

# Contemporary Social Problems, SYA 3930

## Sample slides

- The sample of slides was selected from the following modules:
  1. Studying Social Problems
  2. Defining Social Problems
  3. Economic Inequality
  4. Racial and Ethnic Inequality
  5. Gender Inequality
  6. Aging and Inequality
  7. Crime, Justice, and Criminal Justice System
  8. Economy and Politics
  9. Urban Life

# Claims Making

The process of convincing the public that a particular issue or situation should be defined as a social problem. Claims are made by social movements, groups, and individuals who serve as “**moral entrepreneurs.**”

- AIDS – Aids Coalition to Unleash Power (**ACT UP**)
- Deaths caused by drunk drivers – Mothers Against Drunk Driving (**MADD**)
- Police brutality – Black Lives Matter Movement (**#Blacklivesmatter**)
- Gun violence – March For Our Lives Movement (**MFOL**)

**Cigarette smoking causes approximately 480,000 deaths per year in the U.S and millions globally. Why isn't smoking widely acknowledged as a social problem?**



# Social Stigma of Social Problems



A group advocating AIDS research marches down Fifth Avenue during the 14th annual Lesbian and Gay Pride parade in New York, June 27, 1983.

Mario Suriani/Associated Press  
<https://keithharinfoundationarchives.wordpress.com/category/public-events/>



“THE END. After a three-year struggle against AIDS and its social stigmas, David Kirby could fight no longer. As his father, sister, and niece stood by in anguish, the 32-year-old founder and leader of the Stafford, Ohio, AIDS Foundation felt his life slipping away. David whispered, ‘I’m ready,’ took a last labored breath, then succumbed.

From Life Magazine, November 1990;  
photo: Therese Frare  
<https://changingthefaceofaids.wordpress.com/the-last-days-of-david-kirby/>

# Subjective vs. Objective Nature of Social Problems

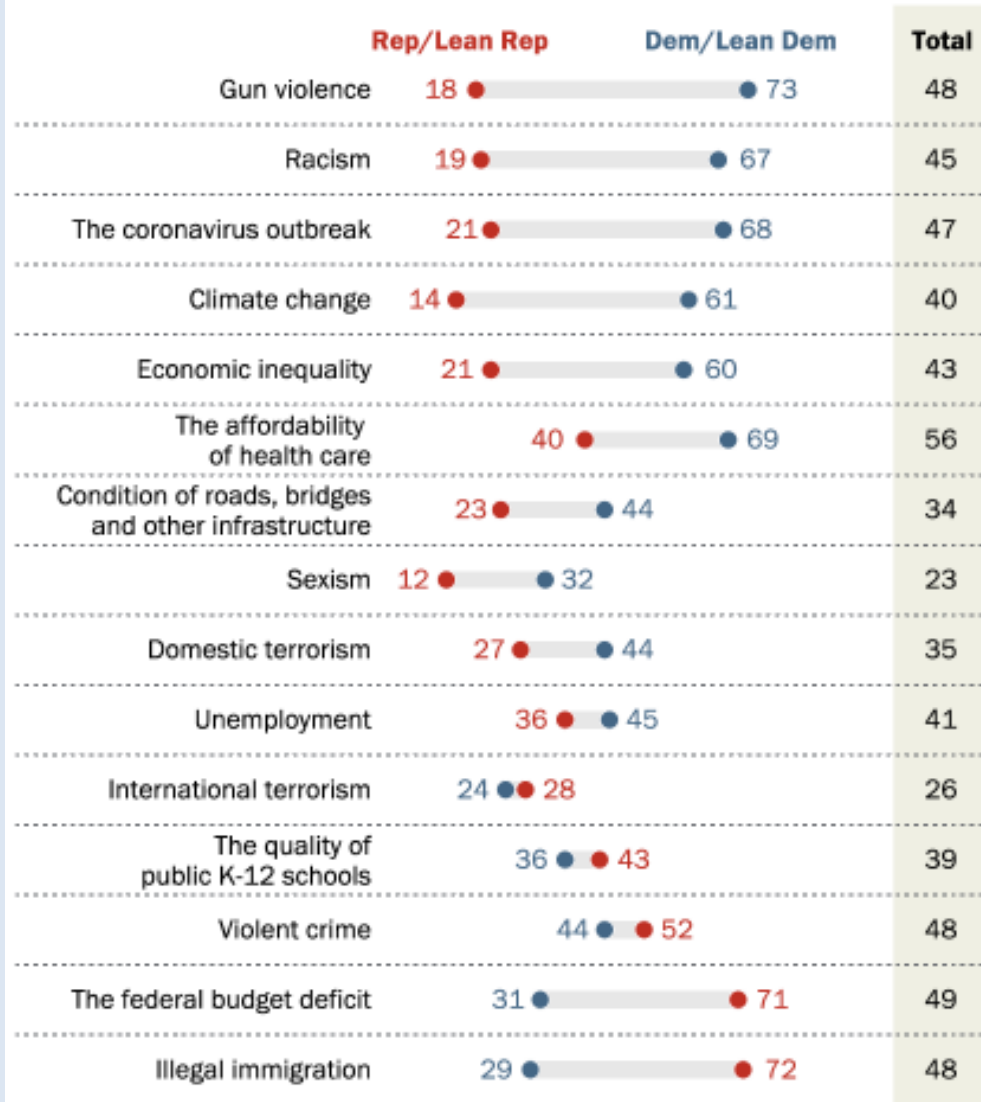


<https://artloversaustralia.com.au/6-things-know-abstract-art/>

- **Subjective**

- : characteristic of or belonging to **reality as perceived** rather than as independent of mind
- : relating to or being experienced or knowledge as **conditioned by personal mental characteristics or states**
- : peculiar to a particular individual: PERSONAL subjective judgments
- : modified or **affected by personal views, experience, or background**; a subjective account of the incident
- : arising from conditions within the brain or sense organs and not directly caused by external stimuli, subjective sensations
- : **arising out of or identified by means of one's perception of one's own states and processes**, a subjective symptom of disease
- : **lacking in reality or substance: ILLUSORY**

% who say \_\_\_ is a very big problem in the country today



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 5-11, 2021.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

What people identify as the most serious social problems varies across age, race/ethnicity, gender, social class, religion, and political party affiliation

Survey of adults in the U.S. conducted April 5 – 11, 2021. Pew Research Center

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/04/15/americans-views-of-the-problems-facing-the-nation/>

## Chapter 2, Part 1: Economic Inequality



# Poverty

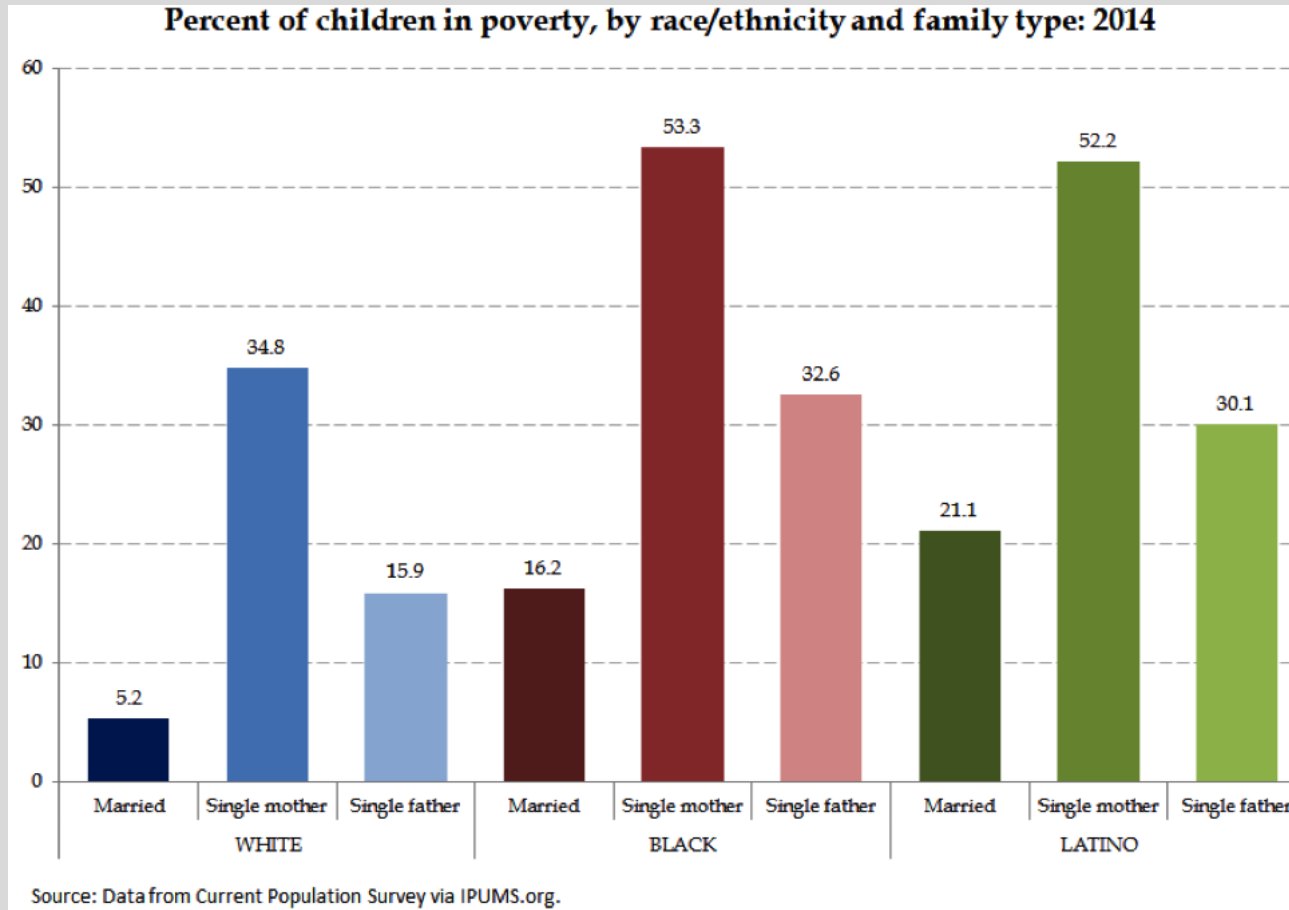
**A. Absolute poverty** refers to a scarcity of resources so severe that it is life-threatening.



<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2253655/Band-Aid-image-starving-children-Africa-warns-Oxfam-charity-says-people-longer-moved-continent-problems.html>

**B. Relative poverty**: refers to a lack of basic resources needed to maintain a standard of living considered acceptable in a particular society.

# Child Poverty by Race/Ethnicity and Family Type



**2023 (Poverty Rate for Single Mother Families)**  
**NA: 42.6**  
**B: 37.4**  
**H: 35.9**  
**W: 25.0**  
**A: 19.7**

<https://contemporaryfamilies.org/moynihan-half-century-brief-report/>

## Children in single parent families by race/ethnicity (2021)

**B: 64%**  
**H: 42%**  
**NHW: 24%**

Source: <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/107-children-in-single-parent-families-by-race-and-ethnicity#detailed/1/any/false/2048,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867/10,11,9,12,1,185,13/432,431>

Out of 10.9 million single-parent families in the U.S., **80 percent** are **single-mother families**.

Data for Oct.2023; <https://singlemotherguide.com/single-mother-statistics/>

## Chapter 7: Crime, Violence, and Criminal Justice (Part 1)



<http://time.com/4967879/deadliest-mass-shootings-las-vegas/>

On **October 1, 2017**, a mass shooting occurred when 64-year-old Stephen Paddock opened fire on the crowd attending the Route 91 Harvest country music festival in Las Vegas, Nevada, killing 59 people and wounding over 500.

# Norms, Law, and Crime

- **Norms** are rules and expectations by which a society guides the behavior of its members. Norms change over time.
- A **law** is a norm formally created through a society's political system.
  - **Civil law** defines legal rights and relationships involving individuals and businesses. The object of civil law is the **redress of wrongs by compelling compensation or restitution**: the wrongdoer is not punished; he only suffers so much harm as is necessary to make good the wrong he has done.

**Examples:** Landlord/tenant disputes, divorce proceedings, child custody proceedings, property disputes, personal injury (due to negligence, malpractice), etc.

# How does Differential Association Theory explain Crime?



[http://izismile.com/2011/01/28/photos\\_of\\_los\\_angeles\\_street\\_gangs\\_47\\_pics.html](http://izismile.com/2011/01/28/photos_of_los_angeles_street_gangs_47_pics.html)

- Edwin Sutherland: **Differential Association Theory**
  - Learning takes place in social groups.
  - Deviance depends on the extent of contact with those who discourage conventional behavior.

## Robert Merton: **Strain theory**

- Crime occurs where there is a discrepancy between culturally described goals and legitimate means of obtaining them.
- Patterns of rule-breaking depend on whether or not
  - People accept society's goals.
  - Society provides the opportunity to reach these goals.



<http://www.davidicke.com/forum/showthread.php?t=181433>



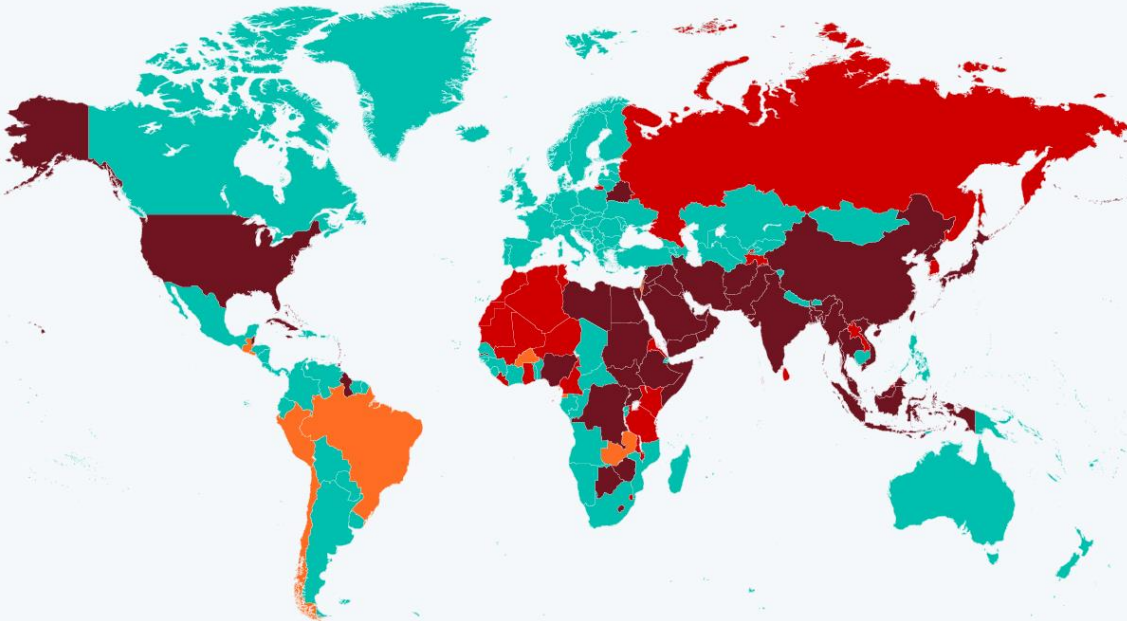
<http://i233.photobucket.com/albums/ee193/JKELLY302/camden14.png>

Some of the poorest neighborhoods in the U.S. may suffer higher rates of crime due to a lack of educational and job opportunities. Under those circumstances, some residents turn to illegal activities for their income.

# Where the Death Penalty Exists

Countries by existence and practice of death penalty laws (2023)

■ Abolitionist ■ Abolitionist in practice\*  
■ Retentionist for serious crimes\*\* ■ Retentionist



\* No executions in previous ten years    \*\* for example war crimes

Source: Amnesty International



statista

**110** countries and territories around the world have **abolished** the death penalty, most recently the Central African Republic and Papua New Guinea. **87** nations **still have capital punishment** on the books, while Amnesty International lists **24** of them as **abolitionists in practice**, meaning the countries haven't carried out an execution in at least ten years.

Source: Buchholtz, Katharina. (2023, May 16). Where the Death Penalty Exists. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/chart/25211/death-penalty-world-map/>

**Almost all highly developed countries and several developing countries have abolished the death penalty. The year of last execution: Sweden – 1910, Portugal – 1917, Finland – 1944, Norway – 1948, Denmark – 1950, UK – 1964.**

Source: [https://www.reddit.com/r/dataisbeautiful/comments/v2f2hj/oc\\_death\\_penalty\\_in\\_europe/](https://www.reddit.com/r/dataisbeautiful/comments/v2f2hj/oc_death_penalty_in_europe/)

## Social Construction of Deviance



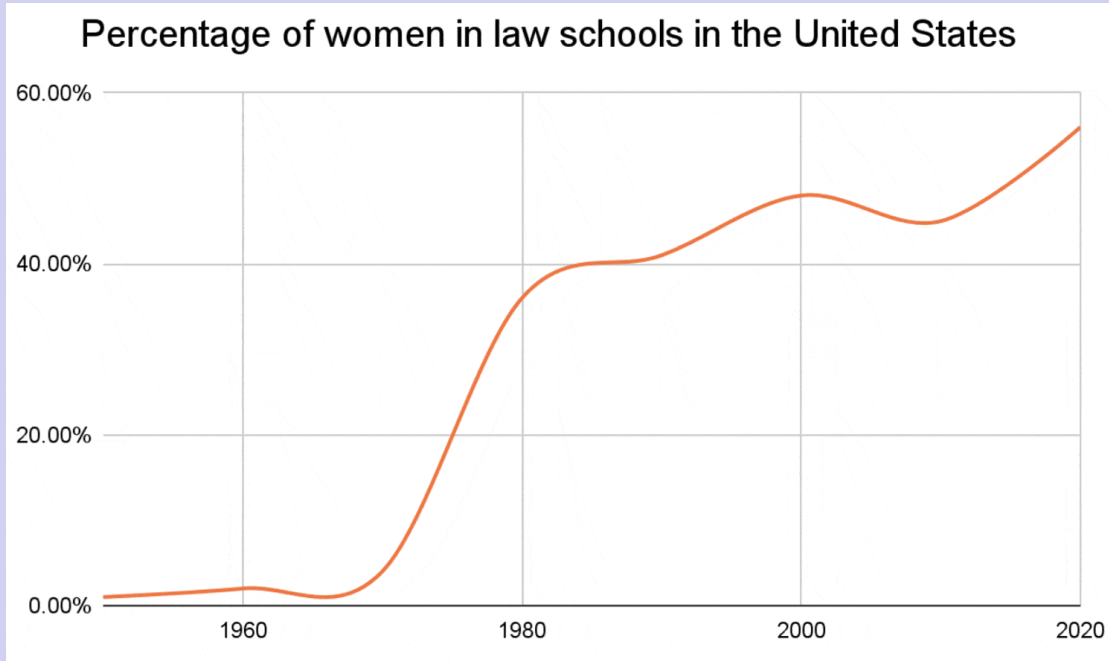
<https://metro.co.uk/2018/03/19/meet-full-bodied-tattooed-teacher-breaking-mold-7398028/>



<https://vt.co/news/weird/5-people-transformed-animals-body-modification/>

Is **body modification** socially accepted and legal in the U.S.? What about cultural traditions like **Female Genital Mutilation** (FGM) that cause harm to girls and women? (Illegal in the U.S. since 1996)

# Gender and Law Degrees



<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/16/business/dealbook/women-majority-of-us-law-students-first-time.html>

In **1960**, women comprised only **3.5 percent** of enrollees in ABA-approved law schools. In **2022**, **women outnumbered men in law school classrooms in the United States for the seventh year in a row**. **53.2** percent of law students at **Harvard**, **55.4** percent at **Georgetown**, and **55.6** percent at **Vanderbilt** were women.

Despite improvements, the ratio of male to female lawyers remains far from balanced. In **2023**, men continued to outnumber women in the legal industry **61.5%** to **38.3%**.



- **Minorities**: groups of people, identified by physical or cultural traits, subjected to disadvantages
- Characteristics:
  - Share a **distinctive identity**
  - Experience **social disadvantage**, for example, poverty or discrimination
- About **39%** of the people in the United States fall into a minority racial or ethnic category.

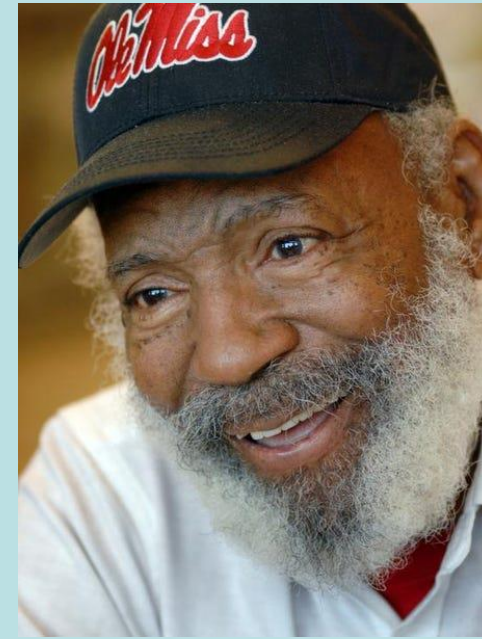




**James Meredith** (C) is escorted to class at the **University of Mississippi** in **1962**. Meredith became the first African American to enroll at the University of Mississippi.

Photo courtesy of Marion S. Trikosko/U.S. News & World Report/[Wikimedia Commons](https://www.upi.com/Decades-after-desegregation-James-Meredith-fighting-for-Americas-moral-character/7871534260160/) <https://www.upi.com/Decades-after-desegregation-James-Meredith-fighting-for-Americas-moral-character/7871534260160/>

In a 2002 interview with CNN, Meredith said of his efforts to integrate Ole Miss, "*I was engaged in a war. I considered myself engaged in a war from Day One. And my objective was to force the federal government—the Kennedy administration at that time—into a position where they would have to use the United States military force to enforce my rights as a citizen.*"



<https://www.clarionledger.com/picture-gallery/news/2020/10/01/james-meredith-through-years-photos/5878289002/>



U.S. Army trucks loaded with steel-helmeted federal agents roll across the University of Mississippi campus on October 3, 1962.

# Hispanic/Latino Americans

- The largest U.S. minority group: **63.7 million** people; **19.1%** of the total population in **2022**
- **37 million** (or **63%** of all Hispanics) are of **Mexican** origin; 9 million **Puerto Rican**, 2.4 million **Cuban**, 2.3 million **Salvadoran**, 2.1 Million **Dominican**, 2.0 million **Columbian**, 1.5 million **Guatemalan**, 1 million **Honduran**
- **There is no one Latino culture.**
- Hispanic Americans are of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds—including **indigenous, Afro-Latino, European, mestizo,** and other identities
- Many have lived here for a long time; others are new arrivals, seeking greater opportunities.



<https://unidosus.org/blog/2020/11/19/how-latino-diversity-can-promote-racial-reconciliation-racial-equity/>

# Ch.6 Aging



<https://www.pedagogyeducation.com/Long-Term-Care-Home-Health-Campus/Class-Catalog/General.aspx>

## Reasons for an Aging Society

- A. Life Expectancy\***  
1900 – 47 years  
2015 – 79 years
  
- B. Fertility/Mortality Rates**  
**19<sup>th</sup> century** – high fertility rates + high mortality rates = youthful nation  
**20<sup>th</sup> century** – low fertility rates + low mortality rates = aging society
  
- C. Baby Boom Generation**  
Increased number of births between 1946 and 1964

\*<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus16.pdf#015>; Health, United States, 2014. Center for Disease Control <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus14.pdf#016>

# Problems of Aging: Retirement Income

- Economic security upon retirement depends on multiple factors

- **Cumulative advantage**

- Higher education → **better** job → higher income
- + benefits (private pension)
- Higher income → **higher** savings
- Higher income → investments
- Higher income → **higher** Social Security income

- **Cumulative disadvantage**

- Lower education → **worse** job → lower income
- and no benefits
- Lower income → **no** saving nor investments
- Lower income → **lower** Social Security income



<https://en.clipdealer.com/photo/media/A:72801562>



<https://thesimpsonian.com/17902/uncategorized/a-day-in-the-life-of-a-janitor/>



<https://www.seniordvice.com/articles/the-difference-between-skilled-nursing-and-nursing-home-care>

More than **70,000** Floridians live in **691** licensed nursing homes across the Sunshine State.

Source: Florida Health Care Association.  
[https://www.fhca.org/media\\_center/long\\_term\\_health\\_care\\_facts](https://www.fhca.org/media_center/long_term_health_care_facts)

**Nursing home care** is a type of long-term care often meant for the elderly. In most cases, the seniors who live in nursing homes are **no longer healthy, mobile, or independent enough to be cared for at home-or even in an assisted living community-but not ill in a way that demands hospital care**. Nursing homes are usually staffed by nurses and aides with considerable medical care skills and senior care experience. The nursing staff is on hand 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to ensure that patients always have the assistance they need.

The services offered in nursing homes run a wide range, from **custodial care** (help with getting out of bed, bathing, dressing, using the toilet, shaving, and more) to physical and speech **therapy**. The staff at a nursing home will also manage medications, make sure that patients receive meals, and encourage residents to develop friendships with one another. <https://www.seniordvice.com/articles/what-is-nursing-home-care>



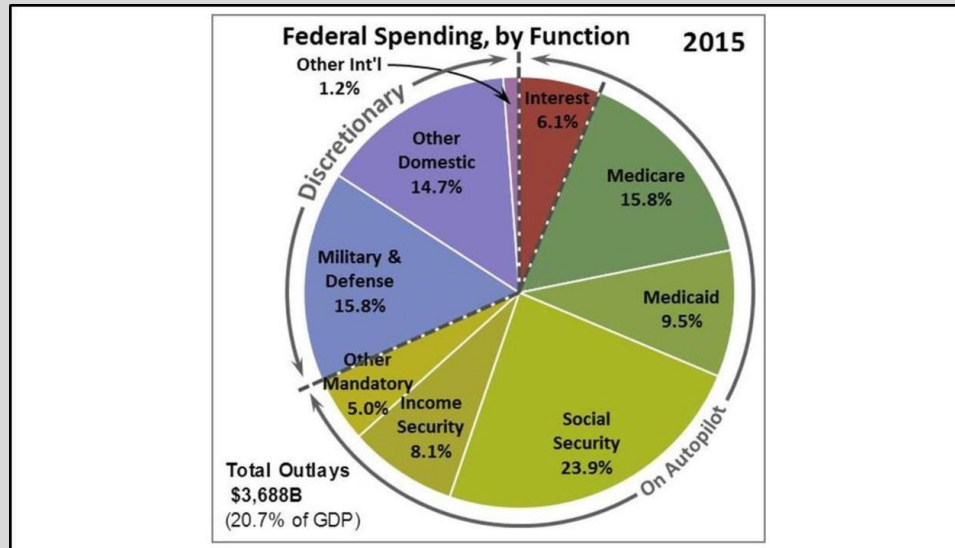
The Federal Budget in Fiscal Year 2022: An Infographic. (2023, March 28). Congressional Budget Office. <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58888>

## FEDERAL BUDGET (2022)

Total outlays: **25.1%** of GDP

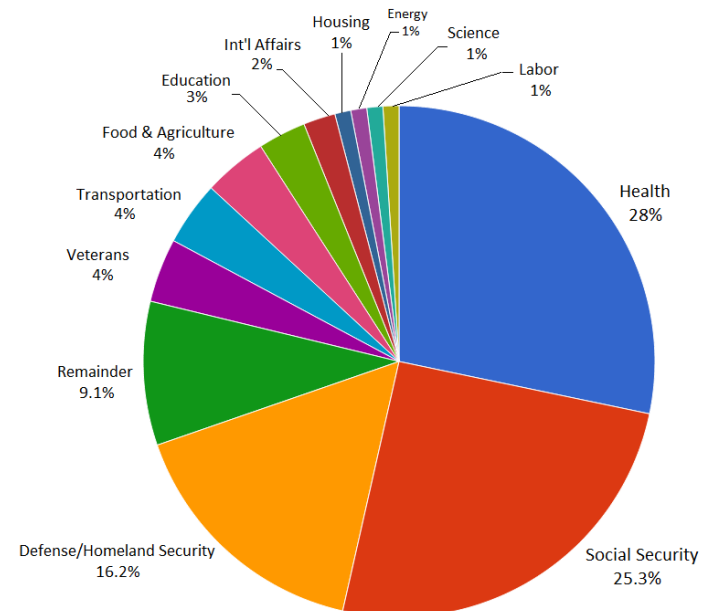
The federal deficit: **\$1.4 trillion**, equal to **5.5%** of GDP

**Mandatory spending** – by law, Congress is required to fund certain programs such as Social Security or Medicare.



<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/last-pie-chart-actually-says-something-important-randall-bolten>

## Percent of spending, including discretionary and mandatory



<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2015/aug/17/facebook-posts/pie-chart-federal-spending-circulating-internet-mi/>

Social Scientists and others are increasingly concerned about the growing power and political influence of **billionaires** and the consequences for **Democracy**, the **economy**, and the **social fabric** of our society.



**SPECIAL REPORT**

**The Pitchforks Are Coming... For Us Plutocrats**

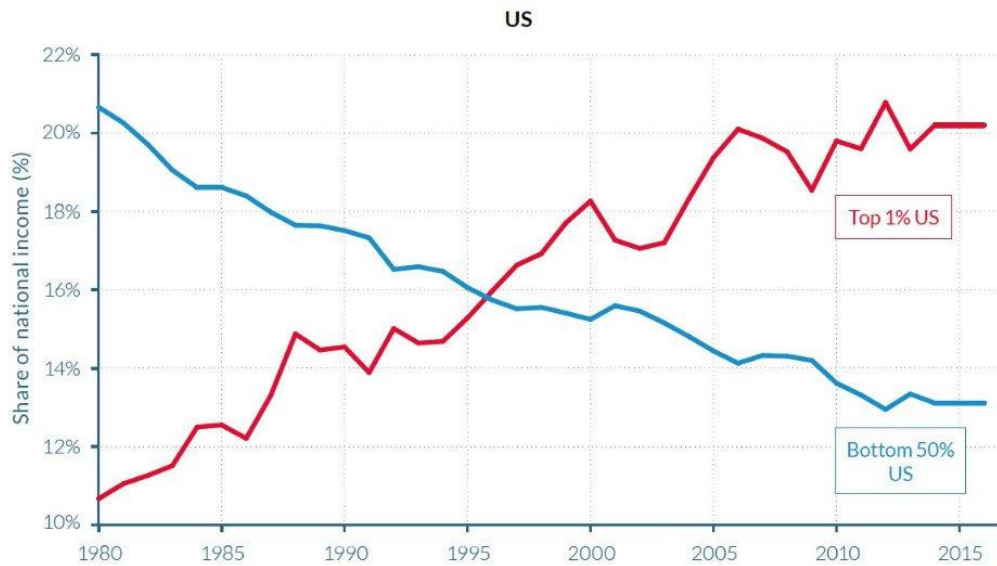
By NICK HANAUER

**July/August 2014**

Nick Hanauer is a billionaire who recognizes the gender of plutocracy (the government by the wealthy).

Use the link to read his article.

Top 1% vs. Bottom 50% national income shares in the US and Western Europe, 1980–2016:  
Diverging income inequality trajectories

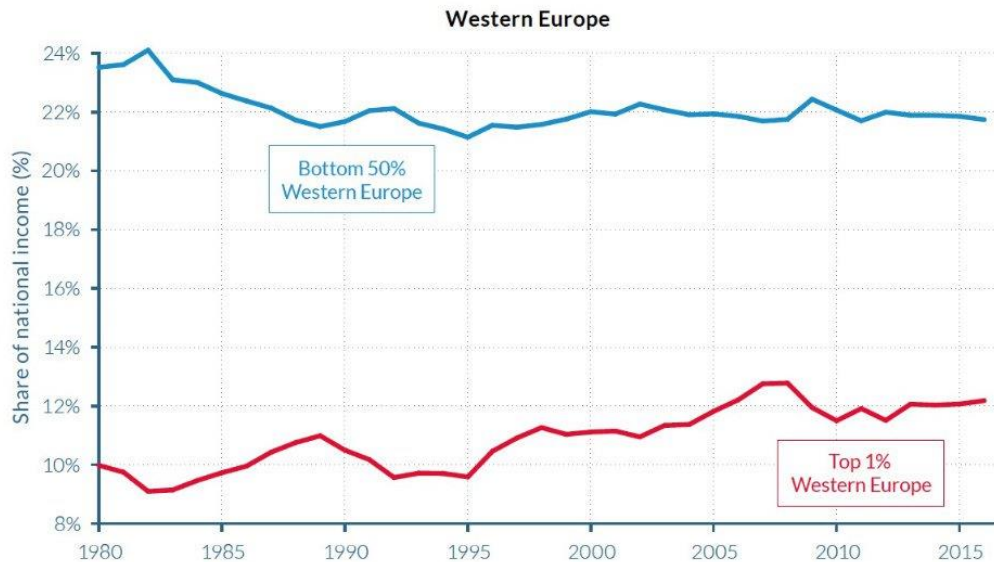


Source: WID.world (2017). See wir2018.wid.world for data series and notes.

In 2016, 12% of national income was received by the top 1% in Western Europe, compared to 20% in the United States. In 1980, 10% of national income was received by the top 1% in Western Europe, compared to 11% in the United States.

## National income shares in the United States and Western Europe, 1980 – 2016

In the United States, unlike in Western Europe, the share of national income held by the top income earners has increased dramatically, while the share held by the bottom 50% has declined.



Source: WID.world (2017). See wir2018.wid.world for data series and notes.

Source: World Inequality Report 2018

<https://wir2018.wid.world/files/download/wir2018-summary-english.pdf>

## Concentration of Capital

The U.S. economy tends to concentrate capital. Large corporations (as well as banks) grow bigger through mergers and acquisitions of smaller firms. Corporate consolidation increases the power of capital vis-à-vis that of labor (workers).



<https://www.bankrate.com/banking/biggest-banks-in-america/>

- The top **15 largest banks held** combined total of **\$12.16 trillion** in assets as of **June 30, 2020**.
- If these 15 banks were a single economy, it would rank only behind the **U.S.** and **China** and ahead of **Japan** or **Germany** in terms of GDP. (**US** - GDP: **20.49 trillion**, **China** - GDP: **13.4 trillion**, **Japan** - GDP: **4.97 trillion**, **Germany** - GDP: **4.00 trillion**, **United Kingdom** - GDP: **2.83 trillion**), **France** - GDP: **2.78 trillion**, **India** - GDP: **2.72 trillion**, **Italy** - GDP: **2.07 trillion**, **Brazil** – GDP: **1.87 trillion**, **Canada** – GDP: **1.71 trillion**).
- As of Nov.2, **2020**, there were **4,700** commercial banks in the U.S. with combined assets of **\$16.7 trillion**. The **15** largest banks controlled **72.8%** of all commercial banking assets in the U.S.

<http://www.firstresearch.com/Industry-Research/Banks-and-Credit-Unions.html#:~:text=The%20US%20banking%20industry%20includes,revenue%20of%20about%20%24556%20billion.>



[https://www.democracynow.org/2013/9/19/two\\_years\\_after\\_occupy\\_wall\\_street](https://www.democracynow.org/2013/9/19/two_years_after_occupy_wall_street)

In **2011**, a major social movement known as the “**Occupy Wall Street Movement**” emerged across the U.S. to protest growing power of Wall Street, social inequality, neoliberalism, and political corruption.

**Ch.15 Urban  
Life  
Part 2**





Alex Peay in his North Philadelphia neighborhood. (Joshua Albert/Next City);

<https://whyy.org/segments/redlining-segregated-philadelphia/>

In 2015, **41.6 percent** of people in Peay's **North Philadelphia** neighborhood were living below the poverty line, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau. **Two-thirds** of the population identified as black.

Use the link to read the article:  
<https://whyy.org/segments/redlining-segregated-philadelphia/>

When **Alex Peay** moved to **Philadelphia** from **New York City** 10 years ago, the scale of the **disinvestment** astounded him. “I’ve seen it in New York, but not to this scale,” says Peay, who runs a nonprofit called **Ones Up**, which helps disadvantaged youth learn professional skills. “**There are just blocks and blocks of abandoned houses. And you go down Broad Street and notice that at one time that was a busy, high-end area. Now there’s nothing. You’re like, ‘what the hell happened?’”**

**Climate Gentrification:** As wealthier individuals and corporations recognize the dangers of climate change, they are increasingly seeking higher ground, driving up property values in safer areas.

- As many as [13 million people in the United States](#) will be displaced by 2100 due to rising sea levels.
- More than half of the **2.6 million** residents of **Miami** will experience “climate gentrification” and pressure to relocate if sea levels rise by 40 inches.

## Climate Gentrification in Florida

*“Areas like Little Haiti (or what gentrification would now label as “Little River”) — historically home to many low-income residents — are experiencing an influx of real estate development catering to wealthier residents seeking higher ground. As property values rise and developers move in, low-income residents are forced out, struggling to find affordable housing options elsewhere and feeling extremely anxious about their future.”*



Use the link to read the article:

<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2023/10/05/climate-housing/>

A woman walks through the streets in the **Little Haiti** neighborhood in Miami.

- Climate Gentrification exacerbates shortage of affordable housing in Florida.
- With 40 inches of sea-level rise, **56 percent** of **Miami-Dade** county residents will be “displaced” due to rising housing costs as people move in from flood-prone areas, according to a 2023 study published in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*.