But within any given social context, features that involve suffering may or may not be recognized as impairments (as opposed, say, to normal variations, sources of spiritual insight and divine inspiration, or stigmata).** [End Page 127] Moreover, in some cases, it is the identification of a feature as a defect that actually causes the suffering—for example, in the case of so-called "birthmarks." **We also can see that a characteristic designated as an impairment, and considered to be a biological given, might not be an impairment within a different cultural environment.** For example, Sophia Isako Wong imagines a situation where a characteristic currently considered an impairment is instead regarded as just another human difference (Wong 2002). She imagines a world in which half the people have Down syndrome, and persuasively suggests that in it, "there would be integrated households, educational resources, public facilities, and political structures." In this world, "the interaction between people with DS [Down syndrome] and those without it would . . . be seen as essential to the flourishing of the human species" (Wong 2002, 102). **Down syndrome is an impairment only within a particular social environment, the environment in which we happen to live.** So far, I have argued that impairment is conceptually constructed; that is, the term "impairment" itself is given a definition by extension, by picking out certain states of certain physical features and attributing significance to them as fundamentally defining particular individuals and groups of individuals as atypical, abnormal, or defective. I also want to argue that impairment is socially constructed in a second way, that is, materially. **Impairment is constructed materially** first, by means of maternal malnutrition, fetal alcohol syndrome, or the ingestion of teratogenic drugs, all of which cause harm to fetuses before birth, and second, by means of workplace injuries, environmental hazards and contaminants, or simple deliberate human aggression, which cause harm to the limbs, organs, and physiological systems in children and adults. Notice that there is both an individual and a societal component to this material construction of impairment. **On the one hand, individuals can be individually injured or "disfigured," but also the creation of impairments across an entire population can result from broader social forces, including poverty, classism, pollution of the home and workplace contexts, and environmental degradation, as well as sexism and racism.** . . . One attempts to assimilate by minimizing or disguising one's years lived and by minimizing or disguising any of one's features that are designated as impaired. Because disability and aging are considered shameful, weak, and low in value, those who are disabled and/or aged by culture experience pressures to pass as non-disabled or non-aged, to engage in various sorts of pretense that they are as much as possible like the so-called young and healthy social norm (Paterson and Hughes 1999, 608). In other words, they are expected to try to "pass for normal"—where "normal" means "not subject to disablement or aging" (Overall 1998, 151–71). **People of all ages internalize the negative valuations of impairment and old age and, as a result, almost everyone participates in the social conspiracy to pretend that there are no impaired or aged people. Assimilationist pressures are among the key tools of oppressive systems such as ableism and ageism. Using Susan Wendell's terms, I would describe these practices as being the results of the "disciplines of normality"** (Wendell 1996, 88). She points out that as the pace of life increases, "[e]veryone who cannot keep up is urged to take steps (or medications) to increase their energy, and bodies that were once considered normal are pathologized" (Wendell 1996, 90). [End Page 132] "Keeping up" is a normative requirement, and anyone who has trouble keeping up is, in effect, rendered impaired and expected to compensate as much as possible. Individuals with these socially conferred impairments are often expected to try to act so as to compensate for the impairments, to engage in substitute activities designed to reassure others that the individual is still functional,⁷ or to change their appearance so as to appear unimpaired.⁸ In the case of aging, older individuals are often expected to try to dress, talk, and act like someone who is younger.⁹ The purpose of trying to assimilate is, in part, to reassure others and spare them any feelings of vulnerability or anxiety about their own prospects that the perception of "oldness" or "impairments" may incite. Thereby one also reduces the likelihood of being the target of ageist or ableist prejudice. The professional agents of ageism and ableism alike include physicians, psychologists, gerontologists, politicians, and journalists. They seize upon and reinforce ableist and ageist tendencies already present in the culture. One way they do this is by promoting the almost-ubiquitous concept of "burdensomeness," a significant negative value that is incorporated into both ageism and ableism.

Access is multidimensional and needs to be seen as a series of metaphors and cultural assumptions, including tensions and possible alliances between the queer body and the disabled body.

Robert **McRuer, '03** ("As Good As It Gets: Queer Theory and Critical Disability" GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, Volume 9, Number 1-2, 2003, pp. 79-105)

Third, both **disability studies and queer theory have attempted to move the conversation forward in the humanities, positioning people with disabilities and LGBT people as subjects rather than objects of (scientific or psychological) scrutiny.** The project that David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, for example, establish from the first sentence of their anthology **The Body and Physical Difference is the introduction of "questions on the representation of disability to critical discourses in the humanities such as the body, cultural studies, minority studies, history, and aesthetics," since disability has only**

been "the province of numerous professional and academic disciplines that concentrate upon the management, repair, and maintenance of physical and cognitive incapacity." 35 Fourth, and related to the move from object to subject and from the sciences to the humanities, both queer and disability movements are attuned to how queerness and disability are metaphorized. Linton (echoing many other scholars in disability studies) points out that "the metaphors that allude to disability or that invoke disability imagery are everywhere, and the ideas they are based on are accepted so casually that we will have a hard time dissuading people from using them." 36 In my mind, this is where the two projects come together in the most promising ways, since queerness can be so easily metaphorized as disability, and vice versa. This is also one of the reasons that a disability studies perspective needs to be named as such in queer theory, and vice versa. Without such an explicit naming, it would be possible, for instance, to respond to how queerness is metaphorized as disability, even in a film like *As Good As It Gets*, by insisting that homosexuality is not a disability, all the while leaving intact the cultural assumption that disability is equivalent to a lack, a weakness, or a character flaw. Claiming critical disability in queer theory (and vice versa) allows us to challenge the conflation of disability and queerness from a perspective that challenges even more the cultural devaluation of both. On this point, in particular, current debates in Deaf studies seem instructive. Deaf activists have insisted for some time that deafness should not be understood as a disability and that Deaf people should be seen instead as having a distinct language and culture. As the disability rights [End Page 98] movement has matured, however, some Deaf activists and scholars in Deaf studies have rethought this position and have claimed disability (i.e., disability revalued by a disability rights movement and disability studies) in an attempt to affirm a coalition with other people with disabilities. Gay and lesbian liberation, like Deaf liberation, includes a historical refusal of dominant discourses of disability—a refusal that spurred an activist campaign culminating in the 1974 removal of homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association's list of mental disorders. Almost thirty years later, under very different historical circumstances, it is worth rethinking the discursive strategies that fueled that campaign and, following the lead of some Deaf activists and scholars, affirming the coalition between LGBT communities and people with disabilities. 37 Finally, critical disability and queerness have the capacity to speak back to the ubiquitous discourse of flexibility in our culture. Queers and people with disabilities should insist, inflexibly, that we will not serve as metaphors for each other and will not simply be tolerated, especially when that tolerance is used, paradoxically, to shore up heterosexual, able-bodied perspectives that continue to subordinate queerness and disability. Cultures of queerness and disability founded on access might, in fact, be positioned in explicit resistance to cultures founded on flexibility. Queer theory and critical disability, however, would demand not simply literal, physical access to already existing cultural spaces and institutions but access to the always shifting locations where identities, communities, and publics are both shaped and contested. 38 We cannot predict what critical and transformative identities will emerge as alternatives, but able-bodied heterosexuality is undoubtedly not as good as it gets, and accessing queer theory and critical disability means continually imagining other possibilities.

3. The Social Movement work still has traction

Last year's paper entertained a social movements alternative and included some evidence on the Occupy movement among others. Yes, this is uncharted territory, but it is still viable and would be a way to really discuss agency and change and how social reform really occurs.

The Occupy movement is not dead and the debate is more vibrant than ever.

Hermann, March '14 (Burkely, March 31, "It has Evolved Into a Different Kind of Movement Occupy isn't dead" by BURKELY HERMANN March 31, 2014 <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/03/31/occupy-isnt-dead/>)

Infamously, corporate mogul Arthur Jensen told Howard Beale in the movie *Network* that the "world is a business." That was thirty-eight years ago. On September 17th 2011, a new movement was born to counter this ideology enshrined in neoliberal globalization, with its roots going back to an article in February 2010 by investigative journalist and activist David DeGraw, if not earlier: the occupy movement. The corporate media at first ignored the movement, but after it became such a powerful force, they couldn't do so any longer, so they just ridiculed it to no end since it was opposed to the two-party system, the corporate-state nexus, committed to democratic practices and stayed leaderless. The movement stayed strong from September to December 2011, facing off police brutality, destruction of tents, etc... As documents show, the national government coordinated the effort to crackdown on this social justice movement with local police departments, which was a powerful use of the supposed 'legitimate' force of the state but it did not render the movement dead. [1] Almost two and half years later, some think that Occupy Wall Street (OWS), which should be called the occupy movement in the United States is dead. This article tries to counter these notions, and set the record straight on the status of this social movement in the United States. If you look up the words 'occupy is dead' on Startpage, a wonderful alternative search engine to monopolistic Google, all sorts of articles come up. There is no need to go through every one of them. Rosie Gray, writing for the good-for-nothing entertainment site,

BuzzFeed, declared absurdly in an almost tabloid fashion: “Occupy’s final implosion” was when trans* woman and Google employee, Justine Turney took over the @OccupyWallSt twitter account. After being blocked by this twitter account myself, and hearing from other occupy activists, I knew that this article was written in a way that distorted the truth in a disgusting way. An article in The New Republic, a crap-shoot liberal magazine barely worth reading, claimed that the movement in Turkey will be longer-lasting than Occupy Wall Street. An opinion piece on CNN’s website by Stephen Zune said that while Occupy gave voice to the 99%, it was ‘dead.’ Even an article on CounterPunch by sociologist Steven Sherman alluded to a conclusion: that Occupy is dead. I could go on and on with more and more articles, and those who say Occupy is dead. **Internationally, a movement is still present.[2] There are a number of Occupy groups which are still present in the US: (1) Occupy the SEC which is trying to “ensure that financial regulators act in the public interest, not for Wall Street and its lobbyists,” (2) Occupy the Hood which is meant to bring issues of people of color to the forefront**, and Occupy Sandy which was created as a people’s response to Hurricane Sandy and helping the victims of the storm. The last group listed here, Occupy Sandy, has engaged in recent actions such as Occupy Christie which was an encampment to protest how Governor Christie has stolen money meant to go to hurricane victims and has other branches: Occupy Sandy Staten Island and Occupy Sandy Relief NJ as well. Also there’s groups like Occupy Monsanto which has a website “dedicated to empowering citizens of the world to take action against Monsanto & it’s enablers” in the government along with “processed food companies that use Monsanto’s products.”[3] One of their project are called ‘Genetic Crimes Units’ where they carry out ‘decontamination’ efforts or actions opposing GMOs and Monsanto, for good reason. I can’t forget **Occupy Our Homes**, which **is a part of the US Occupy movement that is meant to help homeowners**, defining itself as “a movement that supports Americans who stand up to their banks and fight for their homes.” They recently created a new website allowing anyone to “start, run and deliver your own campaign in support of a home occupation or stopping an eviction, with the technology you need at your fingertips.” Additionally, there’s a group called **‘Occupy the Economy’** which **is working to democratize the economy and create an ‘industrial democracy’ in the US**, which is still around as well. Then, **there is a group that tries to make sure women’s voices are heard in the occupy movement: Women Occupy**. [4] If this isn’t enough, there’s Occupy Design, which defines itself as a “grassroots project connecting designers with on-the-ground demonstrators” that work to “create freely available visual tools around a common graphic language to unite the 99%.” This group is connected to **the Creative Action Network** which **defines itself as a “crowdsourcing creativity for causes.”** For environmentalists, there is **Occupy the Pipeline**, which **defines themselves as a “grassroots, not-for-profit, environmental working group” that works to oppose the Spectra pipeline through “non-violent, direct action and civil disobedience.”** There’s also an occupy offshoot called Strike Debt which helps people get rid of their debt by buying it up at a low price and relieving people of their burden, part of a project called the ‘Rolling Jubilee.’ Then there’s groups which are meant to organize remaining occupiers like InterOccupy and Occupy Together which are still existing along with sites like occupy.com and occupyeverything.org which share articles on social justice issues. Oh yeah, and there’s still the twitter for Occupy Weather. There are a number of occupy groups still kicking beyond this. According to my research, **occupy groups are still active in twenty-nine US cities**. [5] Additionally, there is also a Google Group still for Occupy Baltimore, along with a page for the New York City General Assembly which is where it all began. The website created by Adbusters, way back, occupywallst.org still is thriving, but is not a voice for the movement since there not one voice for the movement, no ‘official’ website, ‘official’ organization or person that speaks for Occupy. If there is any further indication one needs that this movement is still living and breathing, consider the trial against Occupy activist Cecily McMillian who has nonviolently fought the powers that be, and the trials of Occupy activists (NATO 3 and Cleveland 4, etc...). There’s also hundreds upon hundreds of Occupy Together meetups, but only further investigation would prove how active each of these groups is. Even the Occupied Chicago Tribune is still hanging on and Tidal magazine which analyses ‘Occupy Theory.’ To be absolutely clear, **no one should have any illusions about the existing occupy movement in the United States.** If I missed some occupy group that is active in the US, please tell me, because I didn’t mean to leave any group out, but this article shows the groups I’ve found so far. Obviously, **the movement is different than it was in 2011, 2012, or even 2013. It has evolved, becoming more localized** in general. Lets not forget that Occupy still has engaged in some big actions like: protests at the NATO summit in May 2012, participation in Marches Against Monsanto, reclaiming foreclosed homes from the banks, etc... It is clear that those remaining Occupy activists have formed a community which in part constitutes the remaining social movement. Its hard for me to say what should happen because I’m not involved in the internal mechanizations of the remaining occupy movement but am rather an Occupy supporter. But, **I hope that Occupy is reinvigorated with new energy** and expand **since ‘occupy’ can apply to many, many social justice causes.** Maybe this can be done at the upcoming Occupy National Gathering in California where the remaining elements of the occupy movement meet or with the coming #WaveofAction which runs for three months (between April 4th and July 4th) where “people throughout the world will be protesting corruption, rallying around solutions and taking part in alternative systems” as part of what they are calling the ‘Global Spring.’ In the end, there is one main point that should be clear: **Occupy isn’t dead and for those disappointed with how ‘weak’ it is, then they should work with the existing movement so that it can be strong again to challenge the powers that be.**

4. This Controversy is at the Core of Democracy.

It makes little sense to ask whether or not this controversy will remain “inherent”—it is turbo super-charged in terms of inherency. If anything this is the exact type of policy discussion we need to have in

debate because the political process is so decidedly opposed to changes in the direction of economic equality.

Teixeira, '14 (Ruy Teixeira is a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and co-director of a new joint project between the Center and the American Enterprise Institute on changing demographics in the United States. "Political Inequality Worsens Economic Inequality" <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/04/21/do-the-rich-call-the-shots-13/political-inequality-worsens-economic-inequality>)

President **Obama has** famously **said that inequality is the defining issue of our times.** The recent release of Thomas Piketty's "Capital in the 21st Century" heavily underscores that assertion by showing how **tendencies toward inequality and the shift of resources from labor to capital are endemic in today's capitalism—and may very well get worse.**

Policies to mitigate disparity are unlikely to be backed by economic elites who benefit from inequality, and therefore unlikely to be enacted. Obama's statement is generally taken as referring to economic inequality. But Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page's paper focuses our attention on political inequality. The paper will not get the attention that Piketty's volume has but perhaps it should. Gilens and Page use a database of 1,779 policy outcomes to show that the views of average citizens exert little or no influence on these outcomes once the views of economic elites and business groups are taken into account. This does not mean that no policies ever align with the views of average citizens — they do when those views agree with those of economic elites. But **when average citizens disagree with economic elites, it is economic elites who prevail over citizens. It doesn't take a lot of imagination to see how this political inequality only aggravates our problems with economic inequality.** If there are policies that could mitigate rising economic inequality they are unlikely to be supported by the economic elites and business groups who benefit from inequality and therefore unlikely to happen. Conversely, **if there are policies that could worsen economic inequality but are supported by elites and business, they may well be opposed by average citizens but enacted anyway because average citizens have so little influence. So inequality truly is the defining issue of our time but it is broader and more challenging than that suggested by the one percent's increasing share of national wealth. It encompasses both economic and political outcomes. As long as economic elites and business groups are effectively controlling the political process, serious action to reduce economic inequality and improve the lives of average citizens will be conspicuous by its absence.**

Nicks, '14 (April 22, 2014 "America's Middle Class Falls Behind" <http://time.com/72496/middle-class-income-inequality/>, acsd 4/14)

Once the juggernaut of the American economy and the envy of the world, the middle class has finally lost its position as the richest in the world, according to a new report. The New York Times, citing an analysis of survey data going back 35, reports that the middle class in the United States has fallen behind Canada's middle class. **While economic growth in the U.S. is equal to or stronger than growth in other countries, those gains have gone almost exclusively to the wealthiest Americans.** America's middle class is still wealthier than corresponding demographics in Europe, but the gap has narrowed significantly in the last 10 years. Meanwhile, **the poor in the U.S. are significantly worse off than their counterparts in Europe and Canada—a total reversal from 35 years ago.** Median income in the U.S., about \$74,000 after taxes for a family of four, rose by 20% between 1980 and 2000 but has since remain mostly unchanged, according to the Times analysis. Median income in Canada, in contrast, rose by 20% between 2000 and 2010 alone. "The idea that the median American has so much more income than the middle class in all other parts of the world is not true these days," Lawrence Katz, a Harvard economist not associated with the study, told the Times. "In 1960, we were massively richer than anyone else. In 1980, we were richer. In the 1990s, we were still richer." **The analysis blames the struggles of the middle class on stagnating education attainment, higher executive pay, lower minimum wage and weaker unions, among other factors.** The Great Divide

Richard D **Wolff**, Professor of Economics Emeritus, University of Massachusetts, '13 ("Debating Capitalism - Redefining Outdated Terms" Saturday, 21 September 2013 09:16 Truthout | Opinion <http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/18323-debating-capitalism-redefining-outdated-terms?tmpl=component&print=1>)

Reasonable conversation about capitalism is possible again. Debates about its strengths and weaknesses resume. The United States' post-1950 taboo against honestly evaluating capitalism finally is fading. The public increasingly ignores over-the-top celebrations of capitalism as humanity's peak achievement, God's choice, perpetual prosperity generator or guarantor of individual freedom.

Politicians, journalists and academics could stop their uncritical cheerleading for capitalism, although most still pay their bills that way. Think the world needs an alternative to corporate media? Click here to make a tax-deductible donation to Truthout and keep independent journalism strong. The reasons are many. **Capitalism no longer "delivers the goods" to most Americans.**

With consumer debt already high, more borrowing can no longer postpone hard times. **The "American Dream" slips farther out of reach.** As Cold War memories recede, labels like socialism or communism no longer stifle debate. Destroyed cities like Detroit; students with unsustainable debts; declining wages, benefits and job security; and millions unemployed or foreclosed - to them, the usual rationalizations of capitalism seem hollow and ridiculous. **This**

July's national survey found 26 percent of Americans believing that capitalism is "not working too well" and another 16 percent that capitalism is "not working at all well." Imagine the consequences if a new political party arose to represent those 42 percent by demanding basic changes in the economic system.

However, that survey and resumed debates about capitalism have not yet faced or solved a shared problem. Widespread confusion and disagreement surround what capitalism means and thus what exactly "is not working." This situation weakens the clarity and appeal of solutions offered by capitalism's critics. A two-dimensional definition of capitalism - as private property plus markets - prevailed for the past 150 years. It neatly contrasted socialism or communism as public property and planning. Privately owned enterprises producing goods and services and free market exchanges of resources and products defined capitalism. State-owned and -operated enterprises and government-planned resource and product distributions defined socialism or communism. Those definitions' inadequacies should have been obvious. They persisted likely because they served leaders in both systems well. Private capitalists and their supporters demonize government regulations, taxes and public services they oppose as socialism or communism and equate them with atheism, revolution, violence and dictatorship. The old definitions work for them. Keynesians and social democrats advocate government intervention to preserve capitalism by offsetting its excesses and flaws. Because they fear being called communists, they use the old definition (that of communism being total state ownership and planning) to reject communism emphatically. Leaders in countries such as the Soviet Union and China - products and custodians of "revolutions against capitalism" - defined their economies as opposites, negations of capitalism. Polarized definitions - capitalism as private property and markets and socialism or communism as public property and planning - usefully emphasize their difference and distance from capitalism. Those polarized definitions are now being challenged and displaced. This is partly because of their close associations with socialist and communist economies that imploded and capitalist economies languishing in deep crises. Searches for alternatives to both systems uncovered the old definitions' flaws. **New agendas for effective economic change begin with different definitions.**

Definitions focused on private versus public property distinguish capitalist from socialist economies poorly. For example, the 1917 Soviet revolution guaranteed private property in land - the agricultural economy's key resource - to millions of peasants. De facto private property comprised the "family plots" alongside collectivized agriculture after 1930. Soviet-style socialisms often did not "abolish" private property. Likewise capitalist economies often did not abolish public property: postal systems, utilities, schools, transport systems, credit agencies and many other sectors remained public enterprises. Markets-versus-planning definitions are likewise problematic. Socialist economies always used markets among other mechanisms for distributing resources and products. That included wage-labor markets. Of course, socialist governments planned, controlled and intervened in most markets. Yet government planning and intervention also exist in capitalism and shape all sorts of market supplies and demands (including labor markets). Keynesian economists mostly favor capitalism while advocating greater government intervention in it. Planning and markets, like public and private property, usually have coexisted over recent centuries. Nor did they tend toward the opposites favored in the old definitions. How should we now differentiate capitalism from other economic systems? Marx's work helps by defining capitalism in terms of its organization of production, the internal structure of enterprises (factories, offices and stores). Capitalist enterprises exclude most workers from key decisions: what, how and where to produce and how to use net revenues (in Marx's terms, the enterprise's "surplus value"). Capitalist enterprise decision-makers include only enterprise owners (e.g., major shareholders) and the boards of directors they select. For this definition, capitalism can exist whether the enterprise is owned privately or publicly and whether it distributes its outputs by market exchanges or a state plan. **In short, capitalism defined as a**

particular organization of production exhibits different forms: private and state and market and planned. For this definition, a new socialist alternative to capitalism entails democratically transformed enterprises.

All the workers have become the board of directors. They collectively employ themselves. They democratically decide what, how and where to produce and how to use net revenues. They do that together with the similarly organized residential communities they interact with. In this new definition, socialism too would exhibit different forms: workers' self-directed enterprises publicly or privately owned and with planning or markets. Socialist societies would debate and decide among possible forms. This new definition enables today's critics of capitalism to focus on what earlier critics missed when they advocated changes from private to public property and from markets to planning. It clarifies what is to be done now, namely a transition that includes turning capitalist into workers' self-directed enterprises, workers cooperatives, etc. Without such a definition, those increasingly dissatisfied with capitalism now risk repeating the failed transitions of the past. Previous socialist and communist critics of capitalism proved unable, in those transitions, to go beyond state and planned forms of capitalism. **We could do better this**

time by insisting that genuinely democratized enterprises be part of any transition beyond the capitalisms and socialisms of the past. Democratized enterprises give working people the means to hold any state apparatus accountable (because they provide its resources). Democratized enterprises could attract mass support. They embody that "vision thing" social critics need.

This is the topic that brings together policy action, a critique of the government, and a concern for suffering and the alleviation of oppression emanating from capitalism and the state.

Bill Moyers and Michael Winship, April '14 (April 22, 2014 by Common Dreams Government = Protection Racket for the 1 Percent: <http://www.commondreams.org/view/2014/04/22>)

The **evidence of income inequality just keeps mounting**. According to "Working for the Few," a recent briefing paper from Oxfam, "**In the US, the wealthiest one percent captured 95 percent of post-financial crisis growth since 2009, while the bottom 90 percent became poorer.**" Our now infamous **one percent own more than 35 percent of the nation's wealth. Meanwhile, the bottom 40 percent of the country is in debt.** Just this past Tuesday, the 15th of April — Tax Day — the AFL-CIO reported **that last year the chief executive officers of 350 top American corporations were paid 331 times more money than the average US worker. Those executives made an average of \$11.7 million dollars compared to the average worker who earned \$35,239 dollars.** As that analysis circulated on Tax Day, the economic analyst **Robert Reich reminded us that in addition to getting the largest percent of total national income in nearly a century, many in the one percent are paying a lower federal tax rate than a lot of people in the middle class.** You may remember that an obliging Congress, of both parties, allows high rollers of finance the privilege of "carried interest," a tax rate below that of their secretaries and clerks. **And at state and local levels, while the poorest fifth of Americans pay an average tax rate of over 11 percent, the richest one percent of the country pay —** are you ready for this? — **half that rate.** Now, neither Nature nor Nature's God drew up our tax codes; that's the work of legislators — politicians — and it's one way they have, as Chief Justice John Roberts might put it, of expressing gratitude to their donors: "Oh, Mr. Adelson, we so appreciate your generosity that we cut your estate taxes so you can give \$8 billion as a tax-free payment to your heirs, even though down the road the public will have to put up \$2.8 billion to compensate for the loss in tax revenue." **All of which makes truly repugnant the argument, heard so often from courtiers of the rich, that inequality doesn't matter. Of course it matters. Inequality is what has turned Washington into a protection racket for the one percent.** It buys all those goodies from government: **Tax breaks. Tax havens** (which allow corporations and the rich to park their money in a no-tax zone). **Loopholes.** Favors like carried interest. And so on. As Paul Krugman writes in his New York Review of Books essay on Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, "We now know both that the United States has a much more unequal distribution of income than other advanced countries and that much of this difference in outcomes can be attributed directly to government action." Recently, researchers at Connecticut's Trinity College ploughed through the data and concluded that **the US Senate is responsive to the policy preferences of the rich, ignoring the poor.** And now there's that big study coming out in the fall from scholars at Princeton and Northwestern universities, based on data collected between 1981 and 2002. Their conclusion: **"America's claims to being a democratic society are seriously threatened... The preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy." Instead, policy tends "to tilt towards the wishes of corporations and business and professional associations."** Last month, Matea Gold of The Washington Post reported on a pair of political science graduate students who released a study confirming that money does equal access in Washington. Joshua Kalla and David Broockman drafted two form letters asking 191 members of Congress for a meeting to discuss a certain piece of legislation. One email said "active political donors" would be present; the second email said only that a group of "local constituents" would be at the meeting. One guess as to which emails got the most response. Yes, more than five times as many legislators or their chiefs of staff offered to set up meetings with active donors than with local constituents. Why is it not corruption when the selling of access to our public officials upends the very core of representative government? When money talks and you have none, how can you believe in democracy? Sad, that it's come to this. **The drift toward oligarchy** that Thomas Piketty describes in his formidable new book on capital **has become a mad dash. It will overrun us, unless we stop it.**

5. Piketty vs. Kuznets Curve.

Some of this debate is taking place over Thomas Piketty's thesis about the need for progressive (radically progressive) tax policy to turn the tide of economic inequality. That's the core of this controversy area in many ways: economic redistribution through policy. The arguments against Piketty's solutions, on the other hand, are also (sort of) compelling—the contention that steep tax increases would shrink the economy overall and that the "oligarchy" people reference in relation to economic wealth dominating politics is not a reality or a huge risk.

Robert J. Samuelson, '14 (<http://www.abqjournal.com/387449/opinion/economic-inequality-is-exploding.html> By Robert J. Samuelson / Syndicated Columnist PUBLISHED: Tuesday, April 22, 2014 at 12:05 am, WASHINGTON — Thomas Piketty has taken America's liberal establishment by storm.)

Piketty is a French economist who has written a lengthy (577 pages) study, “Capital in the Twenty-First Century,” intended to provide a powerful intellectual justification for attacking the superrich. Surprisingly, “Capital” hit No. 16 on the New York Times’ best-seller list for hardcover nonfiction books – a considerable feat for an academic treatise that, though clearly written, is no page-turner. Agree or disagree with his views, **Piketty’s** project represents a prodigious research achievement. With other economists, he **has constructed statistics tracing the distribution of income and wealth for many major countries back to the 1800s. The most obvious conclusion from the data is common sense: Even relatively egalitarian societies have huge disparities in economic fortune.** Piketty presents **Scandinavian countries in the 1970s** and 1980s as examples of **“low inequality.”** Still, **the richest 10 percent commanded about 25 percent of national income and the poorest 50 percent got only 30 percent; the “middle class” – the 40 percent below the top 10 percent – received 45 percent of income. These days, the distribution in the United States is far more unequal. In 2010, the top 10 percent received about 50 percent of national income, and the bottom 50 percent got 20 percent; the middle 40 percent got 30 percent.** European nations are typically in between, with the top 10 percent taking 35 percent of income. What Piketty also shows is that **in the last 30 years inequality has exploded almost everywhere, especially in the United States** and the United Kingdom. **This finding disproves the** so-called **Kuznets Curve. In 1954, American economist Simon Kuznets** (1901-1985) **argued that income inequality would fall as societies modernized. Workers would move from low-paid farm jobs to better-paid industrial jobs. Gaps would narrow.** This seemed to have happened in the United States. From the 1920s to the 1950s, the income share of the richest 10 percent fell from around 50 percent to about 35 percent. **But now it’s rebounded to the late 1920s level. This stunning fact, published previously in academic journals, helped make inequality a big political issue. There’s no consensus as to why inequality has increased. Some economists emphasize big rewards for workers with high skills (investment bankers, doctors, lawyers, business managers) and special talents (actors, athletes). Piketty argues that an American class of “supermanagers” (top corporate officials) has arisen, whose pay is set artificially high by friendly compensation committees composed of other top corporate officers. All income ultimately derives from either labor or capital. Labor includes wages, salaries and fringe benefits; capital covers the returns from stocks, bonds, real estate, businesses and other assets. Piketty fears that capital will gain relentlessly at the expense of labor.** It’s simple arithmetic, he argues. Historical returns on capital, after inflation, have averaged 4 percent to 5 percent annually. Meanwhile, the world economy’s total income – slowed by small population and productivity gains – will grow only 1 percent to 3 percent annually, he believes. **If capital income grows faster than total income, its share must increase. Worse, he says, capital income is more concentrated than labor income. In the United States, the top 10 percent own about 70 percent of the capital,** mainly stocks, bonds and real estate. **To prevent inherited fortunes from dominating advanced societies, Piketty would raise the top income tax rate to roughly 80 percent on incomes above \$500,000 or \$1 million; he would also tax accumulated wealth.** Though Piketty is an economist, his book is essentially a work of political science. He objects to extreme economic inequality because it offends democracy: Too much power is conferred on too few. His economic analysis sometimes seems skewed to fit his political agenda. **Take his tax increases. He doubts that they would hurt economic growth. This seems questionable. Incentives must matter, at least slightly. Or consider his predicted slowdown in the world economy. This seems possible, but if it happens, capital owners would likely suffer lower returns. As for the power of the superrich, they hardly control most democracies. In the United States, where about 70 percent of federal spending goes to the poor and middle class, the richest 1 percent pay nearly a quarter of federal taxes. After-tax and post-government-transfer incomes are less unequal than Piketty’s pretax figures. Still, the present concentration of income and wealth instinctively feels excessive. It understandably stirs resentment. We’d be better off if the rich were less so and other Americans were more so. But it’s doubtful that political action to force this transformation would be similarly beneficial. Class warfare is bruising; today, it would degrade the confidence needed for a stronger recovery.**

Others are not convinced of the “response” to Piketty and are beginning to push the agenda against inequality.

Queally, April 25 (Published on Friday, April 25, 2014 by Common Dreams ¶ “Right Scrambles over Red-Hot Indictment of Inequality and Capitalism¶ Krugman: 'The right seems unable to mount any kind of substantive counterattack' to Thomas Piketty's new book¶ - Jon Queally, staff writer”)

As a book by French economist Thomas Piketty has soared to the top of U.S. best seller lists and the public discourse surrounding inequality has popularized the once rare term "oligarchy" in recent weeks, **the American rightwing appears flabbergasted about how to respond to the seemingly red-hot rise of the idea that modern capitalism has become a failure by creating a permanent ultra-rich ruling class to the detriment of the overall economy and everyone else.** In his column in Friday's New York Times, calling it the "Piketty Panic" now occurring among Republicans and Conservatives, Paul Krugman says that what's most interesting about the national conversation sparked by Piketty "is that the right seems unable to mount any kind of substantive counterattack" to the book's central thesis — one that utterly destroys the core arguments long made by the nation's neoliberals and the financial elite. "People are yearning for an explanation of the dire economic straits in which they find themselves. Piketty's highly readable style, innovative mind, and breadth of knowledge have made him the ideal candidate to meet this need." —Richard Eskow Using **James Pethokoukis of the rightwing American Enterprise Institute** as just one example, Krugman says his rhetoric proves the Conservatives are scrambling. Pethokoukis, in an op-ed in The National Review, **said Piketty's book must be refuted, otherwise its ideas "will spread among the clerisy and reshape the political economic landscape on which all future policy battles will be waged."** But for Krugman the refutations so far amount to little more than familiar tactics. He writes: What's really new about [Piketty's book] "Capital" is the way it demolishes that most cherished of conservative myths, the insistence that we're living in a meritocracy in which great wealth is earned and deserved. For the past couple of decades, the conservative response to attempts to make soaring incomes at the top into a political issue has involved two lines of defense: first, denial that the rich are actually doing as well and the rest as badly as they are, but when denial fails, claims that those soaring incomes at the top are a justified reward for services rendered. Don't call them the 1 percent, or the wealthy; call them "job creators." This week, Piketty's book sits atop the best seller lists of Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, and the New York Times (to name a few), something rather unheard of for a 700-plus page economic treatise draped in extensive data, literary allusions, and scholarly research. According to Richard Eskow, fellow at the Campaign for America's Future, the high sales and unprecedented public attention drawn by the book say something remarkable about both its content and the current state of economic and political affairs in the U.S. The surprising sales figure, Eskow writes, are profoundly important: People are yearning for an explanation of the dire economic straits in which they find themselves. Piketty's highly readable style, innovative mind, and breadth of knowledge have made him the ideal candidate to meet this need. As Piketty himself points out, **the Occupy Wall Street movement showed that even seemingly abstruse mathematical concepts like "the top centile" can galvanize large numbers of people when they are translated into simpler language like "the 1 percent." And, in fact, the phrase "we are the 99 percent" is derived from years of research by Piketty and his co-authors.** One of the key services of the book, says Eskow, is the promotion of the idea—backed by evidence—that **"however bad you think inequality has become, it's worse than that."** The other service, of course, is the statement of **solutions**, which for Piketty's **includes a global tax on extreme wealth** as a way to correct what is an inherent flaw of capitalism itself: the outpacing of personal financial riches compared to the overall rise of the economy. That focus on correcting for massive inequality gets back to Krugman's observation that the rightwing is simply unequipped—or at least temporarily caught off guard—by the power of the economic argument that says higher tax rates would not only lessen inequality across the board, but actually improve the performance of the economy. The rightwing's primary strategy so far, says Krugman, is to simply call Piketty names, smearing him with the same red-Marxist brush. He writes: It has been amazing to watch conservatives, one after another, denounce Mr. Piketty as a Marxist. Even Mr. Pethokoukis, who is more sophisticated than the rest, calls "Capital" a work of "soft Marxism," which only makes sense if the mere mention of unequal wealth makes you a Marxist. (And maybe that's how they see it: recently former Senator Rick Santorum denounced the term "middle class" as "Marxism talk," because, you see, we don't have classes in America.) And The Wall Street Journal's review, predictably, goes the whole distance, somehow segueing from Mr. Piketty's call for progressive taxation as a way to limit the concentration of wealth — a remedy as American as apple pie, once advocated not just by leading economists but by mainstream politicians, up to and including Teddy Roosevelt — to the evils of Stalinism. Is that really the best The Journal can do? The answer, apparently, is yes. Krugman notes that the extreme wealth in the country is now integrally tied to the failed political and democratic processes due to the destruction of campaign finance regulations in a series of deplorable Supreme Court decisions. But returning to the focus of his column, Krugman concludes that the right's reaction to the book and its argument proves 'Capital' has them on the ropes: ...the fact that apologists for America's oligarchs are evidently at a loss for coherent arguments doesn't mean that they are on the run politically. **Money still talks — indeed, thanks in part to the Roberts court, it talks louder than ever. Still, ideas matter too, shaping both how we talk about society and, eventually, what we do.** And the Piketty panic shows that the right has run out of ideas. And that leaves others, including observers like Eskow, asking the classic question: **What is to be done? He writes: Piketty's masterful work provides the populist movement with a new vocabulary, along with a powerful data resource with which to make its arguments. "Capital" offers activists, analysts and lawmakers a new pair of glasses with which to view our economic landscape. If some of that landscape already looks familiar, that's to be expected. And even when we choose to plot a slightly different course than the one Piketty recommends, he has provided a valuable service. Thomas Piketty navigates his terrain with three stars to guide him: economics, history and a deep grasp of Enlightenment ethics. That has brought him, and us, to a deeper understanding of inequality's genuinely "terrifying" implications. Where we go from here is up to us.**

6. History Disputes the “Gilded Age” Thesis (aka “politics links”)

In addition to the negative arguments coming from the critical direction (detailed in last year's paper), there are direct responses to the claim that the US is in a destructive period of economic inequality that is uniquely threatening democracy itself. In some ways, this is the example that Krugman is talking about above.

Tim Rueter, *Forbes* Magazine Contributor, '14

(<http://www.forbes.com/sites/timreuter/2014/04/22/economics-as-politics-by-other-means-income-inequality-capitalism-and-democracy/Economics>, "As Politics By Other Means: Income Inequality, Capitalism, And Democracy" 4/22/2014, acsd 4/14)

Income inequality has become Democrats' favorite talking point ahead of the midterm election in November. The topic is attractive because it is easy to demagogue, and occasionally pays political dividends. Bill de Blasio used the "tale of two cities" narrative to contrast New York City's masses with its wealthy plutocrats, and he won last year's mayoral election. **Judging by Democrats' rhetoric about the rich corrupting the democratic process, they think inequality is a winning issue at the national level.** Today's progressives are not the first to bemoan inequality as a danger to democracy. Their rhetoric speaks to an old tension between the fact that people come to the ballot box with one vote, but enter the marketplace with different talents and accrue unequal rewards. As **historian H.W. Brands states in his history of the Gilded Age, *American Colossus: The Triumph of Capitalism 1865-1900*, capitalism "cannot operate without it [inequality]" whatever the importance of equality to democracy.** Inequality is always most visible at the top. Indeed, "never had a class of Americans been so wealthy as the great capitalists of the late nineteenth century." Cornelius Vanderbilt, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J.P. Morgan harnessed railroads, oil, steel, and finance to amass fortunes that, in today's dollars, would dwarf those of Warren Buffet and Charles Koch. In 1901, Carnegie sold his steel empire to Morgan for \$480 million. Moreover, Morgan's subsequent merger of Carnegie Steel with other firms created the first company capitalized at \$1 billion (U.S. Steel). Such immense wealth was the reward for satisfying market needs in a brutally competitive environment. Long before Rockefeller became the richest man in America (valued at roughly \$1 billion upon his death in 1937), he relentlessly cut costs and inefficiencies from Standard Oil's refining process. Such measures allowed Standard Oil to cheaply refine oil into kerosene and ship that night illuminating liquid to numerous customers. However, the high profits that come from dominating a market invariably attract competitors. In Rockefeller's case, his success drew Morgan's interest. The famed banker got his start consolidating railroad companies, and restoring them to profitability. Seeking a new challenge, Morgan invested in the nascent electric power industry, namely Thomas Edison. The combination of Morgan's money and Edison's genius paid off such that General Electric evicted Rockefeller from the light market. Only the discovery of oil's use to the burgeoning "horseless carriage" industry kept Standard Oil profitable. Wealth was equally transient in the stock market where fortunes were made and destroyed with great speed. In 1868, Cornelius Vanderbilt lost roughly \$7 million in a clash with a speculator named Jay Gould. The Commodore tried to buy a controlling stake in the Erie Railroad, of which Gould was a board member. As Vanderbilt bought stock, Gould and other board members printed new shares: the more "watered down" stock Vanderbilt bought, the more kept appearing on the exchange. When he filed for an injunction against further printing, Gould responded by bribing New York legislators to legitimize the stock. The affair ended when Gould paid Vanderbilt to end his quest to buy the railroad. Such anecdotes abound in Brands' book, and they paint a complex portrait of free-market capitalism at its zenith. Free-markets harness the disparate talents of individuals to achieve beneficial outcomes for all. Unbridled competition for customers transformed an agrarian nation into the richest country on Earth. By 1900, "infant mortality declined by a third; life expectancy increased by a seventh," and "real per capita income nearly doubled." Innovations such as electricity, steel, and trains had lifted the living standards of average Americans to levels once associated with "aristocracy." But when wealth inequality translated into inequality of power, bad things followed. Labor disputes often turned violent. An 1892 clash at Carnegie's Homestead steel plant outside of Pittsburgh left nine strikers dead when Pinkerton detectives, hired by Carnegie Steel's chairman, Henry Frick, opened fire. In retaliation, an anarchist attempted to kill Frick (and Carnegie eventually fired him). In another case, the Pullman Strike of 1894, railroad owners found the smallest reason (delivery of the mail) to demand the federal government use law (an injunction) and force (deploying federal troops and arresting strike leader Eugene Debs) to break the strike in Chicago. It is easy to blame income inequality as the source of such tragedies. How could the common man fight back against the captains of industry? The courts enforced their contracts; federal troops broke strikes; and Congress acquiesced to their legislative demands (tariffs namely). Great wealth seemingly equaled great power. Many so-called progressives would concur with Brands' thesis that capitalism exists in tension, if not in conflict, with democracy. Progressives view democratic equality as a bulwark against abusive behavior enabled by wealth inequality. Moreover, unrestrained capitalism may subvert democracy. As Brands notes, the tycoons held far more influence over the lives of average people than any elected official. **But such assertions about the corruption of democracy by capitalism miss the mark. Those who claim that democracy could have limited capitalism's worst excesses should realize that some tragedies had democratic sanction.** Capitalism did not conquer the west by itself. As railroads brought numerous settlers into Indian Territory, clashes between Native Americans and white settlers turned nasty. Tribal raids eventually incurred fearsome retaliation on November 29, 1864 when a militia butchered Indian men, women, and children in Colorado. The Sand Creek Massacre elicited condemnation of Colonel John Chivington and his men from those in the east, but "many westerners actively applauded" the soldiers. One newspaper even claimed they had "covered themselves with glory" after mutilating the bodies of the dead. The Sioux fared just as badly. A gold strike in the Black Hills of South Dakota in 1873 brought "fifteen thousand" miners onto the Sioux holy land in defiance of the Treaty of Fort Laramie. The federal government failed to prevent the encroachment, and war began. The Sioux won the battle of Little Big Horn in 1876 against George Custer and the U.S. 7th Cavalry, but cost themselves "support among that minority of Americans disposed to treat the Indians leniently" by doing so. Americans greeted the news of the massacre at Wounded Knee in December 1890 with indifference, if not approval. Democratic judgment was no less harsh on foreigners. Democratic agitation, and Congressional approval, preceded an imperial war. Those who profited off of the "splendid little war" with Spain in 1898 were an exception to the rule that war is inimical to economic growth. **War destroys wealth, terminates trade, and kills customers. But as so often happens, democratic furor overwhelmed economic logic.** The war was initially sold as a way to end Spanish atrocities (including the use of concentration camps) against Cuban

insurgents. The events in Cuba deserved headlines on their own merit. But the task of inflaming public opinion against Spain's fell to two publishing tycoons, William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer. The bellicose "penny press," the *New York Journal* and *New York World*, competed for readers by publishing sensationalized stories about the events in Cuba. When a Spanish diplomat called President McKinley "weak," Hearst's *Journal* exploded with indignation: "Worst Insult to the United States in Its History" was the headline. The explosion of the U.S.S. Maine in Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898 became the *World's* famous war cry: "Remember the Maine and to Hell with Spain!" How much the profit driven propaganda swayed policymakers is debatable. Yet, other pro-war interests echoed the bellicosity of the "yellow press." Sugar producers were eager to protect their investments in Cuba, while imperialists, such as Theodore Roosevelt, wanted to project power. The rush to war quickly overwhelmed the resistance of President McKinley and Speaker of the House Thomas Reed. A joint resolution of Congress authorizing the use of force against Spain passed 311-6 in the House of Representatives and 42-35 in the Senate in late April. By mid-August, the U.S. had inherited Spain's colonies and its bloody counter-insurgency in the Philippines. The stormy debate that followed the war's end focused on whether a republic should run an empire, and the battle lines were not clear. Capitalists were "not of one mind," but probably tilted toward imperialism even though Andrew Carnegie famously denounced the economic illogic of seizing Asian markets. More liberally minded members of Congress attacked colonialism as repugnant. How could a republic side against those who sought self-determination, let alone rule them? Unfortunately, the anti-interventionists lost the argument. Expansionist appeals to jingoism trumped logic. Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana declared: "It [the Philippines] holds for us all the profit, all the glory, all the happiness possible to man." Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts said relinquishing the Philippines would amount to an "act of infamy" (by what standard?). Even President McKinley reversed himself on the occupation question. The U.S. would not abandon the Filipinos, but fulfill its obligation to "civilize and Christianize" them. No sooner did American forces defeat the insurgency in 1902; capitalism endured a major setback. Investigative journalists ("muckrakers") placed capitalism on trial in the court of public opinion for its corruption of governments, cities, and people. They had evidence that ranged from Jacob Riis' photojournalism that documented the squalor of Manhattan tenements in *How The Other Half Lives* to Upton Sinclair's lurid descriptions of filthy meat sold by Chicago meatpackers in his novel *The Jungle*. The torrent of damning literature had the desired effect. It stigmatized capitalism as corrupt, and politicians reacted accordingly. The three presidents of the Progressive Era (1901-1914) staged what Brands calls a "democratic counter-revolution." Theodore Roosevelt's government filed an anti-trust suit against Morgan's "\$400 million" railroad monopoly, Northern Securities, and won a conviction in 1904. Rockefeller's Standard Oil was similarly sued in 1906, and President William Howard Taft oversaw its dissolution in 1910 (decreed by a unanimous Supreme Court). A federal income tax was established in 1913, and President Woodrow Wilson created the Federal Reserve later that year. By the start of World War I in 1914, the foundation for mixed economy had been laid. Beneath his plethora of stories, **Brands manages to echo the cries of today's progressives. They also desire a "democratic counter-revolution" to restrain the excesses of capitalism. For them, the Gilded Age, much like the present, is a cautionary tale about how inequality threatens, and can damage, democracy. This unfortunate position manifests the blurred state of today's debate over income inequality. Economic questions are too often confused with political ones. This is most apparent with regard to the issue of positive rights, or the right to something. No one can logically claim the poor in America are worse off than the poor in socialist Cuba, so the debate over income inequality becomes ideological. With little regard for how wealth is produced, progressives' emphasis on positive rights reframes the state's primary duty as distribution rather than protection. In some cases, and usually in response to an individual abuse, the two are conflated. Capitalism is derided as systematically corrupt when individual misdeeds are brought to light, even though politicians still assert that people have a right to the fruits of capitalism. The emphasis on democracy is equally disingenuous. Once America's great wealth becomes spoils to divide up, democracy becomes corrupt. Rent-seeking behavior abounds, market distortions beget more legislation to "solve the problem" (subsidized student loans raising the cost of college), and citizens vote themselves benefits they do not entirely pay for (entitlements). Those who object find themselves stigmatized as apologists for plutocrats who will exploit the masses absent state intervention. Progressives might as well just say that inequality is a sign of pending societal disaster. Yet, the evidence to the contrary is hiding in plain sight. Those who deride the present as a "second Gilded Age" seem to forget that the last third of Nineteenth Century produced revolutionary changes in every facet of life. If such circumstances and changes were to occur now, many people would live infinitely better lives.**

7. Child Care. Parental Leave Laws, Better Protections for Parents

In the areas of "family financial security" and "income distribution" there are some important considerations. This area is about family and labor laws that allow for better child care across incomes.

JUDITH WARNER April 20, '14, (Judith Warner, a contributing writer for The New York Times Magazine, is a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress. http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/04/20/to-reduce-inequality-start-with-families/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0 "To Reduce Inequality, Start With Families" 8:21 pm)

The French economist Thomas **Piketty swept across the United States** last week **with a dire warning: Income inequality isn't going to go away, and it probably will get worse. Only policies that directly address the problem** — in particular, **progressive taxation** — can help us change course. At a panel discussion in Washington of Piketty's new blockbuster, "Capital in the Twenty-

First Century,” the American economist Robert Solow, who served on President Kennedy’s Council of Economic Advisers, took the long view as he formulated his response to the idea of trying to democratize ownership of capital in our country. “Good luck with that,” he said. The pessimism expressed by Solow, an 89-year-old Nobel laureate who is a professor emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is well-founded. Since President Obama declared in his State of the Union address that fighting inequality was the “defining project of our generation,” Democrats and Republicans alike have seized upon the theme to connect with voters. Their dueling campaigns have, predictably enough, devolved into an extension of the futile partisan deadlock that characterizes our stillborn political debates on almost every issue. And yet a relatively straightforward and simple way out of our current dead end has been hiding in plain sight. President Obama alluded to it in the State of the Union when he issued the call “to do away with workplace policies that belong in a ‘Mad Men’ episode,” and to update our laws so that a woman can “have a baby without sacrificing her job” and to allow people “to care for a sick child or sick parent without running into hardship.” It floated to the surface again at the Piketty panel, when Betsey Stevenson, a University of Michigan economist now serving on the White House Council of Economic Advisers, noted the “asymmetry” of early life experiences that increase inequality among American children, which plays out, in adulthood, as a gap in income-earning potential. “We know that investing more in young children will cause them to be more productive,” she said. Later, she pointed out that “high-income people are able to make investments in their children that lower-income people aren’t able to make.” However it’s worded, the message is clear: If we want to strike at the roots of inequality in America, we’ve got to start at its source, in the family, at the very beginning of children’s lives. We have to make it possible for mothers — two-thirds of whom are now breadwinners or co-breadwinners for their families — to stay in the work force without the sort of family-related job interruptions that can greatly limit their lifetime earnings and even push some families into bankruptcy. We need to make it possible for all parents to give their kids the kind of head start that is increasingly becoming an exclusive birthright of the well-off. Unlike progressive taxation, this sort of focus on the family really ought to have bipartisan support. And the good news is that there are decades’ worth of shovel-ready legislative and policy proposals that we can draw on: proposals regarding family leave, paid sick days, early childhood education, child care and workplace flexibility that have been stymied for decades. In Europe, it’s well-established that legislation aimed at keeping women in the work force, and, by extension, helping all families live and thrive amid the present-day realities of working parenthood, is one of the most powerful tools governments can use to fight the long-term, multigenerational ill-effects of income inequality. In the United States, where virtually no such public policy exists, there’s evidence that families that do have access to paid leave and flexibility through their employers are faring considerably better than those that don’t. In December, a longitudinal survey of more than 100 working- and middle-class families published by the Institute on Assets and Social Policy at Brandeis University found that the rewards of allowing families to build wealth over time went “far beyond the paycheck.” Most important, beyond basic benefits, were stable employment and workplace flexibility. (That is to say: flexibility that allows workers some choice in where, when and how much to work — not “flexibility” that allows employers to play havoc with their workers’ hours and schedules.) The data we have available from California, one of the three states in America, along with New Jersey and Rhode Island, that have fully implemented paid family leave policies, show real income-stabilizing effects for families. Eileen Appelbaum, senior economist at the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, and Ruth Milkman, a professor of sociology at the City University of New York Graduate Center, have found that access to paid leave has kept families out of bankruptcy, and kept low-wage workers in their jobs. Other research has shown that paid leave has kept women, in particular, in the work force and off public assistance and has bolstered mothers’ long-term earning potential. Yet the policies that allow mothers and fathers to maintain consistent work and to work in a flexible way that permits some responsiveness to the needs of their families remain a privilege, perks that are granted at the will of employers to their most valued employees, and are out of reach for the workers who need them most. An analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ American Time Use Survey by the economist Heather Boushey found that while more than 90 percent of high-wage employees report that their employers allow them to earn paid time off or to change their schedule if they have an urgent family issue, less than half of private-sector workers in the bottom 25 percent of earners can change their schedules under such circumstances. And things are hardly better for the middle class; only about half of middle-income workers, Boushey found, have the right to those sorts of schedule changes. Among high-wage workers, according to an analysis by my colleague Sarah Jane Glynn, 66.2 percent have access to paid parental leave, compared with 10.8 percent of those who earn the lowest wages. And while 78.5 percent of the highest-paid workers have access to earned sick time, only 15.2 percent of the lowest-paid workers have the right to take paid days off if they or a family member get sick. What this all means is that the people who are already in the most precarious economic circumstances are the most at risk for a devastating loss of income — and assets — when they need to care for their children. And those already in the strongest earning position see their earning potential grow, thanks to private-sector policies specifically devised to motivate and retain them. Inequality among families isn’t just about financial means, however. It’s also about the care parents can provide, the food they can prepare, and the amount and the nature of the time they can spend with their children. But today, the ability of parents to make the most basic time investments in their children — taking time for parent-teacher conferences or setting a schedule that permits a parent to sometimes be home in the after-school hours — is sharply divided by income level. The lack of availability of parental time has serious detrimental effects on children’s behavior, ability to learn and emotional development — all of which affect performance in school and, eventually, the workplace. In California, however, access to paid family leave has allowed workers to better care for their newborns and also to make better child care arrangements. And both men and women in the state who used paid leave reported a positive effect on their ability to care for their children. Such lessons about human resource cultivation have not been lost on China, which now includes as part of its economic growth policies a provision that women employed in public enterprises get 98 days of paid maternity leave. The idea that investing in children is good economic policy has been for some time a rare area in which Democrats and at least some Republicans have been able to find agreement. This understanding has led to the growth of the one form of family policy that’s been gaining solid ground over the past two decades: universal pre-K, an expensive, once highly controversial measure that now enjoys solid success in a number of red states, as well as the support of the United States Chamber of Commerce. In addition, polls now show that Americans across the political spectrum want their government to get involved in making life work better for working families: More than two-thirds agree that the government or businesses should be doing more to help fund child care for working parents; three-fourths believe that employers should give workers more flexibility in their schedules and work locations; and three-quarters support a policy guaranteeing employees a minimum number of paid sick days. The one piece of national legislation now on the books — the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, which grants some workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave — was passed with bipartisan

support that included nearly two dozen conservative Republicans (and, for that matter, support from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). Is it too Pollyannaish to hope that, in this pre-election season, a bipartisan "Gang of Six" (or 16, or 66) could band together to pledge to fight inequality by creating a more equal start for kids? Could they agree that helping families work and care for one another is precisely what we need to create opportunity for all?

Representations of welfare and child-care reinforce stereotypes while opening space for change.

Frank **Munger Professor of Law, New York Law School, '06** (Ph.D. (Sociology) 1997, J.D. 1968, University of Michigan. "Dependency by Law: Poverty, Identity, and Welfare Privatization" Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies, Volume 13, Issue 2, Summer 2006, pp. 391-415)

Privatization of welfare reflects the political pressure to limit public responsibility for protection of social citizenship. Recent welfare reforms incorporate three classic market-like privatization mechanisms—contracting out services, forcing allocation of a limited pool of benefits, and deregulation. Deregulation entails strategic diversion and disqualification of large numbers of would-be applicants who are left without alternatives to the labor market. In this article I discuss an empirical study of the effects of deregulation of welfare on the self-perceptions of recipients. **Interviews with recipients and with low-wage health care workers, former recipients, show that, criticisms of welfare notwithstanding, they have embraced welfare reform's valorization of market labor, despite the women's continuing poverty. The interviews suggest that the "consent" of women in low-wage health care work is grounded in both powerlessness and resistance. Care taking, a role devalued by welfare reform, is valued by them and a foundation for identity and an imagined career.**

Direction of the Squo / Uniqueness

Over fifty years ago, President Johnson proclaimed in his State of the Union:

"Poverty is a national problem, requiring improved national organization and support. But this attack, to be effective, must also be organized at the State and local level....For the war against poverty will not be won here in Washington. It must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House....Our aim is not only to relieve the symptoms of poverty but to cure it—and above all, to prevent it....No single piece of legislation, however, is going to suffice."

Just a few of his words hint at the importance of these debates today, comments about federal action vs. state and local solutions, the inadequacy of single-issue legislation, the layering of the struggle. Those statements are important to keep in mind, particularly in the context of Obama's 2013 State of the Union:

Melissa **Boteach, '13**

(Melissa Boteach is the Director of the Poverty and Prosperity Program at the Center for American Progress. President Barack Obama delivers his State of the Union address during a joint session of Congress on Capitol Hill on February 12, 2013. February 13, 2013, <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/news/2013/02/13/53265/top-5-solutions-to-cut-poverty-proposed-by-president-obama-in-state-of-the-union-address/> acsed 4-13-2013)

To that end, **President Obama set forth an ambitious agenda that, if enacted, would make enormous strides in reducing poverty. Here are five big solutions the president outlined** that would bring millions of struggling families into the middle class:

1. **Creating good jobs.** The president laid out several public investments and reforms that would create millions of jobs. **Unemployment is one of the primary drivers of poverty and the president set forth a menu of solutions** such as investing in infrastructure and school repair, clean energy, and manufacturing **that will** bring millions off the economic sidelines, grow our economy from the middle out, and **enable workers to earn good wages to lift their families above the poverty line.** Included in this agenda should be the president's "Pathways Back to Work" proposal, part of President Obama's American Jobs Act, which would create hundreds of thousands of subsidized and transitional jobs for low-income and long-term unemployed workers.
2. **Raising wages.** A good job is the lynchpin of any national strategy to cut poverty in half. But as the president rightly noted, under current law, a full-time worker with two children earning the minimum wage will still raise his or her family in poverty. In fact, **we haven't raised the federal minimum wage since 2007, and this basic wage floor has lost 30 percent of its buying power since the 1960s** due to a failure to index the minimum wage to inflation. The president's proposal to raise the federal minimum wage to \$9 an hour and index it to the cost of living would increase the wages of millions of low-wage workers, and create demand in the economy for goods and services as workers spend their increased wages in local businesses.
3. **Training the next generation of workers.** The president also recognized that we don't just need to create new jobs, but we need to also train workers to fill them. His proposals to better prepare high school graduates to compete in a high-tech economy, equip students with the information they need to make smart choices about a college education, and secure investments in worker training, will help ensure that American workers are prepared to fill the jobs of tomorrow.
4. **Investing in children.** Child poverty costs the U.S. economy \$500 billion a year. Conversely, investing in early education for young children is one of the most important strategies to cut poverty, leading to outcomes such as better high school graduation rates, higher worker productivity, and lower rates of violent crime that yield \$7 in savings for every \$1 invested upfront in early education. The president's plan to provide universal pre-K would provide millions of parents with a quality, reliable place for their children to thrive, enabling them to work more or

steadier hours to bring additional income into the family, as well as create greater economic opportunity for their children in the long term.

5. **Strengthening families.** The president also recognized the key roles that families play in cutting poverty, offering solutions that promote more stable and healthy families. The president called for passage of the Violence Against Women Act, ensuring that more women are able to benefit from services and reforms to flee abusive relationships, for example. He also proposed an end to financial penalties for marriage in our public policies and for a greater emphasis on policies that encourage fathers to take responsibility for their children.

President Obama's State of the Union address enshrined important principles to ensure that the coming deficit reduction fights do not exacerbate poverty and inequality. But he also set forth a bold and proactive agenda that, if enacted, would make major strides in cutting poverty. Now is the time for the #TalkPoverty activists, who urged the president to speak out about poverty, **to translate these inspiring words into policies that would bring millions of American families into the middle class.**

A primary focus on poverty and concerted actions to fight against poverty are few and far between. The direction in the status quo is almost universally in the other direction. As with all policy trends, there is a debate about where we are headed and some will argue that we are beginning to re-target poverty and economic inequality. The contention that poverty is being targeted now, however, is a minority viewpoint and most analyses show that federal, state, and local governments are pursuing a "War against the Impoverished" rather than a "War on Poverty." Add to this the rise of corporate power and the strength of the financial sector at the expense of the middle class and the "uniqueness question" is clearly no longer an issue for this controversy. Requiring the affirmative to take substantial action against economic inequality is a change from the status quo.

Jesse **Bernstein**, April **2013** (April, 14th The pseudonym of a social worker in New York City. He has been active in social justice efforts for the past 15 years. <http://truth-out.org/news/item/15727-npr-attacks-disability-bolsters-new-consensus-against-welfare>, acsed 4/14/2013)

Nearly two decades after Bill Clinton ended "welfare as we know it," we're seeing a new push to decimate what's left of the safety net. Conservatives and liberals alike who drank the Kool-Aid about the "success" of welfare reform are still waging war on welfare. Now NPR's Planet Money has joined the chorus with Chana Joffe-Walt's confused and rhetoric-heavy March 22 piece "Unfit for Work: The Startling Rise of Disability in America." (Versions also aired on This American Life and All Things Considered.) Liberal policy analysts and progressive media groups have already responded to the inaccuracies in Joffe-Walt's piece. Those include her claims about parents getting their children on disability benefits in scam-like ways and her misrepresentations about access to the programs. These stories have been largely right to focus on these issues—access is actually extremely difficult. The scandal is not that it's too easy for the non-disabled to get benefits, as Joffe-Walt claims, but that it's too hard for the disabled to be approved. But there's more to the story. Joffe-Walt's piece is part of **a long lineage of shock journalism that targets poverty programs by misstating the facts and cynically focusing scrutiny on poor people who have almost nothing.** She's one of **many in the policy, journalistic, and academic worlds who are still trying to roll back the meager assistance available to poor people. The attack on disability benefits is part of a larger effort to reduce social service spending by the federal government**—whether it be postal service, subsidized housing, or supported income. **Their consensus is that the state owes the working class—including those unable to get or hold a job—nothing.**

A recent history of social services and action against poverty shows that these programs have been whittled away and virtually eliminated. The trend over time, beginning with New Deal legislation and stretching into austerity and

the current attacks on entitlement programs, has been to make government assistance less extensive, more temporary, and more restrictive.

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New consensus thinking was codified in the Family Support Act of 1988, which expanded work requirements for recipients and imposed big penalties for noncompliance. Work requirements are largely aimed at making sure that child-raising is not seen as valid labor—that only working for wages is seen as acceptable productive activity—and focusing anti-poverty strategies on individual behaviors instead of the economy. Clinton's 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act went further—ending the meager cash entitlements of AFDC and replacing them with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the federally-funded cash assistance program for families in poverty. TANF has a five-year time limit, mandates work requirements, and is provided through a block-grant structure that incentivizes states to close welfare cases. Most poor families do not receive TANF, even if they are objectively eligible—in 2012 about 4.1 million people accessed TANF assistance, more than 3 million of them children. The new law also targeted disability programs like SSI by mandating reviews of childhood cases, tightening the threshold of medical approval, eliminating drug and alcohol abuse as disabling criteria, and restricting immigrants' access to benefits rolls. After the passage of PRWORA the welfare rolls substantially declined—by 59 percent between fiscal years 1996 and 2003, a reduction of more than 7 million people. Conservatives and liberals cheered the reduction in welfare cases. But many never got out of poverty, even if they left the rolls. Many more have become impoverished since 2008 as the economy has gone into crisis, this time with little safety net to assist them. The welfare rolls have barely budged in the crisis. Disability is one of the last federal safety-net programs remaining, and politicians have long had their eyes on it, too. During the 1990s, according to congressional staffer Matt Weidinger, "the design of the SSI program was undermining long-held values of work and responsibility and in serious need of reform." SSI and SSDI are now front-and-center in the war on welfare.

Of course conservative approaches to poverty are also abundant and there is room to move the other way against poverty, preserving counterplan ground and a plethora of arguments against liberal reforms that target inequality.

Toby **Calvert-Lee**, April 7th, 2013 ("A New War on Poverty" <http://www.redstate.com/calvtob14/2013/04/07/a-new-war-on-poverty/>, acsed 4-14-13)

Conservatives are to blame for this continuation of traditional tax-and-spend attempts to reduce poverty. For too long we have preferred to ignore the issue of poverty, relying solely on economic growth and private charity to provide assistance to the indigent. By ignoring this important issue, we opened up an opportunity for the left to gain a monopoly on this area of public policy, allowing ourselves to be cast as heartless and losing countless votes in the process. Conservatives instead should be making the insidious welfare trap, created and promulgated by the bureaucrats and politicians, a centerpiece of our argument against big-government liberalism. How can we expect to be taken seriously if we do not even have an agenda to end this welfare trap and seriously make a dent in poverty? We will continue to be viewed as heartless tools of the economic elite unless we apply our Conservative philosophy to providing economic opportunities to those who need them the most. We cannot pretend that the government has no role in reducing poverty; government has a very real duty to combat the blight of the poor. However, the government's role is to harness the power of the free market to do so, as opposed to harming the market in the process. We have seen the success of Conservative anti-poverty policies in the past, most recently with the successful Welfare Reform Act of 1996, which, by applying work requirements to welfare, reduced the caseload of TANF by 50%, with the vast majority of those leaving the program finding gainful employment and leaving poverty. The problem with this bill is, it doesn't go anywhere near far enough. We applied our principles to one of 77 federal welfare programs, and left the other 76 programs untouched. It is high time to take a serious look at how we can reduce the economic disincentives found in these other programs which trap millions of innocent people in poverty each year. Often times, the individuals on welfare would lose up to 50% of their income if they were to get a job or a second one, due to a loss of federal benefits. This is essentially a 50% tax on work for the poor, and exemplifies all that is wrong with transfer payments....This new, Conservative, war on poverty is designed to minimize economic disincentives. It is engineered to harness the power of the enterprising spirit locked within every American and the power of the free market to reduce poverty, instead of simply subsidizing poverty. It is focused on driving the poor out of their situation, and encouraging them to thrive, not just survive. The time has come for a Conservative focus on reducing poverty, and the way to do it is not through empowering bureaucrats and

politicians further; it is through incentivizing entrepreneurialism and hard work as ways to lead to a thriving and expanding middle class, as opposed to a stagnating lower class.

Whether or not the political landscape changes in November of 2014, the most important agenda item for the upcoming debate season will be the "War on Inequality" and how it gets implemented. This means that political capital and agenda-focus debates will be complicated and meaningful. In other words, a strong set of politics links and scenarios will be available in this area, and special interests and local politics will play a role as well.

Many different forms of the States Counterplan will also emerge because the States are fluctuating wildly between extreme liberal and extreme conservative approaches to poverty. Depending on the agent of action, the State Counterplan will be a viable strategy but probably not the silver bullet we often fear. Despite all the criticism of the States Counterplan, very few people would get rid of it as an option for all topics and most would admit that certain topics make for extremely exciting and germane debates about federalism and state action. A good politics debate and a good States CP debate are both signs of an important controversy that offers lots of space for clash. This controversy, in short, is both timely and profoundly historical.

David Rohde, Feb 14 2013 (David Rohde is a columnist for Reuters, two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, and a former reporter for The New York Times. "Obama's LBJ Moment: The War on Inequality Is the New 'War on Poverty'" <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/02/obamas-lbj-moment-the-war-on-inequality-is-the-new-war-on-poverty/273165/>)

He quoted Jack Kennedy but sounded more like Lyndon Johnson. In an audacious State of the Union address Tuesday, President Barack Obama made sweeping proposals to reduce poverty, revive the middle class and increase taxes on the "well off." While careful to not declare it outright, an emboldened second-term president laid out an agenda that could be called a "war on inequality." "There are communities in this country where no matter how hard you work, it is virtually impossible to get ahead," Obama declared in a blunt attack on a core conservative credo. "And that's why we need to build new ladders of opportunity into the middle class for all who are willing to climb them." In his 1964 State of the Union address, Johnson introduced the legislation that became known as the "War on Poverty." Those laws - along with many others he shepherded - stand today as perhaps the greatest legislative achievement of any modern president. Whether or not one agrees with him, Johnson's laws - from the Civil Rights Act, to Medicaid, Medicare and Head Start, to sweeping federal urban renewal and education programs - changed the face of American society. Obama, of course, is very different from LBJ and governing in a vastly different time. While Johnson excelled at cajoling legislators, Obama reportedly finds it distasteful. Where Johnson could offer new federal programs, Obama must maneuver in an age where the federal government is distrusted. And while Johnson had full government coffers, Obama lives in an era of crushing fiscal constraint. Those differences, though, make Obama's second inaugural address and Tuesday's State of the Union all the more remarkable. As Richard W. Stevenson noted in the **New York Times**, "he continued trying to define a 21st-century version of liberalism that could outlast his time in office and do for Democrats what Reagan did for Republicans." Throughout, the speech, Obama emphasized the collective over the individual, and concluded by hailing the notion of "citizenship." "This country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another," he declared, "and to future generations." He was careful, however, to avoid comparisons with the big government programs of the 1960s. "It is not a bigger government we need," Obama emphasized, "but a smarter government." A central question, though, is: Can government be smarter, particularly in an age of partisanship? Can it counter the global economic forces that are battering the middle class and poor? Johnson faced challenges as well, but he was a master of persuading his political opponents to support his proposals. Whether they agreed with them or not. Robert A. Caro, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author and famed Johnson biographer, argued in an interview with Reuters last spring that Johnson's "awesome" political skills could have overcome today's partisan gridlock in Washington. "It is in the nature of political genius," Caro said, "to find a way to solve problems no one else can solve." In truth, making government "smart" is enormously difficult. Technological changes that moved manufacturing overseas were largely beyond the control of government. A global competition for talent that creates staggeringly high wages for a skilled handful is difficult to reverse. Widening partisanship at home makes any major policy change difficult to implement. Obama clearly exaggerated the ability of the federal government alone to revive the middle class and the poor. Government programs alone cannot counter the global economic changes that are putting so much pressure on average Americans. And without serious entitlement reform, the federal government will be unable to pay for the initiatives Obama outlined. At the same time, Republican orthodoxy is wrong. Slashing the size of government will not magically solve our problems. Novel policies that move beyond 1960s liberalism and 1980s conservatism are needed. In one promising sign, Obama pledged to work with states

that come up with the "best ideas" to create jobs, lower energy bills and expand early childhood education. Outside Washington, many states are trying to find solutions to income inequality, soaring healthcare costs and the need for world-class public schools. This Pew Charitable Trusts website details the innovative efforts that are being made at the state level. Some are adopting starkly conservative approaches. And some decidedly liberal ones. Obama's new boldness is laudable. But now that he has shown his Johnson-like vision, he should show Johnson-like political skills at implementation. His speech won praise, but his real legacy will be what he achieves legislatively. Wednesday, the president began a three-state tour designed to build grass-roots pressure on Congress to enact his agenda. Some political analysts believe Obama hopes to win Democratic control of the House in 2014. But this Congress, including the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, is where legislation is enacted now. Obama cannot wait for an electoral miracle in 2014. He should not operate in perpetual campaign mode. Instead, he and Vice President Joe Biden should find ways to divide Republicans as they did with last month's tax deal.

The bottom line is that poverty is a growing problem, from 11% of the population in 1973 to over 15% forty years later. Potential solutions are not being implemented and conditions are worsening. The social stigma of impoverishment makes these policies even less likely and the rich-poor gap continues to grow. This area needs to be debated for reasons beyond "good clash"—it is a social and political epidemic that urgently calls for the attention and advocacy of some of the best college students and coaches in the country.

Allan **Brawley**, Professor Emeritus of Social Work, Arizona State University, **2012** ("We Need a New War on Poverty -- Not the Same Old War on the Poor" Sept 11, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/allan-brawley/we-need-a-new-war-on-pove_b_1866261.html, acsd 4/14/13)

So, what is going on here? Clearly, it is another sign that the Republicans have upped the ante in their long-term war on the poor and their use of dog-whistle politics to stigmatize poor people as different from the rest of us and unworthy of assistance of any kind. It is, of course, highly divisive and intended to convince working people to vote against their own interests. This is not new. Back in the 1980s, Ronald Reagan would regale audiences with his tale of the "welfare queen" who drove to the public assistance office in a Cadillac to pick up her fraudulently obtained government benefits. As Robert Lekachman reported back then in **Greed Is Not Enough: Reaganomics,** nobody was ever able to locate this individual but she and the supposed legions of others like her were used to justify massive cuts to the social safety net and the three-decade long process of redistributing more of the nation's resources to the already wealthy. So, here we are again, using misrepresentation of the poor to justify treating them as we would not wish to be treated, if we found ourselves in similar circumstances. Until very recently, most Americans would never have conceived of themselves as ever being at risk of joining the ranks of the poor and could comfortably embrace the stereotypes. But economic trends over the last couple of decades and, quite dramatically since 2008, are providing a rude awakening for millions of newly poor middle class individuals and their families. They did not suddenly become lazy. Nor are they much different from anyone else they find themselves in line with at the welfare office, food bank, or thrift store.

So, who are these people? More than fifty million Americans -- over 15 percent of the population, over 21 percent of our children -- fall below the official poverty line which is \$22,400 per year for a family of four. This is the absolute minimum the Federal Government says is required for basic subsistence. However, neither the Federal Government nor any state government provides that amount which is why we have 50 million people living in poverty. This is the largest number and highest percentage in five decades -- up from 11 percent in 1973. Those earlier figures were nothing to be proud of in the richest country in the world but we thought the trend was moving in the right direction. Unfortunately, we were wrong. Were those 11 percent simply lazy and unmotivated to better themselves? Not at all. Many were working full-time in minimum or sub-minimum wage jobs that did not raise them out of poverty. Others were in that part of the workforce -- 4 percent at least but often much higher -- whose unemployment was considered necessary in order to keep wages down and inflation under control. Some were elderly, sick or disabled. The great majority were children. The same applies to today's 15 percent. In effect, we have had national policies that have condemned millions of Americans to live in dire need. And we have justified our indifference to their plight by citing self-serving but seriously flawed economic theories that claim to promote the greater good and by defining the

poor as different from the rest of us. However, those who work with individuals and families who fall into poverty know that they are different from us only in their lack of sufficient income to raise them above the poverty line. Their work ethic, their sense of personal responsibility, their wish to provide for themselves and their families and, despite their current predicament, their patriotism and belief in the American Dream are the same. They just want the chance to participate in that Dream but face enormous obstacles, mainly because the economic and political decks are heavily stacked against them.

As Tavis Smiley and Cornel West found in their recent 18-city "Poverty Tour and Call to Conscience," and reported in their book, **The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto:**

Candidates for high office, protected with gilded lives of wealth and privilege, seem to know nothing about poverty or the poor. They claim to be concerned about the middle class but they must have missed the memo; the new poor are the former middle class.

And, what is being done to address the problems of the poor, the newly poor middle class, and the near poor who are only a paycheck or serious illness away from joining the rest? Smiley and West sum up the situation as follows:

Because both major political parties are so dependent on big campaign contributions from the rich who benefit from loopholes and tax breaks, politicians are hesitant or lack the will to utter the 'p' word in the public space.

This is a national disgrace and all of us who are outraged by this state of affairs must do everything in our power to call out those political leaders who continue to make war on the poor for their own selfish political and economic advantage and insist that we undertake a twenty-first century war on poverty by, among other things, promoting full employment by all means necessary, requiring employers to pay a living wage, reversing the redistribution of wealth and income that has occurred by making the tax system sufficiently progressive, and repairing the social safety net for the most vulnerable members of our society. There is more that can and should be done but these measures would be a good start towards returning us to the type of country we claim to be.

Finally, this is not some temporary preference of one party over the other—the topic calls upon us to reverse a sustained process of destroying the social safety net and ignoring poverty that goes back at least 40 years.

Eric Laursen, '13 (April 19, 2013, "Obama's "Mess of Pottage", <http://independent.org/2013/04/19/obama%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Cmess-pottage%E2%80%9D>, acsed 4-21-13)

The fiscal cliff deal and the sequester leave no room for early childhood education, infrastructure investment, or any of the other building-blocks-of-the-future about which the president likes to wax visionary. At best, the remainder of his term will be a carbon copy of the second Clinton administration, in which the Man from Hope successfully fought off annual Republican efforts to pass a massive tax cut—but otherwise was hamstrung domestically. My guess is that Obama miscalculated, misunderstood his opponents, and painted himself into the corner that will define the rest of his presidency. But in the end, the exact circumstances, his precise motivation, and how deliberate this all was, don't matter very much. What will be remembered 10, 20, 30 years from now is that Obama played the key role in a process that extends back at least to the Carter administration, in which Democratic presidents and Republican lawmakers have collaborated to dismantle the economic structure of New Deal industrial America. For progressives who want to end the three-decade political siege of Social Security and Medicare, expand them to meet the needs of a changing economy, and put government back in the business of breaking down racial, class, wealth, and gender barriers, the challenge is not to persuade Obama to be more progressive, or even to elect progressive candidates. It's to reverse a long-term trend in government that goes back almost 40 years now and that has proceeded regardless of which party is in power.

Core Ground

For details on aff and neg ground, please peruse the earlier topic papers located here: <http://www.cedadebate.org/forum/index.php/topic,3599.msg7350.html#msg7350> and here: <http://www.cedadebate.org/forum/index.php/topic,4799.msg10522.html#msg10522>

The 2012 paper includes about 30 pages (2012, p31-63) on affirmative ground, including a section at the end with some beginning gestures to revolution, massive economic restructuring across the board and some other sweeping possibilities. In that paper you will also find a discussion of the harms (what is poverty? what does it do to people? why it is bad?) and solutions or places where inequality can be targeted (labor rights, tax reform, income restriction, transfer payments, wage reform, financial regulation, poverty offsetting, consumer driven reform, and other agents of action including social movements).

The 2012 paper also goes through a number of negative positions, including specific negative ideas against social movements and against the Court. The 2013 paper adds a number of negative arguments to the arsenal, building a compelling balance of arguments between the aff and the neg. To take just a snippet from last year's paper:

We can create a balance where the economic framing of the poverty issue offers a line (even if fuzzy) between fighting inequality generally and fighting poverty *as an economic issue*. If we can (and I think we should be able to), the negative will ALWAYS have ground to criticize economism or argue "non-economic" topicality and breath some new life into a specific topicality argument. The position would argue something like this: "If the aff can go outside the resolution to tackle poverty in a way that is not tied to economism through the policy or the framing of economic inequality, then the aff is now outside the topic in a way that is beyond the agent questions." This matters because it is about the description of what poverty is. This debate is great for both sides:

Yapa, 1996 (Lakshman Yapa [Dept of Geography, Penn State] "What Causes Poverty?: A Postmodern View" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (Dec., 1996), pp. 707-728 Jstor)

Economism. Poverty is represented in the development literature as essentially an economic problem: People are poor because they do not have enough money to command a market basket of basic goods, a situation that can be corrected through investment, growth, job creation, improved education, and so on. Within the academic terrain, the discourse on poverty has been constructed at a particular theoretical locus whose principal defining characteristic is *economism*, the dominant worldview of the social order composed of a marked at the economic base, a superstructural value system to facilitate the working of the market, and an academic discourse constructed to rationalize the general commodification of use values. This I maintain is a reductionist argument because it has reduced the lack of food, shelter, and health care to an economic problem that in turn calls for economic solutions. By defining poverty as an economic problem, *as a lack of*, we are prevented from seeing how the scarcity of basic goods is socially constructed at a large number of sites at every point of the nexus of production relations. For example, there are a number of ways of improving the nutrition of low-income families. These include reducing purchase of expensive processed foods, establishing cooperatives to encourage bulk buying of produce, giving access to community kitchens, raising food in home gardens, and, in rural areas of the Third World, disseminating knowledge of edible leaves and plants with food value. We can make similar arguments for a range of topics such as food production, building of shelters, provision of health care, education, and transportation. We foreclose a myriad of options and possibilities by approaching poverty as an economic problem related to income, and thus prevent the resolution of the very problem that we are trying to solve.

This is a topic that will contribute to our collective knowledge base and add a great deal to the education of the community. It connects to a number of “tried-but-true” debate arguments like politics, the capitalism kritik, the states CP, and some tough obstacles to overcome in order to reach solvency, but it also has a persuasive impact area for any type of debate and lots of affirmative flexibility and room for alternative approaches to debate.

What is poverty?

Poverty—the state of living on less than \$2 per day, as defined by the World Bank.

Extreme Poverty—the state of living on less than \$1 per day, as defined by the World Bank

We cannot turn our back on this forgotten segment of the population.

Investor’s Business Daily, ’13 (4/3/13, “Failed Obama Policies Put More Americans in Poverty” <http://news.investors.com/print/ibd-editorials/040313-650383-media-dont-cover-disastrous-obama-economy.aspx>, acsd 4/16/13)

Obamanomics: As the president began the first year of his second term, the U.S. poverty rate rose to a level not seen since the 1960s. What we have here is a colossal failure of government policy. The Census Bureau says that 50 million Americans, roughly one in six — almost 17% — are living below the poverty line, which is defined as earnings of less than \$23,021 a year for a family of four. Apparently 20% of the nation's children are living in poverty.

What is it like to live in poverty? Why does this matter?

Adair, 2002 (Vivyan C. Adair [Dept of Women Studies, Hamilton College] “Branded with Infamy: Inscriptions of Poverty and Class in the United States.” Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society Winter 2002, vol 27 no. 2, jstor)

Material deprivation is publicly written on the bodies of poor children in the world. In the United States poor families experience violent crime, hunger, lack of medical and dental care, utility shut-offs, the effects of living in unsafe housing and/or of being homeless, chronic illness, and insufficient winter clothing (Edin and Lein 1997, 224-31). According to Jody Raphael of the Taylor Institute, poor women and their children are also at five times the risk of experiencing domestic violence (2000). As children, our disheveled and broken bodies were produced and read as signs of our inferiority and undeservedness. As adults our mutilated bodies are read as signs of inner chaos, immaturity, and indecency as we are punished and then read as proof of the need for further discipline and punishment. When my already bad teeth started to rot and I was out of my head with pain, my choices as an adult welfare recipient were either to let my teeth fall out or to have them pulled out. In either case the culture would then read me as a “toothless illiterate,” as a fearful joke. In order to pay my rent and to put shoes on my daughter's feet I sold blood at two or three different clinics on a monthly basis until I became so anemic that they refused to buy it from me. A neighbor of mine went back to the man who continued to beat her and her scarred children after being denied welfare benefits when she realized that she could not adequately feed, clothe, and house her family on her own minimum-wage income. My good friend sold her ovum to a fertility clinic in a painful and potentially damaging process. Other friends exposed themselves to all manner of danger and disease by selling their bodies for sex in order to feed and clothe their babies. **Poverty becomes a vicious cycle that is written on our bodies and intimately connected with our value in the world.** Our children need healthy food so that we can continue working; yet working at minimum-wage jobs, we have no money for wholesome food and very little time to care for our families. So our children get sick, we lose our jobs to take care of them, we fall deeper and deeper into debt before our next unbearable job, and then we really cannot afford medical care. Starting that next minimum-wage job with unpaid bills and ill children puts us further and further behind so that we are even less able to afford good food, adequate child care, health care, or emotional healing. The food banks we gratefully drag our exhausted children to on the weekends hand out bags of rancid candy bars, hot dogs that have passed their expiration dates, stale broken pasta, and occasionally a bag of wrinkled apples. We are either fat or skinny, and we seem always irreparably ill. Our emaciated or bloated bodies are then read as a sign of lack of discipline and as proof that we have failed to care as we should.¹³

The problem will intensify because we face a war on welfare, not on poverty. The people subject to the difficulties of poverty have become the problem in the status quo, not the structures of capitalism.

Schram, '08

(Sanford. "In the Clinic: The Medicalization of Welfare." *Social Text* 18.1 (Spring 2000): 81-107. [Sanford Schram teaches social theory and social policy in the Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research at Bryn Mawr College. He recently published books including *Welfare Discipline: Discourse, Governance, and Globalization*, and *Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform*.])

The U.S. welfare system has been radically restructured in recent years. As a result, the welfare rolls fell dramatically from 14.2 million in 1993 to 7.6 million by December 1998, thereby enabling President Clinton to claim he has made good on his 1992 campaign promise to "end welfare as we know it."¹ A major factor in this restructuring is the welfare reform law passed in 1996. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) requires adult welfare recipients, largely single mothers, to work outside the home in order to receive aid and imposes a five-year lifetime limit on eligibility, after which time recipients are expected to be supporting themselves. Yet **there are many features of contemporary welfare reform that make it as self-defeating as it is self-legitimizing. Prominent among the self-defeating features are the self-legitimizing practices focused on "welfare dependency." The focus on welfare dependency achieves its own legitimation in good part by representing itself as a return to older social policy concerns. The country has moved away from the "war on poverty" initiated in the 1960s to the "war on welfare" that has dominated the 1990s.**² The pre-1960s assumption that reliance on public assistance for anything other than a very short period of time is unquestionably wrong has reasserted itself. For people like Newt Gingrich, extended welfare use was a sure sign of how late-twentieth-century America had become a "sick society."³ **As a result, welfare receipt has been transformed from use to abuse, from an active exercise of one's legal rights to income to a passive dependency on the government. Welfare dependency is seen as a universal deficiency that almost no one can actively support, while poverty is no longer considered a public problem that must be attacked. Unfortunately, the way welfare reform in recent years has articulated treatment for welfare dependency ensures that poverty will persist and intensify.**

Do not abandon the most vulnerable. We have to begin the conversation about poverty, regardless of opposing frames. Poverty reduction targets matter and prove their effectiveness by creating controversy.

Nancy K. **Cauthen**, NCCP's Deputy Director, '07 ("The New Poverty Wars: Debating the Frame(s)," April 2007, http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_721.html, acsd 4-20-13)

The mini-firestorm created over the Center for American Progress' (CAP) call to set a national poverty reduction target is the latest chapter in the ongoing debate about how to frame a policy agenda to reduce poverty and inequality and to increase opportunity and mobility. Last week, CAP released a major task force report arguing for a national effort to cut poverty in half over the next decade. Another group weighed in arguing that an anti-poverty frame is not the right approach, calling for the United States to adopt the European frame of "social inclusion." This debate—or rather, some version of it—is a critical one for the field and one we should have sooner rather than later. In this piece, I argue the following: Poverty is indeed a loaded frame, but we need to have a conversation about **how to talk about poverty, not to excise it from the discussion. Social inclusion is a great concept, but it's not the right one for the U.S. There is value in establishing a national poverty reduction target. It would be unconscionable to abandon the plight of the most vulnerable for the sake of promoting a politically saleable frame.**

Sample Wordings

A sample wording within this controversy area might look like this:

R: Social movements should expand direct action against poverty in order to significantly (comprehensively/measurably) reduce economic inequality throughout (across, in) the United States.

That starting point should serve as an update to the “economic inequality” area and should also augment and refine the stems offered there:

R: The United States Federal Government should <establish/implement a poverty policy to> (comprehensively/measurably) reduce {poverty/economic inequality} throughout (across, in) the United States.

R: Direct action against poverty that significantly (comprehensively/measurably) reduces economic inequality throughout (across, in) the United States should be expanded.

R: The US Supreme Court should extend Constitutional protections to individuals living in poverty.

By way of comparison, the NFL Resolution for the 2009-10 high school policy debate topic was:

Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase social services for persons living in poverty in the United States.

---Seeking a few list options? Here are some edits to the “peel off” wordings from the economic inequality paper:

(Pick **green** or **yellow** or **turquoise**)

R: **Antipoverty policy** / **social welfare policy** that **substantially** / **and** **directly** **reduces** / **minimizes** economic inequality in the United States should be **expanded** / **improved** / **reformed** through **tax reform** / **progressive taxation**, **poverty offsetting** / **consumer-driven reform**, regulation of **financial** / **banking** institutions, **income-based** / **need-based** transfer payments, raising the national minimum wage, **or** / **and** labor law protections, employment **policy** / **expansion** / **job quality standards**.

For example, if you were to pick all of the green options, it would read:

R: Antipoverty policy that substantially reduces economic inequality in the United States should be expanded through tax reform, poverty offsetting, regulation of financial institutions, income-based transfer payments, raising the national minimum wage, labor law protections, or employment policy.

All the yellow options (except keeping the “or” given the number of sub-areas) would read:

R: Social welfare policy that directly minimizes economic inequality in the United States should be improved through progressive taxation, consumer-driven reform, regulation of banking institutions, need-based transfer payments, raising the national minimum wage, labor law protections, or employment expansion.

A version of all the sub-areas at this point:

R: Antipoverty policy that substantially and directly reduces economic inequality in the United States should be expanded through tax reform, poverty offsetting, regulation of financial institutions, income-based transfer payments, raising the national minimum wage, labor law protections, or job quality standards.

A version with some of the sub-areas at this point:

R: Policy action should be implemented that substantially and directly reduces economic inequality in the United States by/through improving tax reform, poverty offsetting, regulation of financial institutions, income-based transfer payments, raising the national minimum wage, job quality standards, or labor protections.

Given all of these options, the best route, if this controversy is selected, would be to come up with two-four types of resolutions for each of the four agent possibilities. Then determine viability and decide whether it would make sense to focus on just two or three of the agent possibilities in order to have multiple options under each. We could start with 12 possibilities and narrow from there.

	USFG	Social Movements	Supreme Court	Passive
Broad, Less Specification				
Specifications with Choices				
Specifications with Fewer Choices				
A sub-set stand-alone				

Note to “Wording Paper” Authors and the Topic Committee

It makes sense for wording papers to take on one of these spectrums or a portion of one of the areas and defend a particular wording.

There are essentially three matrices to consider as “spectrums” for the slate of resolutions.

Spectrum One: The Agent Spectrum

- A) The USFG should substantially reduce economic inequality in the United States.
- B) Social movements should substantially reduce economic inequality in the United States.
- C) The US Supreme Court should _____ (either repeat the stem or create a legal one like the one above).
- D) Economic inequality in the United States should be substantially reduced.
- E) We should substantially reduce economic inequality in the United States.
- F) Other

Spectrum Two: The Object Spectrum

- ...tax reform / progressive taxation,
- ...poverty offsetting / consumer-driven reform
- ...regulation of financial / banking institutions
- ...income-based / need-based transfer payments
- ...raising the national minimum wage
- ...labor law protections, employment policy / expansion / job quality standards

Spectrum Three: Alternative Constructions / Some of Each of the Above

See the various options above.

With these spectrums in mind, it makes sense for each person or group to work on a discrete resolution or family of resolutions that would share key terms, defends those terms with evidence and a delineation of the major arguments involved, and an assessment of why those key terms are better than the possible alternatives. The discrete resolution then has a means of differentiating itself in mind, but that is not the only portion of the construction being generated.