

INEQUALITY

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Spring 2016

- Welcome to the week on inequality
- Or, “life isn’t fair”

RACIAL INEQUALITY

- Divisions and inequalities across racial groups has been (and continues to be) one of the largest sources of inequality in American politics

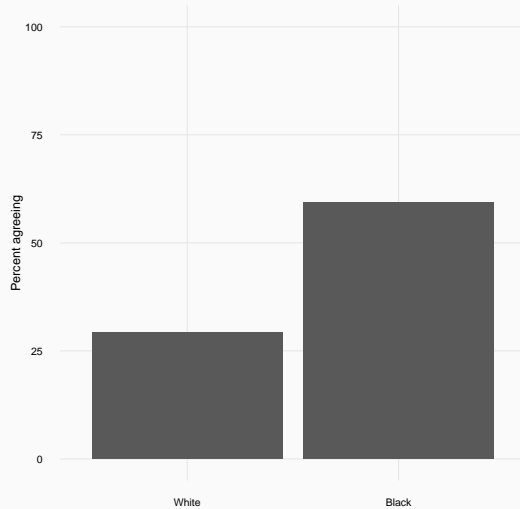
- Slavery and racism in the US has had a long and lasting impact on the socioeconomic status of black people
- Major events:
 - 1787: Three-fifths compromise
 - 1861–1865: Civil War
 - 1863–1877: Reconstruction
 - 1960s: Civil Rights Movement

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- For example (2014 General Social Survey):

On the average African-Americans have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people. Do you think these differences are mainly due to discrimination?

PERCEPTION OF BIAS



The average black person is less well-off than the average white person

	Median HH income	Unemployment rate	Poverty rate
Black	\$35,416	11.4%	27.2%
White	\$59,754	5.3%	9.7%

- Blacks and Hispanics on average receive lower grades, are more likely to drop out, score lower on standardized tests, are less likely to enter college, and are less likely to complete college

Evidence that much of the criminal justice system is systematically biased against racial minorities

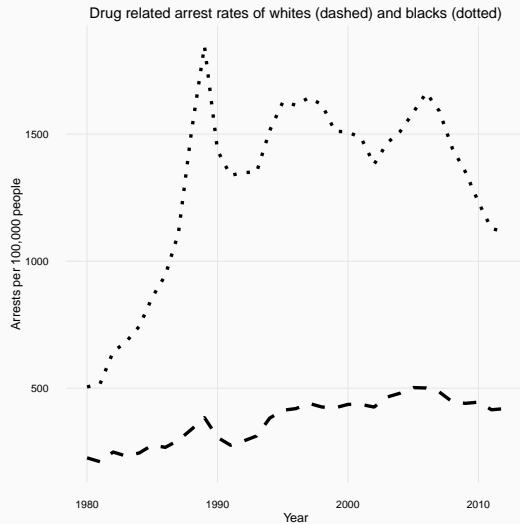
¹Data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics

Evidence that much of the criminal justice system is systematically biased against racial minorities

Example: whites and blacks use drugs at comparable rates, but...¹

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DRUG RELATED ARREST RATES



- Started in 2013 to bring attention to perceived injustices in the criminal justice system
- Specifically, that (mostly white) police officers tend to use excessive, and/or lethal force on (sometimes unarmed) black people
- Walter Scott: unarmed black man attempting to flee a (white) police officer, was shot at least eight times in the back
- Many other such stories from around the country

- Very little data available pertaining to police shootings
- The Washington Post started in 2015 attempting to keep track of this: [link](#)
- The WP reports that 990 people were shot and killed by police in 2015
 - 258 were black (26%)
- To 24 April 2016, 305 people shot and killed by police in 2016
 - 71 of whom were black (23%)
- However, large problems with those data: can't get a good picture about the context

- Historically blacks and Hispanics have not gotten much representation in Congress
- First black person elected to Congress in 1870
- Historically, minorities are very under-represented in Congress

MAJORITY-MINORITY DISTRICTS

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- About 113 of the 435 districts today
- Majority-minority districts one way to increase likelihood of minority representation
- Controversial, however...

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- What do you think?

- The current Congress (114th) is the most diverse to date
- 17% of this Congress is non-white
 - 20% of House, but only 6% of Senate
 - However, 38% of the US population is non-white

- 35% of black people in the population are represented by a black House member²
- 22% of Hispanics, 12% of Asians, 8% of Native Americans

²Source

EXAMPLE: NAMES

- Researchers sent resume's to employers
- Everything was identical except the person's name
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- Researchers sent resume's to employers
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- Resume's with white-sounding names received 50 percent more callbacks
- Not different among employers who explicitly state that they are Equal Opportunity Employers

GENDER INEQUALITY

- Inequalities based on gender
- We aren't focusing on transgendered people even though they are faced with inequalities as well

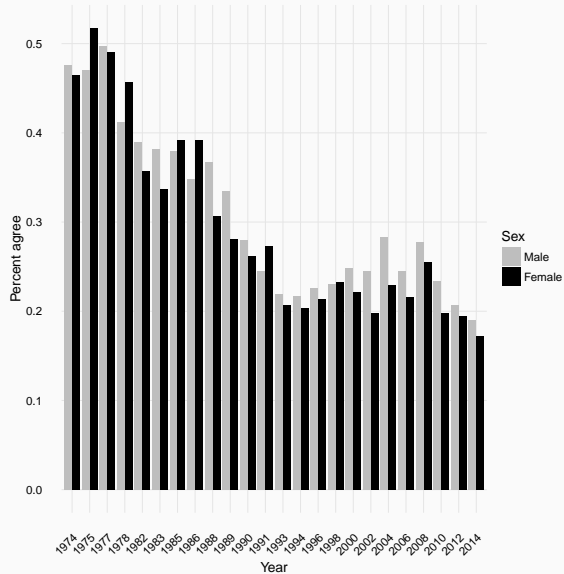
(QUICK) HISTORY

- Inequalities based on gender have existed throughout US history
- Gradually diminishing, especially since 1900
 - E.g. women now have the right to vote
- Many inequalities remain
 - Occupational
 - Pay gap

- Generally, public opinion has shifted in favor of men and women equality
- (Problems with asking people what they think)

Tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement: Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women.

PUBLIC OPINION



- Women on average earn less than men
- In 2013, median weekly income of full-time male workers was \$860, for females it was \$706

- On average, women make 79 cents for every dollar that a man makes doing the same job
- Women make less than men for virtually all occupational categories for which we have data

- Why?
 - Education, hours worked, experience, occupation, etc
- However, difference still left over after taking that into consideration
- Typically attributed to discrimination
- Other possible explanations:
 - Men more likely to negotiate salary

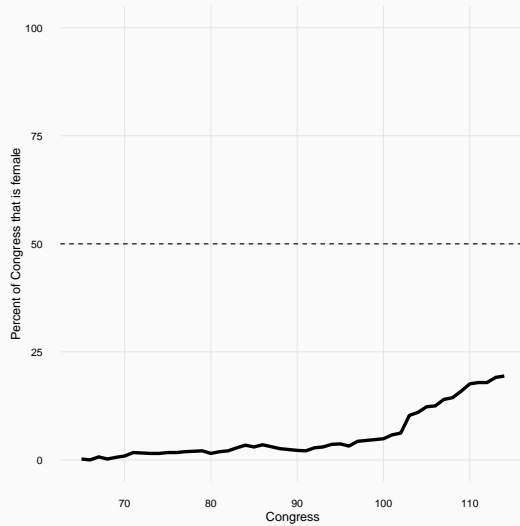
- Current policy allows women who find out that they were receiving discriminatory pay to sue and receive recompense within 6 months of their last paycheck
- The [Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act](#) was passed in 2009

- Women tend to follow different careers than men do
- Ever seen a male dental hygienist?
- Or a female plumber?

- Very few women in STEM fields
- Probably due to few women choosing these fields in college
- Women earn the majority (nearly 60%) of bachelor's degrees
- Only ~20% of computer science degrees, engineering, physics

- Women historically underrepresented in Congress
- First woman elected to the House in 1917
 - Currently 84 female Reps (19.3%)
- First woman elected to the Senate in 1932
 - Currently 20 female Senators

WOMEN IN CONGRESS



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- What do you think?

INEQUALITIES BASED ON GENDER IDENTITY & SEXUAL ORIENTATION

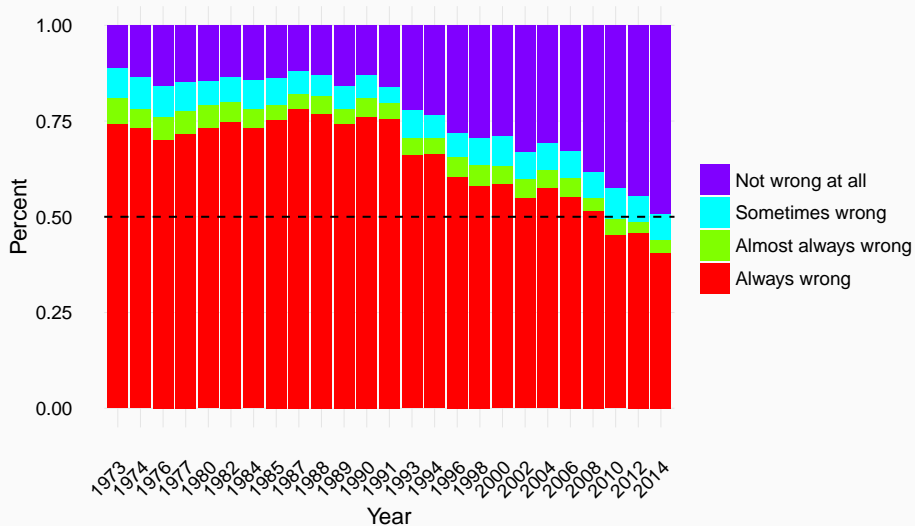
- Patchwork of regulations that varies by city/county/state
- Occasionally large advances by Supreme Court decisions
 - 2003: *Lawrence v. Texas* strikes down anti-sodomy laws
 - 2015: *Obergefell v. Hodges* recognizes same-sex marriage
- Overall, LGBT rights advocates have been hugely successful over the past decade

- Campaign began in the 1970s, but unsuccessful until 2004 when Massachusetts legalized same-sex marriage
- Between 2004 & *Obergefell* 37 states legalized same-sex marriage

Are sexual relations between two adults of the same sex:

- 1. Always wrong*
- 2. Almost always wrong*
- 3. Wrong only sometimes*
- 4. Not wrong at all*

PUBLIC OPINION



- “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” was policy 1994–2011
 - Signed by Clinton, repealed by Obama
- Under DADT, openly gay people couldn’t serve in the military

- 22 states outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation
- 19 based on gender identity
- Existing protections under federal laws (Civil Rights Act) gradually extended to cover sexual orientation and gender identity

- Texas (and ~30 other states) does not prohibit housing discrimination for sexual orientation or gender identity
 - The Dept of Housing and Urban Development prohibits this if the housing provider receives HUD funding
- Texas (and ~30 other states) does not prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity

INCOME & WEALTH INEQUALITY

- How do you think wealth is distributed in the US?
 - Top 20%? Next 20? Mid 20? Next 20? Bottom 20?
- How do you *think* it should be?

WEALTH DISTRIBUTION

The Actual Wealth Distribution of the U.S., What Americans Think the Wealth Distribution Is, and What They'd Like It to Be



- Is the US an outlier here?
- What do other comparable countries look like?

The U.S. stands out on wealth inequality.

Share of **income** and **wealth** owned by top 10% of households, 2012



- Taxes can be **progressive** where the tax rate increases as the amount increases
 - Example: federal income tax
- Or they can be **regressive** where the tax rate decreases as the amount increases
 - Example: sales taxes on essentials like food

- Progressive taxes are one way to shrink this gap
- Other redistributive policies include food stamps and Social Security

WHY PROGRESSIVE TAXES?

- The value of an additional dollar decreases with every dollar you already have
- So we need to tax dollars at high levels if you already have lots of money to make it just as painful as the taxation of a dollar if you have few

- Many states have passed Voter ID laws in recent years
- Reason given usually to suppress voter fraud
- However, many poor people & minorities don't have access to proper ID

WHO GETS REPRESENTED?

(Examples)