Chapter One | American Democracy in an Era of Rising Inequality

Lawrence R. Jacobs
Theda Skocpol

Equal political voice and democratically responsive government are widely cherished American ideals—yet as the United States aggressively promotes democracy abroad, these principles are under growing threat in an era of persistent and rising inequalities at home. Disparities of income, wealth, and access to opportunity are growing more sharply in the United States than in many other nations, and gaps between races and ethnic groups persist. Progress toward expanding democracy may have stalled, and in some arenas reversed.

Generations of Americans have worked to equalize citizen voice across lines of income, race, and gender. Today, however, the voices of American citizens are raised and heard unequally. The privileged participate more than others and are increasingly well organized to press their demands on government. Public officials, in turn, are much more responsive to the privileged than to average citizens and the less affluent. The voices of citizens with lower or moderate incomes are lost on the ears of inattentive government officials, while the advantaged roar with a clarity and consistency that policymakers readily hear and routinely follow. The scourge of overt discrimination against African Americans and women has been replaced by a more subtle but potent threat—the growing concentration of the country's wealth, income, and political influence in the hands of the few.

These are the conclusions that the Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy established by the American Political Science Association in 2002 reached. As one of several task forces recently formed to enhance the public relevance of political science, this group of scholars was charged with reviewing and assessing the best current scholarship about the health and functioning of U.S. democracy over recent decades, in a era of expanding social rights yet rising economic inequality.[1] Speaking in its own voice and on the authority of the task force members alone, the group drew conclusions after surveying available evidence about three important, interlinked areas of concern: citizen participation, government responsiveness, and the impact of public policies on social inequalities and political participation. The core chapters of this book present in-depth reviews of research findings on these issues. With input and advice from other task force members, each chapter was prepared by a working group of scholars listed as the authors of that chapter.

This introduction sets the context for detailed explorations of citizen participation, government responsiveness, and public policymaking. We begin with evidence about the changing patterns of inequality in the United States, and then consider why recent rising economic inequality may be of special concern. Although Americans tolerate varied fortunes produced by the market, they worry when economic disparities threaten equal citizen voice and undermine government responsiveness to the needs and values of the majority. Americans want their democracy to ensure and expand equal opportunity for all citizens. The research reviewed in this book speaks to basic concerns about the health and prospects of U.S. democracy.

EXPANDING RIGHTS AND RISING ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

American society has become both more and less equal in recent decades. Following the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, racial segregation and exclusion were no longer legal or socially acceptable. Whites and African Americans began to participate together in schools and colleges, the job market, and political and civic organizations. Gender barriers have also been breached since the 1960s, with women now able to pursue most of the same economic and political opportunities as men. Many other previously marginalized groups have also gained rights to participate fully in American institutions and have begun to demand—and to varying degrees enjoy—the dignity of equal citizenship (Skrentny 2002).

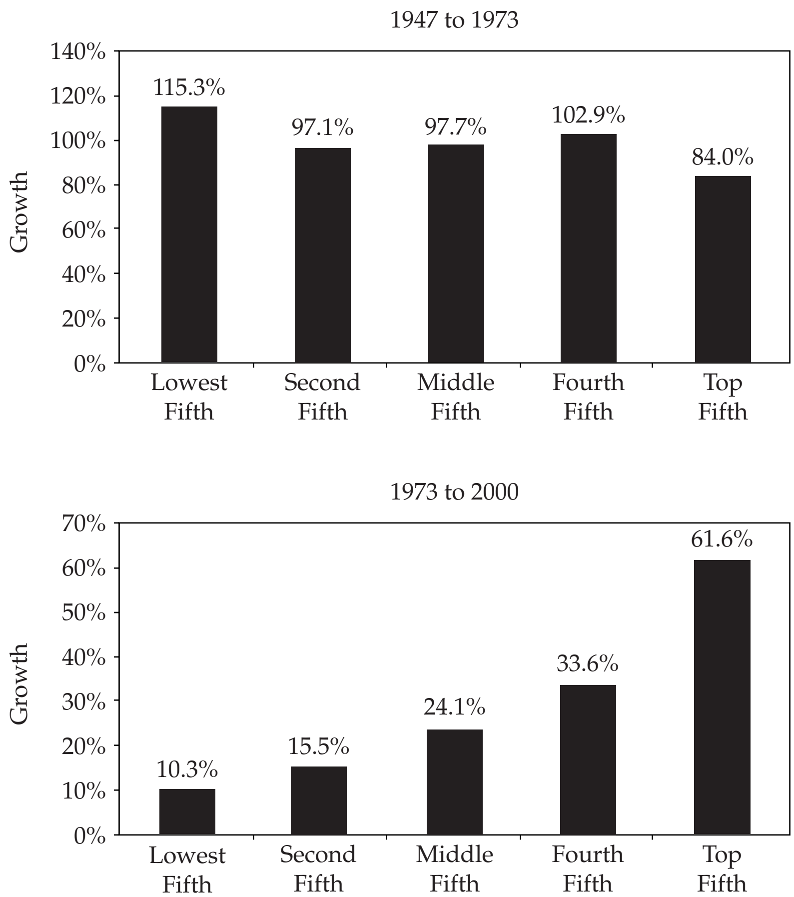
But as U.S. society has become more integrated across the previous barriers of race, ethnicity, gender, and other long-standing forms of social exclusion, it has experienced growing gaps of income and wealth. This conclusion emerges from large bodies of authoritative government and nongovernment data, analyzed by researchers using diverse methodologies.[2] The critical questions we address here are how the relative share of income or wealth going to different segments of American society has changed over time and how it compares to distributions in other advanced industrialized countries committed to private enterprise. Numerous independent studies find that the distribution of economic resources in American society has become increasingly concentrated among the most affluent over the past three decades to a degree not found abroad. To be sure, the nation as a whole has become more affluent as absolute levels of income and wealth have risen. Alarmingly, however, rising affluence is sharply concentrated in the very top of American society. Gaps of income and wealth have grown not just between the poor and the rest of society, but also between privileged professionals, managers, and business owners on the one hand, and the middle strata of regular white-collar and blue-collar middle class on the other hand. The rich and the super-rich have appropriated a growing share of wealth and income since the mid-1970s.

Perfect income equality would mean that each fifth of the population (that is, each quintile) would receive 20 percent of the country's income.[3] In 2001, the most affluent fifth received 47.7 percent of family income; the middle class (the third and fourth fifths) earned 15.5 percent and 22.9 percent, respectively, and the bottom two quintiles each received less than 10 percent. Put simply, the richest 20 percent enjoyed nearly half of the country's income—and fully 21 percent of family income went to the top 5 percent of Americans.

The rich, of course, have always enjoyed a disproportionate hold over income. The top quintile has cornered more than 40 percent of the country's income since at least 1947. But patterns of income growth across segments of the American population have shifted radically over time. For twenty years after World War II, the hold of the top fifth on the country's income was slightly weakening—as income at the top grew less rapidly than income in the middle and at the bottom—but after 1973 the trend toward income equalization reversed. Figure 1.1 displays the sharply different distribution of income growth that prevailed in 1947 to 1973 versus 1973 to 2000. After 1973, income growth was clearly much more rapid for those in the top fifth than for all other Americans, and growth was especially anemic toward the bottom. What is more, even within the top fifth, rates of gain were especially fast for the richest 5 percent and fastest of all for the fabulously wealthy top 1 percent.

Even as the distribution of income has tilted sharply toward the top, the most affluent have amassed an even larger slice of the country's wealth (including stock holdings, mutual funds, retirement savings, ownership of property, and other assets). Table 1.1 is based on a survey of consumer finances conducted by the Federal Reserve Board in 1998 and shows the

Figure 1.1 U.S. Family Income Growth



Source: Reprinted from Mishel, Bernstein, and Boushey (2003, 57), based on U.S. census data.

distribution of household income and net worth (total family assets minus its liabilities such as mortgages and other forms of debt). The top 1 percent of households drew 16.6 percent of all income but wielded control over more than double this percentage of the country's wealth (38.1 percent). By contrast, the supermajority of the country—the "bottom" 90 percent of households—earned the majority of household income (58.8 percent) but controlled less than half this percentage (29 percent).[4]

Table 1.1 Distribution of Income and Wealth, 1998

	Household Income (Percentage)	Net Worth (Percentage)
All	100.0	100.0
Top 1 percent	16.0	38.1
Bottom 90 percent	58.5	29.0

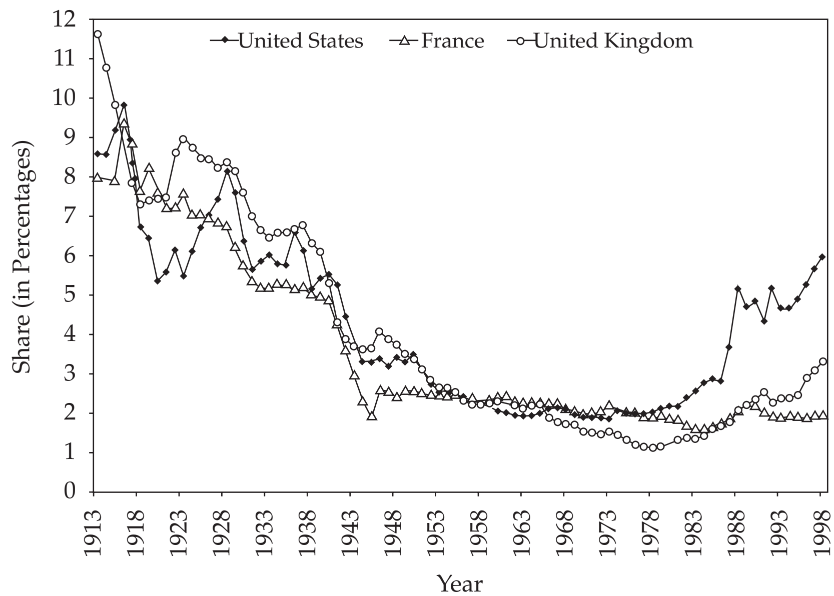
Source: Reprinted from Mishel, Bernstein, and Boushey (2003, 279), based on Federal Reserve Board Survey of Consumer Finances. Copyright © 2003 by Cornell University. Used by permission of the publisher, Cornell University Press.
Note: Net worth is the sum of all of a family's assets—checking and savings accounts, property ownership, stock holdings, retirement funds and other assets—minus all of the family's liabilities—debt owed for credit cards and loans for college, property, and other purchases.

Disparities in wealth and income in the United States are much sharper and have grown faster than in other advanced industrial Western democracies. Figure 1.2 presents information about income trends for American families compared against families in Britain and France. The proportion of income accruing to the top one-tenth of 1 percent of families ran along parallel tracks for much of the twentieth century. All three countries reduced inequality from the end of World War I through World War II and until the 1960s. But from the mid-1970s on, the United States rapidly diverged from both Britain and France and became far more unequal. By 1998, the share of income held by the very rich was two or three times higher in the United States than in Britain and France.

The bottom line is clear: the resident of an American penthouse on the top twentieth floor is doing much better than his neighbors not only in the basement but also on the sixteenth floor and, for that matter, any floor. The debate among analysts is no longer about whether inequality has risen and reached unparalleled levels in the United State. Discussion has shifted to pinpointing why economic inequality rose. A range of demographic, technological, and political factors have contributed to rising economic gaps, and we leave it to analysts of economic distributions to sort out their relative impact (see the discussions in Burtless 1999; and Mishel, Bernstein, and Boushey 2003, 56–82). In chapter 4, we will assess some of the ways in which government policies have contributed to the emergence and persistence of greater inequality in the United States compared with other advanced nations.

Economic disparities are particularly striking when it comes to comparisons across races. The Civil Rights era helped lift the absolute levels of income and wealth enjoyed by African Americans and Hispanics. These two groups, however, remain far behind white America. In the late 1980s, the median white household earned 62 percent more and had twelve

Figure 1.2 Top 0.1 Percent Income Shares



Source: Piketty and Saez (2003), based on analysis of tax returns. © 2003 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

times the wealth of the median black household. Nearly two-thirds of black households (61 percent) and half of Hispanic households have no net worth, compared with only a quarter of their white counterparts.[5] Even young, married, black couples in which both adults work—the shining beacons of progress toward racial equality—still earn 20 percent less than their white counterparts and have a staggering 80 percent less net worth. These figures are based on an unfortunately all-too-infrequent in-depth analysis of income and wealth among African Americans from 1987 to 1989. More recent analyses, however, still show a similar pattern: improvement in absolute terms but continuing racial disparities. According to an analysis of the Federal Reserve Board's *Survey of Consumer Finances*, the median net worth of African Americans nearly quadrupled, from $5,300 in 1989 to $19,000 in 2001. Nonetheless, the median net worth of whites in 2001 was more than ten times greater ($121,000) than for African Americans ($19,000). At nearly every level of wealth, whites continued to enjoy much greater net worth than African Americans in 2001 (Kennickell 2003, 34–36).

Living conditions remain fragile even for the black middle class, and continue to lag far behind those experienced by their white counterparts. And, of course, the circumstances of African Americans who have not reached the middle class are even more precarious.

CONSEQUENCES FOR DEMOCRACY

How concerned should we be about persistent and rising socioeconomic inequalities? Few normative theorists propose a genuinely equal distribution of economic resources as either desirable or feasible. Most of the debate is about the consequences and tolerability of various degrees of economic inequality. Some theorists are comfortable with significant inequalities, which they see as a just reflection of greater rewards going to people who work harder and contribute specialized skills or capital investments to the economy. Those who accept high inequalities also fear that efforts to alter economic distributions will come at an excessive cost to liberty. Others are concerned whenever the life chances of citizens in a democracy become too divergent. If disparities become too great, how can people retain a sense of community and shared fate and engage in informed decisionmaking? And how can political equality be realized when citizens have increasingly divergent resources?

Theorists are not the only ones who disagree about the consequences of economic inequality. Citizens in various advanced-industrial societies differ as well. Our investigations take cues from the special concerns of Americans, which focus on the consequences of inequalities for democratic politics more than on the simple existence of economic disparities as such.

Concerns of Americans

According to opinion surveys, reviewed in chapter 2, Americans are much more likely than Europeans to accept substantial disparities of income and wealth. In the United States, unequal economic outcomes are seen as largely reflecting differences among individuals rather than flaws in the economic system. Americans support private property and free enterprise, and see much of the skewed distribution of wealth and income as a legitimate result of differences in individual talent and effort.

Tolerance of economic inequality by Americans is not unambiguous, however. Two caveats come into play (Page and Shapiro 1992; Weakliem, Andersen, and Heath 2003). First, Americans accept economic inequalities only when they are sure that everyone has an equal chance to get ahead—to achieve the best possible life for the individual and family. Research and news accounts document that the rise in economic inequality is short-circuiting the pathway to the American Dream—the hope that opportunities to prosper are within the reach of every individual willing to work hard and accept the sacrifice. Upward mobility continues, but the number of Americans who are able to enjoy the fruits of upward mobility are few in number and do not come close to offsetting the economic disparities among the many (Gottschalk 1997; Michaels 2004; Smeeding 2004). A narrowing of opportunities for getting ahead contradicts public hopes and expectations and raises concerns about what government is doing, or can do, to further equal opportunity.

Indeed, the second situation that raises public concern is when rising economic inequalities threaten to impinge on ideals of equal citizen voice and government responsiveness to the majority. Americans fervently believe that everyone should have an equal say in our democratic politics. They embrace wholeheartedly the ideal enunciated by the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal," which in our time means that every citizen, regardless of income, gender, race, or ethnicity, should have an equal voice in representative government.

According to the National Elections Studies (NES) and other evidence, Americans are increasingly worried about disparities of participation, voice, and government responsiveness.[6] Citizens are much less likely than they were four decades ago to trust government to "do the right thing." Between 1964 and 1994 the proportion of Americans who only trusted the federal government "some" or "none of the time" more than tripled from 22 percent to 78 percent. Although the terrorist attacks on September 11 precipitated a decline in distrust to 46 percent in 2002, distrust increased to 53 percent in 2004. The proportion of Americans who felt that the government is "run by a few big interests looking out only for themselves" more than doubled from 29 percent in 1964 to 76 percent in 1994. This proportion declined to 50 percent in 2002 following the 9/11 attacks (still nearly double the 1964 level) before rising to 56 percent in 2004. In addition, the number who believed that "public officials don't care about what people like me think" nearly doubled, growing from 36 percent in 1964 to 66 percent in 1994. While this proportion dropped to 29 percent in 2002 after the 9/11 attacks, the suspicion rebounded to 50 percent in 2004. Surveys in 1995 and 2000 found that more than six in ten respondents cited too much influence by special interests as a reason for not trusting government.[7]

Looking Ahead to Our Findings

The evidence suggests that citizens are right to be concerned about the health of American democracy. We find disturbing inequalities in the political voice expressed through elections and other avenues of participation. We find that our governing institutions are much more responsive to the privileged and well-organized narrow interests than to other Americans. And we find that the policies our government fashions today may be doing less than celebrated programs of the past to promote equal opportunity and security and enhance citizen dignity and participation, reinforcing the suspicion of many in the American public that government officials "don't care" about the needs and values of ordinary citizens.

As chapter 2 documents, only about a third of eligible voters regularly participate in mid-term congressional elections and only a little more than half regularly turn out for contemporary presidential elections. While the intensely competitive presidential election of 2004 increased turnout to its highest level since 1968—60 percent of individuals living in the United States who are 18 and over[8]—the United States remains a turnout laggard compared to other advanced industrialized countries. As Richard Freeman (2004, 703) puts it, on "a world scale, the United States ranks 138th in turnout among countries that hold elections—far below every other advanced democracy save for Switzerland." Overall, the U.S. electorate has contracted since the 1960s, and the well-educated and well-to-do are much more likely to vote than the least educated and economically privileged. Stratified voting was not, of course, created by any recent increases in economic disparities. But recently growing economic inequalities may reinforce voting differentials, counteracting major reforms that otherwise should have greatly expanded voter turnout. Reforms that should have done much to mitigate voting stratification include the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which brought millions of African Americans into the electorate; simplified processes for registering and casting absentee ballots; and the spread of formal education, which instills the skills and values that encourage voting. Analysts disagree as to whether voting has become more unequal by class over recent decades or has simply remained as it was (see Leighley and Nagler 1992 and the careful reanalysis by Freeman 2004). Certainly, however, voting has not become more equal, despite many factors that should have pushed it in that direction.

Despite all of the limitations in voter turnout, casting a ballot remains the most common political activity. Far fewer Americans take part in more demanding and costly political activities, from protest to giving money. The direct impact of rising economic inequality may be most directly apparent in campaign contributions. As wealth and income have become more concentrated and the flow of money into elections has grown, wealthy individuals and families have opportunities for political clout not open to those of more modest means. Stratification in participation is also evident in a range of other activities, such as joining and supporting a voluntary association or interest group, working in an electoral campaign, getting in touch with a public official, getting involved in an organization that takes political stands, and taking part in a protest or demonstration. Well-developed theory shows that exercising the rights of citizenship requires not only individual resources of income, time, and education, but also skills of the sort that privileged occupations disproportionately bestow on the economically well-off.[9] Managers, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals enjoy not only higher education and salaries but also greater confidence and abilities to speak and organize.

With socioeconomic inequality on the increase, there are some theoretical reasons to believe that the political participation of the less privileged should actually increase (see Brady 2004). But much depends on the role of organizations and political parties in mediating social interests. Although the sheer number of organizations in Washington that speak for once-underrepresented preferences and constituencies has grown, blue-collar trade unions have weakened and are thus less likely to mobilize working-class voters (Radcliff and Davis 2000). Corporate managers and professionals have also increased their organized presence in Washington and enhanced their capacities to speak loudly and clearly to government officials. Even political parties—which the APSA and generations of political activists and observers have held out as a vehicle for an inclusive form of democracy that counteracts the advantage of the better off—may nowadays skew participation in U.S. politics. Along with contemporary professionally managed interest groups, today's major parties target resources on recruiting those who are already the most privileged and involved (Schier 2000; Skocpol 2004a, 2004b). Democrats and Republicans alike have come to depend heavily on campaign contributors and middle-class activists, and have gotten used to competing for just over half of a shrinking universe of voters.

The stratification of political clout and voice interacts with the emergence of a new group of political activists harboring views more intense and extreme than the average citizen's. Operating through interest groups swirling in and around the major political parties, such activists are not only themselves likely to be higher-income and well-educated individuals. On a range of important matters from abortion to tax cuts, activists are also often resistant to government compromises that respond to the more ambiguous or middle of the road opinions of average citizens (Fiorina 1999; Skocpol 2003, chaps. 5 and 6). Even liberal "public interest" advocates, moreover, are likely to focus on the concerns and values of the middle class, than on those of the poor or working Americans (Berry 1999, 55–57).

Disparities in political participation and voice matter because they affect who governs and how these elected officials respond to citizen preferences. Research surveyed in chapter 3 documents that campaign contributions influence who runs for government office—and therefore who sits in the halls of government. The notion that monetary contributions can directly "buy" votes on the floor of Congress is *not* supported by rigorous empirical research that controls for a variety of other relevant factors (Ansolabehere, Figueiredo, and Snyder 2003; Wright 1985, 1990). But wealthy citizens and moneyed interests who make big contributions do gain privileged access to send clear signals about their political demands and support. Money and its increasingly unequal distribution buys the rare opportunity to present self-serving information or raise problems that can be addressed through a host of helpful, low-profile actions—inserting a rider into an omnibus bill, for example, expediting the scheduling of a bill that has been languishing in committee, or making sure that threatening regulatory legislation receives minimal funding for implementation (Gopoian 1984; Hall and Wayman 1990; Kroszner and Stratmann 1998; Langbein 1986).

Scholars are beginning to document the exact degree to which skewed political demands and support are converted by the governing process into policies and activities that disproportionately respond to business, the wealthy, and the organized and vocal. Recent research (Bartels 2002) documents that the votes of U.S. senators are almost three times more likely to correspond with the policy preferences of their most privileged constituents than with the preferences of their least privileged constituents, even though the latter are of course much more numerous. Bias in government responsiveness is evident not only in Congress but also in national government policy more generally. Government officials who design policy changes are more than twice as responsive to the preferences of the rich as to those of the least affluent (Gilens 2003). Business and other elites also exert far more influence than the public on U.S. foreign policy, which not only guides the country's diplomatic and defense affairs but also has powerful consequences for domestic economic conditions through decisions on trade and the protection and promotion of American jobs and enterprise (Jacobs and Page 2005).

We also need to consider the impact of public policies, once enacted, on social stratification and further political activities. The authors of chapter 4 not only examine the overall impact of U.S. social programs. They also discuss an impressive and growing body of contemporary research on "policy feedbacks"—that is, the ways in which policies, once enacted, modify government capacities and future patterns of political participation.[10]

Dramatic changes in private markets have increased economic inequality in a number of advanced industrialized nations—yet nations differ considerably in the degree to which, and ways in which, they use public policies to modify or counteract market-generated disparities. Governments in Canada, Germany, Sweden, France, and other U.S. trading partners have limited increases in economic inequality and built floors under the least privileged through the use of regulations and tax policy as well as social programs.[11] By contrast, government policies and actions in the United States have been especially responsive to the values and interests of the most privileged Americans and therefore have often not undertaken active and effective steps to mute or offset market inequalities.

What the U.S. government does—and does not do—about economic disparities and insecurities influences political participation as well as social outcomes. Research shows that broad social programs such as the G.I. Bill of 1944 and the Social Security Act (as updated through the early 1970s) not only distributed economic benefits, but also encouraged ordinary citizens to increase their political participation (Mettler 2002; Campbell 2003). Recent social programs are likely to be narrowly targeted and to work in complex and relatively invisible ways through the tax code. Such programs may do less than major social programs of the past to boost the political engagement of ordinary Americans, especially those who are not elderly.

The effects of government inaction in the face of rising market-generated inequality are particularly evident in the economic and political conditions of less privileged minorities and women. One of the great stories of the past century in the United States has been the reduction of overt discrimination that once excluded millions of Americans from the core of political, economic, and social life. Well-educated women and minorities have benefited greatly from the removal of discriminatory barriers. In recent years, however, the reduction of overt discrimination has been countered by growing gaps in income and wealth, which have undermined economic progress and political inclusion for many, nonelite African Americans, Latinos, and women, even as equal opportunity and citizenship is also imperiled for many white men. Subsequent chapters demonstrate a general pattern of stalled progress and persistent political disparities: The political playing field remains highly unequal, and the immediate gains of the rights revolution have not yielded a sustained widening of political voice and influence in the governing process.

The chapters to come discuss many more developments and assess the contributions of many more factors than we have been able to mention in this brief overview. Furthermore, and as these snapshots suggest, this book does not present a simple picture of the impact of widening economic disparities on U.S. politics and government. Some relationships are relatively direct. Individual participation is socially stratified, for reasons that are increasingly well understood. And in a period when monetary contributions to politicians, parties, and interest groups are more and more important, the ability to give large chunks of money equips the growing ranks of the most affluent with a potent mechanism to express individual voice. Less privileged citizens may (or may not) find ways to band together to give money as well as votes, but as individuals their clout is less.

Other ways in which rising economic disparities may matter are less clear-cut, however, because socioeconomic shifts often work in complex interaction with slowly changing political institutions or with other ongoing changes that cannot be reduced to economic trends. New information technologies, for example, may magnify the effects of individuals and groups that are economically privileged enough to deploy them intensively. And long-standing "checks and balances" built into U.S. political institutions might promote pluralism under some socioeconomic conditions, but further entrench privilege under others—especially if the majority needs new government initiatives to mitigate effects of rising economic inequality and insecurity.

Indeed, in the final analysis, rising economic inequalities may have served primarily to counteract otherwise equalizing influences. As we have suggested, stasis in the situation of many African Americans may have resulted from the ways in which relative economic losses for less-privileged people have undercut the undoubted democratic gains of the Civil Rights movement.

An overriding theme of this volume is examination of the interconnections among economic and social inequalities, politics and governance, and public policies. This volume resists the all-too-common tendency of social science research to compartmentalize the study of American politics into discrete cubby holes (for research developments in political science see Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy 2004). We investigate the discrete aspects of American politics to assess the overall vitality and health of U.S. democracy in an age of rising inequality. Understanding the democratic political system requires persistent investigation into complex interrelationships with an eye toward consequences for society and polity.

The various ways in which rising inequality matters, either directly or indirectly, require careful unpacking with the benefit of the latest empirical research. The next three chapters make a solid start in pursuing such analyses, drawing together current findings from political science and neighboring disciplines. As the discussions of existing evidence and currently developed literatures make clear, the data we have to answer important questions are incomplete. Much additional theorizing and analysis remains for those who would unpack the complex, two-way relationships between socioeconomic change and politics. In our conclusion to this volume, we look toward the future, offering thoughts on the challenges that remain to be tackled by scholars determined to continue to probe the health and functioning of American democracy in an era of rising inequality.

NOTES

1. Nominated by Theda Skocpol, president of the American Political Science Association (APSA) from 2002 to 2003, and chaired by Lawrence Jacobs of the University of Minnesota, the Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy was appointed by the APSA in the fall of 2002. With support from the APSA and the Russell Sage Foundation, it began meeting in January 2003 and issued its report in June 2004. Fifteen scholars were appointed, of whom two were eventually unable to participate for personal reasons. In addition to Jacobs and Skocpol, the members were Ben Barber (University of Maryland); Larry Bartels (Princeton University); Morris Fiorina (Stanford University); Jacob Hacker (Yale University); Rodney Hero (Notre Dame University); Hugh Heclo (George Mason University); Suzanne Mettler (Syracuse University); Benjamin Page (Northwestern University); Dianne Pinderhughes (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign); Kay Lehman Schlozman (Boston College); and Sidney Verba (Harvard University).
2. Data on economic inequality has been collected from a number of authoritative sources including the U.S. government (for example, U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, and U.S. Internal Revenue Service) and the Luxembourg Income Study. Information on the distribution of income and other economic rewards in the United States can be found in Mishel, Bernstein, and Boushey (2003). Evidence that compares income and wealth distributions in the United States and other advanced-industrial democracies can be found in the Luxembourg Income Study (http://www.lisproject.org).
3. Unless otherwise noted, the next three paragraphs are based on Mishel, Bernstein, and Boushey (2003, 52–57, 86–94, 277–307, and table 1.8).
4. Although the Federal Reserve's Survey was conducted near the stock market's peak (1999), the value of the stock market remained at or near record levels even after its sharp decline (1999 to 2001) with the top 10 percent of households continuing to own over 69 percent of the country's net worth in 2001 compared to 2.8 percent among the bottom half, according to a study of the Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Consumer Finances (Kennickell 2003, table 5).
5. This analysis is based on Oliver and Shapiro (1997, 86–90, 96–103), a survey

of income and wealth among African Americans from 1987 to 1989. The survey shows that the median income for white households during that period was $25,384 as compared with $15,630 for their black counterparts; the net financial assets of whites was $43,800 compared with $3,700 for blacks. In terms of two-earner young couples (25 to 35 years old), white couples enjoyed a median income of $36,435 and a median net worth of $23,165 compared with an income of $29,377 for black couples and a net worth of $4,124.

6. Unless otherwise noted, the data cited in this paragraph is from NES. A valuable discussion of these patterns appears in Nye, Zelikow, and King (1997), especially the chapters by Gary Orren (1997), "Fall from Grace: The Public's Loss of Faith in Government," and Robert J. Blendon and others (1997), "Changing Attitudes in America."
7. 1995 survey is discussed in Blendon and others (1997, 210), and the 2000 poll was conducted by International Communications Research.
8. Most media discussion of turnout focuses on the number of ballots that are cast as a proportion of the number of individuals living in the United States who are 18 and older (Committee for the Study of the American Electorate 2004). The disenfranchisement of felons and other factors reduce the number of Americans who are actually eligible to vote (McDonald and Popkin 2001). Voter turnout in 2004 did rise, however, regardless of which method is used.
9. Relevant research is reviewed and synthesized in chapter 2. See especially Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995).
10. On the concept of policy feedback, see especially Hacker (2002); Heclo (1974); Mettler (2002) and Pierson (1993).
11. Many references appear in chapter 4. See also Freeman (1994) and Smeeding (2004).

REFERENCES

Ansolabehere, Stephen, John M. Figueiredo, and James M. Snyder. 2003. "Why Is There So Little Money in U.S. Politics?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(1): 105–30.

Bartels, Larry. 2002. "Economic Inequality and Political Representation." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, Mass. Available at: http://www.princeton.edu/~bartels/papers (accessed April 20, 2005).

Berry, Jeffrey M. 1999. *The New Liberalism: The Rising Power of Citizen Groups*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Blendon, Robert J., John M. Bensons, Richard Morin, Drew E. Altman, Mollyann Brodie, Marios Brossard, and Matt James. 1997. "Changing Attitudes in America." In *Why People Don't Trust Government*, edited by Joseph S. Nye Jr., Philip D. Zelikow, and David C. King. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Brady, Henry E. 2004. "An Analytical Perspective on Participatory Inequality and Income Inequality." In *Social Inequality*, edited by Kathryn M. Neckerman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Burtless, Gary. 1999. "Growing American Inequality: Sources and Remedies." In *Setting National Priorities: The 2000 Election and Beyond*, edited by Henry J. Aaron and Robert D. Reischauer. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Campbell, Andrea Louise. 2003. *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Committee for the Study of the American Electorate. 2004. "President Bush, Mobilization Drives, Propel Turnout to Post-1968 High." November. Available at: http://www.fairvote.org/reports/CSAE2004electionreport.pdf (accessed April 20, 2005).

Fiorina, Morris P. 1999. "Extreme Voices: A Dark Side of Civic Engagement." In *Civic Engagement in the United States*, edited by Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina. Washington, D.C., and New York: Brookings Institution Press and the Russell Sage Foundation.

Freeman, Richard, ed. 1994. *Working Under Different Rules.* A National Bureau of Economic Research project report. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

———. 2004. "What, Me Vote?" In *Social Inequality*, edited by Kathryn M. Neckerman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Gilens, Martin. 2003. "Unequal Responsiveness." Paper presented at conference on Inequality and American Democracy, Princeton University. November. Available at: http://www.princeton.edu/~csdp/events/pdfs/Gilens.pdf (accessed April 20, 2005).

Gopoian, J. David. 1984. "What Makes PACs Tick? An Analysis of the Allocation Patterns of Economic Interest Groups." *American Journal of Political Science* 28(2): 259–81.

Gottschalk, Peter. 1997. "Inequality, Income Growth, and Mobility: The Basic Facts." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 11(2): 21–40.

Hacker, Jacob S. 2002. *The Divided Welfare State: The Battle over Public and Private Benefits in the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hall, Richard L., and Frank W. Wayman. 1990. "Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees." *American Political Science Review* 84(3): 797–820

Heclo, Hugh. 1974. *Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden.* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.

Jacobs, Lawrence, and Benjamin Page. 2005. "Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy Over Time?" *American Political Science Review* 99(1): 107–24.

Kennickell, Arthur. 2003. "A Rolling Tide: Changes in the Distribution of Wealth in the U.S., 1989–2001." Federal Reserve Board, September 2003. Available at:

http://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/oss/oss2/papers/concentration.2001.10.pdf (accessed April 20, 2005).

Kroszner, Randall S., and Thomas Stratmann. 1998. "Interest Group Competition and the Organization of Congress: Theory and Evidence from Financial Services Political Action Committees." *American Economic Review* 88(5): 1163–87.

Langbein, Laura. 1986. "Money and Access: Some Empirical Evidence." *Journal of Politics* 48(4): 1052–62.

Leighley, Jan, and Jonathan Nagler. 1992. "Socioeconomic Class Bias in Turnout, 1964–1988: The Voters Remain the Same." *American Political Science Review* 86(3): 725–36.

McDonald, Michael P., and Samuel Popkin. 2001. "The Myth of the Vanishing Voter." *American Political Science Review* 95(4): 963–74.

Mettler, Suzanne. 2002. "Bringing the State Back In to Civic Engagement: Policy Feedback Effects of the G.I. Bill for World War II Veterans." *American Political Science Review* 96(2): 351–65.

Michaels, Walter Benn. 2004. "Diversity's False Solace." *New York Times Magazine*, April 11: 12–14.

Mishel, Larry, Jared Bernstein, and Heather Boushey. 2003. *The State of Working America, 2002–2003.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Nye, Joseph S., Jr., Philip D. Zelikow, and David C. King, eds. *Why People Don't Trust Government*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Oliver, Melvin, and Thomas Shapiro. 1997. *Black Wealth, White Wealth.* New York: Routledge.

Orren, Gary. 1997. "Fall from Grace: The Public's Loss of Faith in Government." In *Why People Don't Trust Government*, edited by Joseph S. Nye Jr., Philip D. Zelikow, and David C. King. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Page, Benjamin I., and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pierson, Paul. 1993. "When Effect Becomes Cause: Policy Feedback and Political Change." *World Politics* 45(4): 595–628.

Piketty, Thomas, and Emmanuel Saez. 2003. "Income Inequality in the United States, 1913–1998." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 118(1): 1–39.

Radcliff, Benjamin, and Patricia Davis. 2000. "Labor Organization and Electoral Participation in Industrial Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(1): 132–41.

Schier, Steven E. 2000. *By Invitation Only: The Rise of Exclusive Politics in the United States*. Pittsburgh, Penn.: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Skocpol, Theda. 2003. *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

———. 2004a. "Voice and Inequality: The Transformation of American Civic Democracy." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(1): 3–20.

———. 2004b. "Civic Transformation and Inequality in the Contemporary United

States." In *Social Inequality,* edited by Kathryn M. Neckerman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Skrentny, John D. 2002. *The Minority Rights Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Smeeding, Timothy. 2004. "Public Policy, Economic Inequality, and Poverty: The United States in Comparative Perspective." Revised version of paper presented at the conference on Inequality and American Politics, Maxwell School, Syracuse University (February). Available at: http://www-cpr.maxwell.syr.edu/faculty/smeeding/pdf/campbell%20paper_5.17.04.pdf (accessed April 21, 2005).

Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy. 2004. "American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(4): 651–66.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Weakliem, David L., Robert Andersen, and Anthony F. Heath. 2003. "The Directing Power? A Comparative Study of Public Opinion and Income Distribution." Unpublished paper, University of Connecticut, Storrs.

Wright, John R. 1985. "PACs, Contributions, and Roll Calls: An Organizational Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 79(2): 400–14.

———. 1990. "Contributions, Lobbying, and Committee Voting in the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 84(2): 417–38.