

Studying Social Inequality with Data Science

INFO 3370 / 5371
Spring 2024

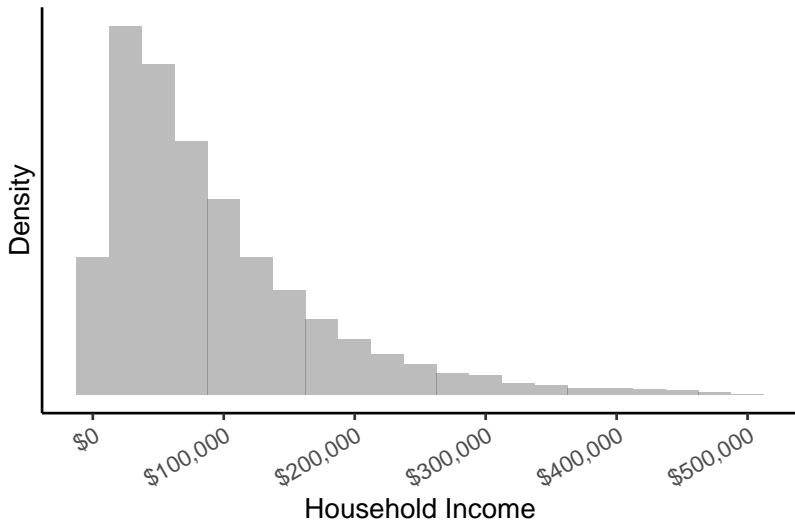
Welcome!

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

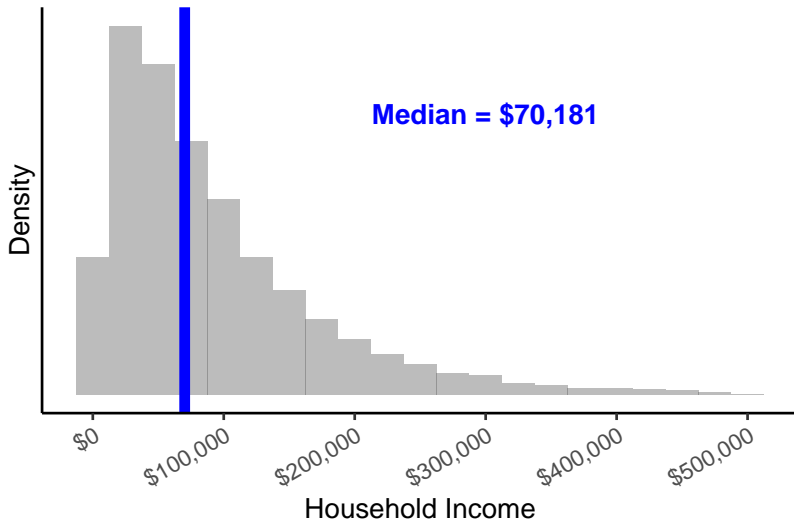
U.S. Household Income Distribution

2022 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey



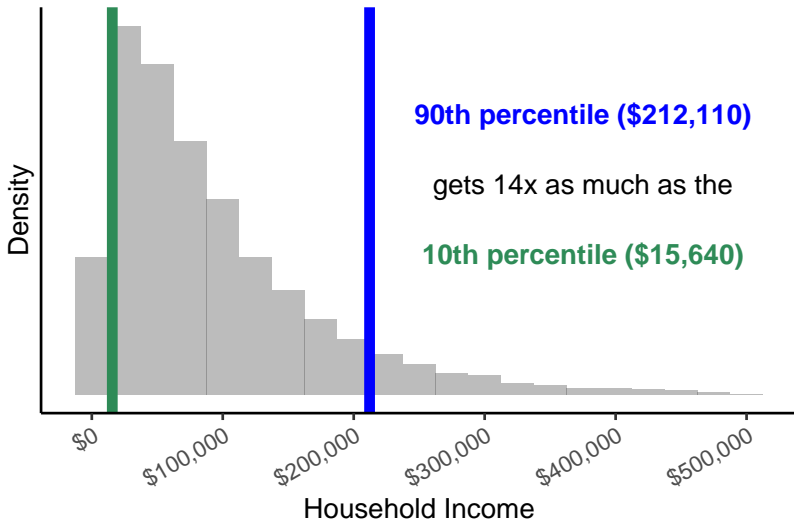
U.S. Household Income Distribution

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

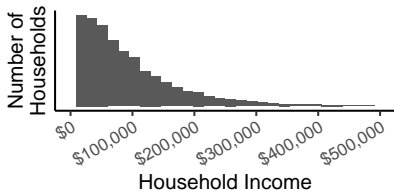


Normative arguments about
inequality

Activity. Which income distribution would you prefer? Why?

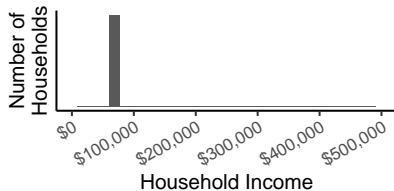
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Distribution A



U.S. 2022 distribution

Distribution B



Everyone gets \$70,181



196

Dy eltschen zu dir vñ vāz
 pñ 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 flos
 Das vrech vil liot: w all d' schat
 Genug: zeterubchen heeren gar. al
 W zagt auf si mit groz dē
 Vñ amalech dy hāden schalt
 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
vñ slach mit der rūt dar an
Das tet der vil rān māt
vñ al: er an den nam getug
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vñ wolten mit in streiten
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Manna drops from heaven

First pound is more
helpful than the second



176

Der eltschen zu dir vñ vāz
mit in all gemān
Se ozeb him zu einem nam
Vñ flach mit der vñ dar an
Das tel der vil rān māt
Vñ al: er an den nam getlugt
Wazers mer dān genug
Vñ ein pāch vil groz

In dem heeren nam floz
Das vñch vil liot: w all d' schat
Genug: zeterubchen heeren gar. al
W rogt auf si mit groz de
Vñ amalech dy hādenstalt
Vñ woten mit in freiten
Al: dy amalechten
Vegunde nāhen gen 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

Der eltschen zu dir vñ vā:
mit in all gemān
te ozeb him zu einem nam
vñ flach mit der vñ dar an
Das tet der vil rān māt
vñ al: er an den nam getug
Wazers mer dān genug
vñ ein pāch vil groz

In dem heeren nam floz
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w zogt auf si mit groz er
vñ amalech dy hādenstalt
vñ woten mit in freiten
Iz dy amalechten
begunde nāhen gen dem mer

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176

Dy eltschen zu dir vñ vā:
 sint in all gemān
 se ozeb him zu einem nam
 vñ slach mit der vñt dar an
 Das sel: der vil rān māt
 vñ al: er an den nam getugt
 Wazers mer dān genug:
 vñ ein pāch vil groz

In dem heeren nam slo:
 Das vñch vil liot: w all d' schat
 genug: zeterubchen heeren gar. dñ
 w rogt auf si mit groz dñ
 vñ amalech dy hāntschalt
 vñ woten 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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About 1400–1410

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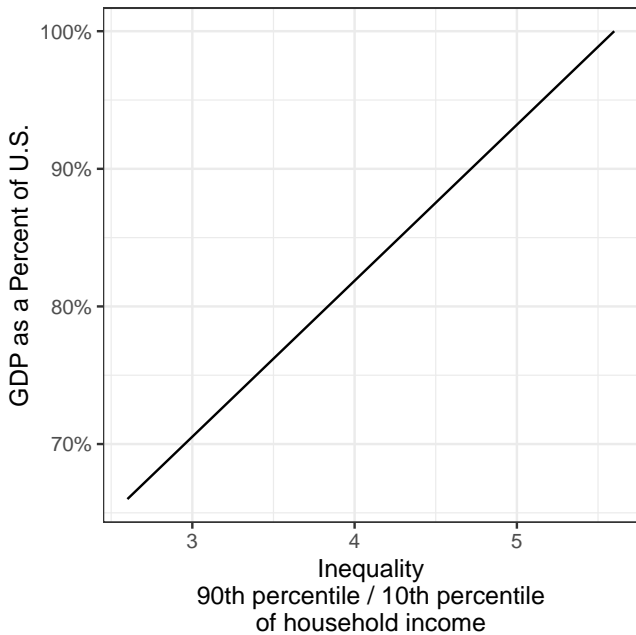
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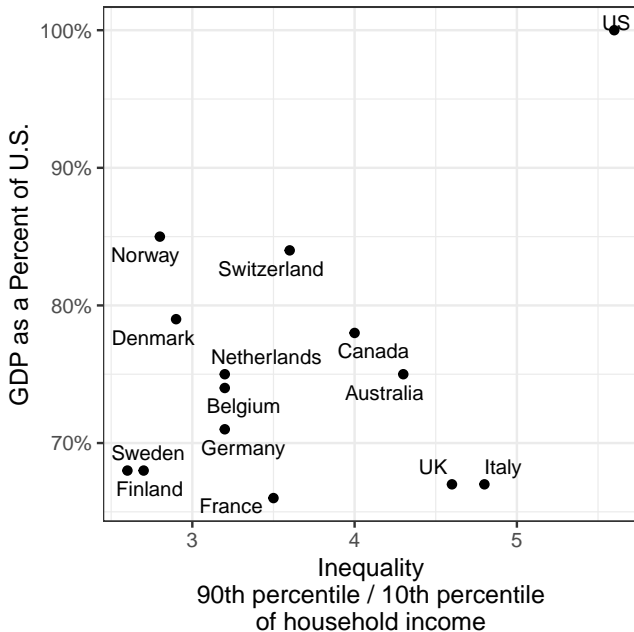
An argument for allowing inequality

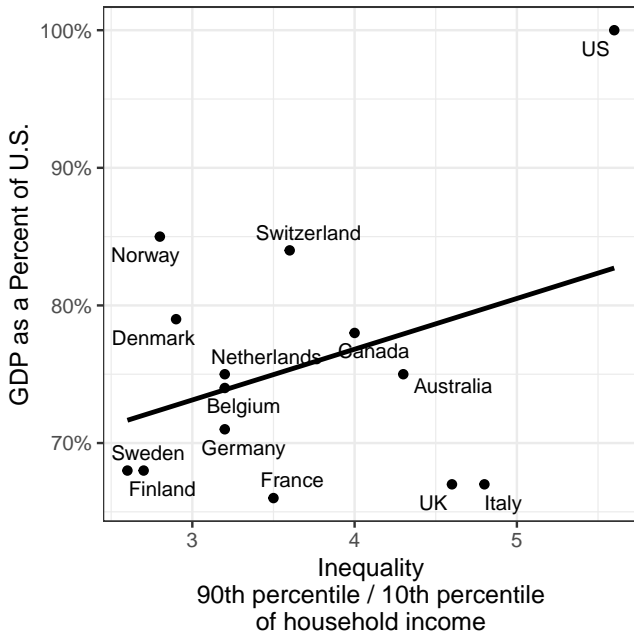
1. unequal rewards motivate work and innovation
2. work and innovation make everyone better off

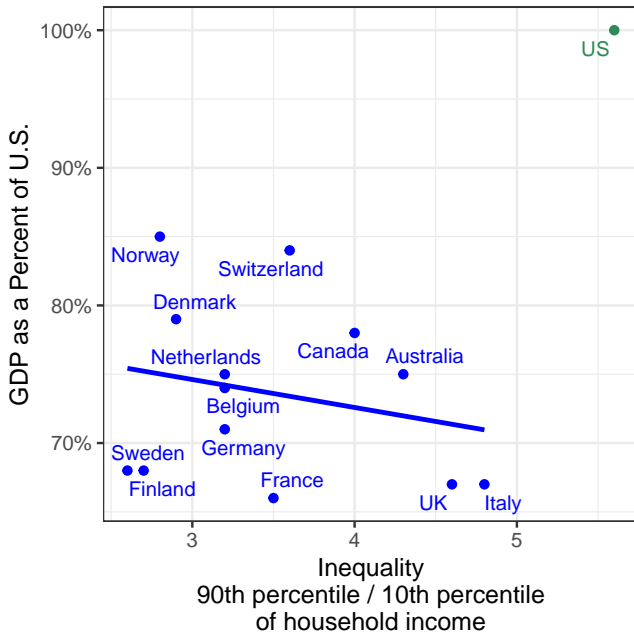
Thus inequality makes us all better off

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

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