

[Forums](#) / [General Discussion](#)[Help](#)

The United States Is an Oligarchy, Not a Democracy

✉ You are subscribed. [Unsubscribe](#)

🏷 No tags yet. [+ Add Tag](#)

Sort replies by: [Oldest first](#) [Newest first](#) [Most popular](#)

[Rich Bussom](#) · 6 days ago 🔒

From an [article](#) about an upcoming article in the Journal "Perspectives on Politics": "the preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy." The full paper is [here](#).

To me it appears that the researchers make a strong case. If your vote doesn't impact policy does it have any value?

↑ 1 ↓ · flag

[Gary Romer](#) · 6 days ago 🔒

It is a well established principle that those who have the most to lose or gain in respect to a political action are the most likely to take an active part in the deliberations. If a law to give the Koch brothers a tax break of \$10 billion was proposed, would you be surprised to see the Koch brothers trying to influence the outcome?

↑ 0 ↓ · flag

[Rich Bussom](#) · 6 days ago 🔒

No, but I'm disappointed in a system that allows it.

↑ 0 ↓ · flag

[Carol A. Kichen](#) · 6 days ago 🔒

The reason the American people don't have an impact is that they do not participate. Going into the voting booth to vote for people and issues you know nothing about is not participation. People have to let their representatives know that they do not like what is happening. They do listen to people who are persistent and who appeal directly to them. I have seen it happen.

↑ 0 ↓ · flag

[+ Comment](#)Joel Kovarsky · 2 hours ago 

Regarding the article by Gilens and Page, today's NY Times has a "Room for Debate" discussion about the issue of wealth and political influence: <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/04/21/do-the-rich-call-the-shots-13>. The section by Scott Winship stipulates that more often than not the wealthy and middle class agree with respect to policy preferences. He points out that, at least based on his interpretation, the referenced article is not saying that the US is an oligarchy. Winship briefly mentions known problems with the interpretation of polling preferences. The Winship piece is very short but does point out some issues that complicate interpretation of the results. Stimson's section also questions too-broad acceptance of the Gilens and Page report. The other two essayists in the group appear more concerned with what many feel is an increasingly plutocratic government.

↑ 0 ↓ · flag

[+ Comment](#)Alec D. Rogers · 2 hours ago 

Part of the problem is that the average American doesn't do much. They don't learn about the issues, they don't talk to their neighbors about politics, they don't even vote. We barely get a majority in presidential races. Non-presidential turnout is virtually non-existent.





One could argue that this reflects that the US is a centrist country without the real extremes that exist elsewhere, and that people are largely satisfied with the viable choices. And I think there's something to that. However I wouldn't say this makes us an "oligarchy."

↑ 0 ↓ · flag

[+ Comment](#)

New post

To ensure a positive and productive discussion, please read our [forum posting policies](#) before posting.

B	<i>I</i>			 Link	<code>	 Pic	Math		Edit: Rich ▼	Preview
<div></div>										



Make this post anonymous to other students

Subscribe to this thread at the same time



Add post

