

Studying Social Inequality with Data Science

INFO 3370 / 5371
Spring 2024

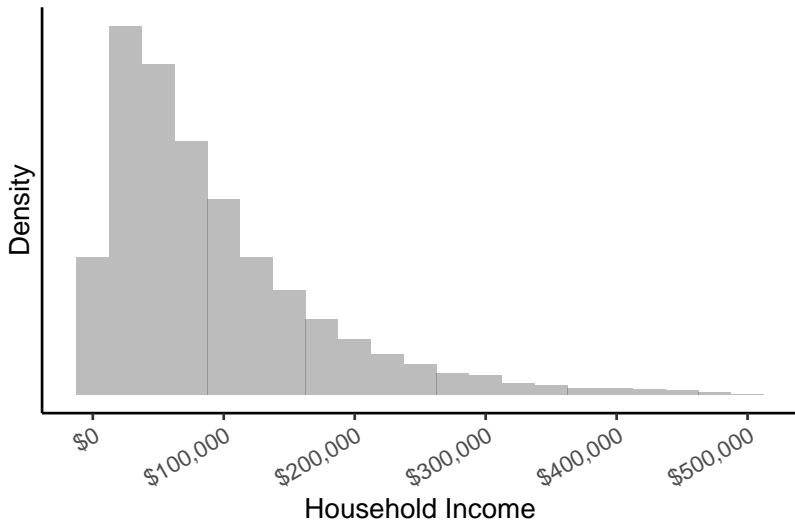
Welcome!

Lecture today draws on [Jencks \(2002\)](#). After class,
— read p. 49–53
— complete the very brief Problem Set 0 by Wednesday 5pm

Quantitative evidence about inequality

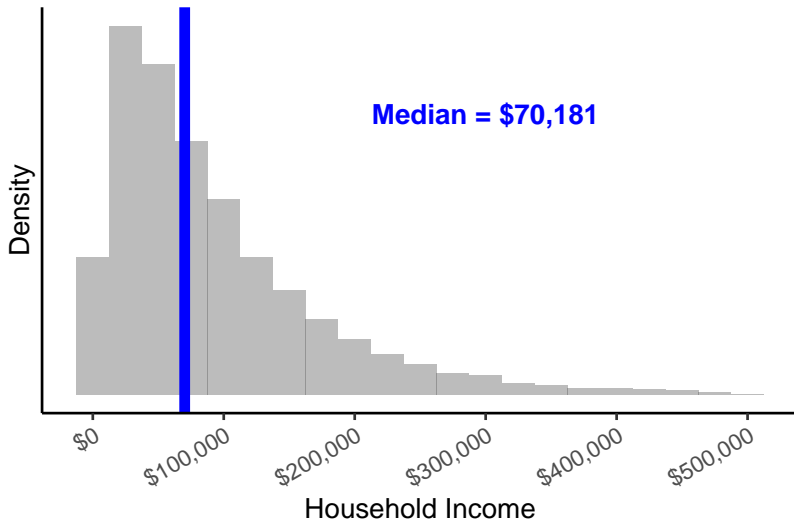
U.S. Household Income Distribution

2022 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey



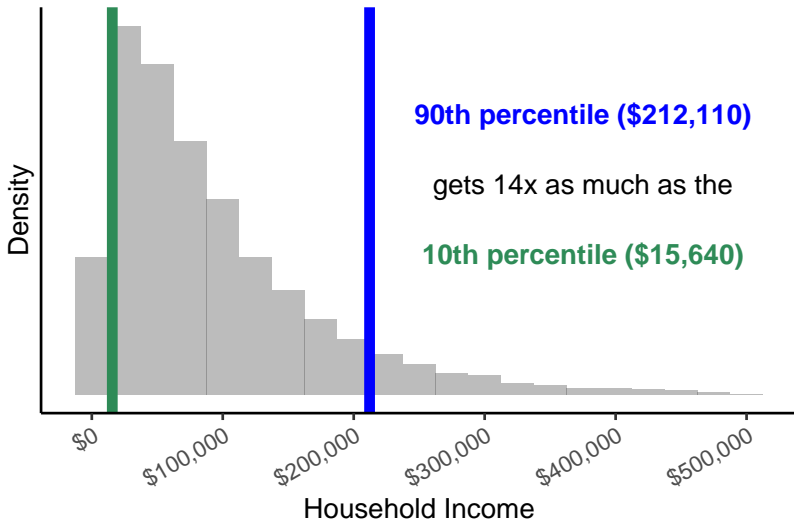
U.S. Household Income Distribution

2022 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey



U.S. Household Income Distribution

2022 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey



Normative arguments about
inequality

Activity. Which income distribution would you prefer? Why?

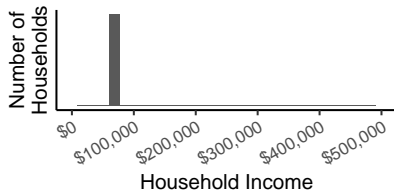
QR HERE

Distribution A



U.S. 2022 distribution

Distribution B



Everyone gets \$70,181



196

Dy eltschen zu dir vñ vāz
 pñt in all gemān
 Se ozeb him zu einem nam
 Vñ slach mit der rūt dar an
 Das ret der vil rān māt
 Vñ al: er an den nam getug
 Wazers mer dān genug
 Vñ ein pāch vil groz

In dem heeren nam sloz
 Das vrech vil liot: w all d' schat
 Genug: zeterubchen heeren gar. al
 W rogt auf si mit groz dē
 Vñ amalech dy hādenstalt
 Vñ woten mit in freiten
 Als dy amalechten
 Begunde nāhen gen dem mer

The Israelites Collecting Manna from Heaven

Austria

About 1400–1410

Unknown artist

Getty Open Content Program

getty.edu/art/collection/object/105T6R

Manna drops from heaven



196
Dy eltschen zu dir vñ vāz
mit in all gemān
te ozeb him zu einem nam
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Das tet der vil rān māt
vñ al; er an den nam getlugt
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First pound is more
helpful than the second



176

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Vñ amalech dy hādenstalt
Vñ woten mit in freiten
Al: dy amalechten
Wegunde nāhen gem dem mer

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Manna drops from heaven

First pound is more
helpful than the second

How should we distribute
the manna?



196

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vñ woten mit in freiten
Iz dē amalechten
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176

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 w rogt auf si mit groz dñ
 vñ amalech dy hāntschalt
 vñ wōten mit in freiten
 Als dy amalechten
 begunde nāhen gen dem mer

~~Manna drops from heaven~~

People work for manna

First pound is more
helpful than the second

How should we distribute
the manna?

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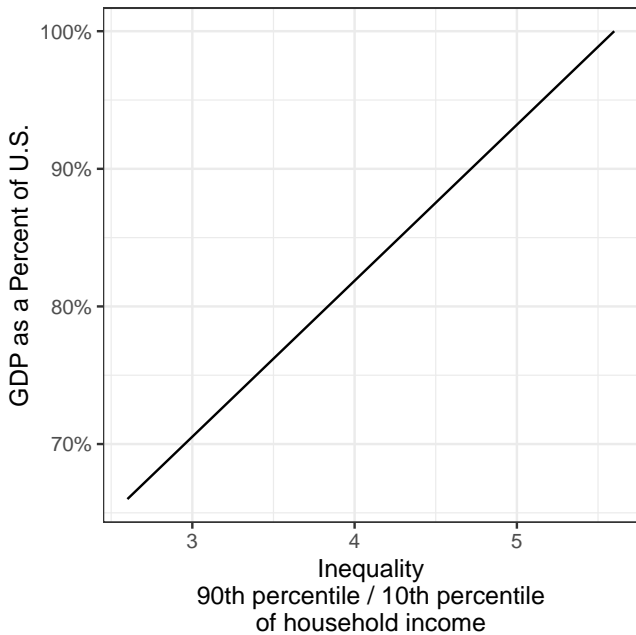
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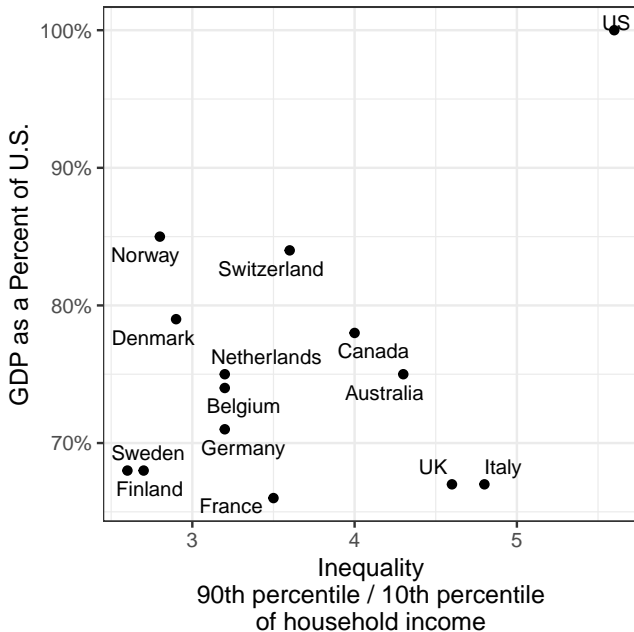
An argument for allowing inequality

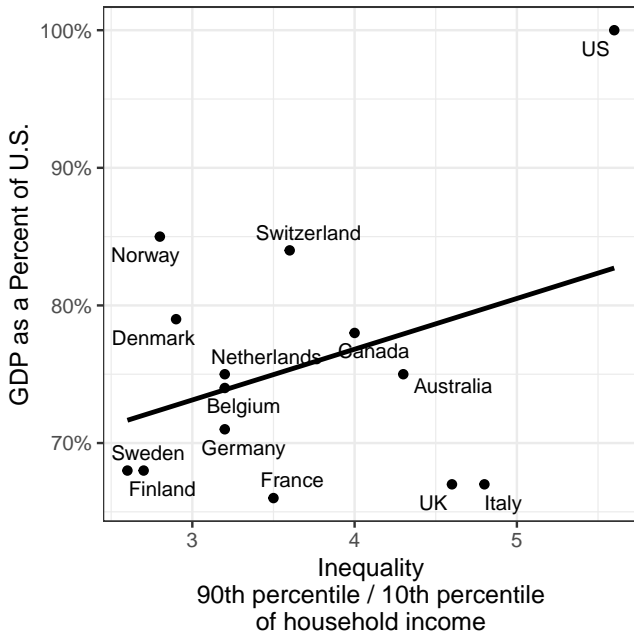
1. unequal rewards motivate work and innovation
2. work and innovation make everyone better off

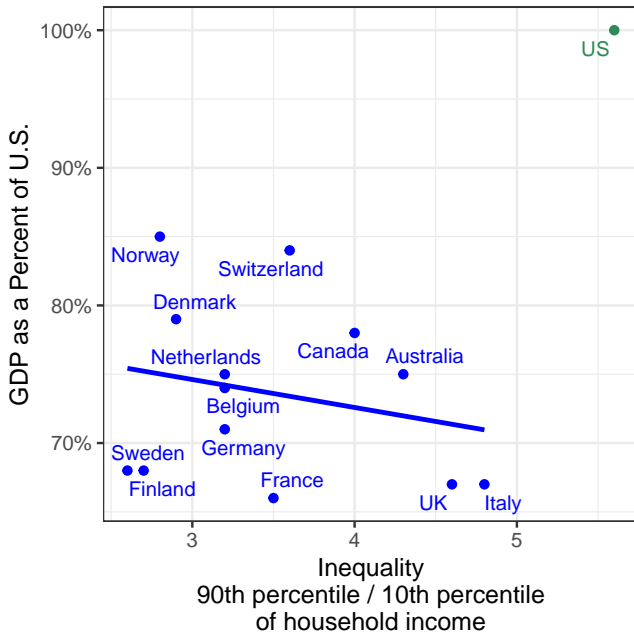
Thus inequality makes us all better off

Empirical question. Do unequal places have higher well-being?









An argument for allowing inequality

1. unequal rewards motivate work and innovation
2. work and innovation make everyone better off

Thus inequality makes us all better off

Empirical question. Do unequal places have higher well-being?

Empirical answer. Not really.

Goals of the course

- ▶ visualize economic inequality with graphs that summarize survey data
- ▶ connect theories about inequality to quantitative empirical evidence
- ▶ evaluate interventions to reduce inequality
- ▶ conduct data analysis using the R programming language

Plan for the course

info3370.github.io