

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

SHOULD DIFFERENCES IN INCOME AND WEALTH MATTER?

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

SHOULD DIFFERENCES IN INCOME AND WEALTH MATTER?

Edited by

**Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, Jr.,
and Jeffrey Paul**



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, England
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne, Victoria 3166, Australia

Copyright © 2002 Social Philosophy and Policy Foundation

First published 2002

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Should differences in income and wealth matter? / edited by Ellen Frankel Paul,
Fred D. Miller, Jr., and Jeffrey Paul. p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-00535-3

1. Income distribution—Moral and ethical aspects. 2. Equality. 3. Social justice.

I. Paul, Ellen Frankel. II. Miller, Jr., Fred D. III. Paul, Jeffrey.

HB523 .S535 2002

339.2-dc21 2001043944

CIP

The essays in this book have also been published,
without introduction and index, in the semiannual journal
Social Philosophy & Policy, Volume 19, Number 1,
which is available by subscription.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**CONTENTS**

	Introduction	vii
	Acknowledgments	xvi
	Contributors	xvii
DANIEL SHAPIRO	Egalitarianism and Welfare-State Redistribution	1
TYLER COWEN	Does the Welfare State Help the Poor?	36
EDWARD N. WOLFF	The Stagnating Fortunes of the Middle Class	55
DONALD R. DEERE and FINIS WELCH	Inequality, Incentives, and Opportunity	84
YOUNG BACK CHOI	Misunderstanding Distribution	110
RICHARD A. EPSTEIN	Can Anyone Beat the Flat Tax?	140
RICHARD J. ARNESON	Why Justice Requires Transfers to Offset Income and Wealth Inequalities	172
JAMES K. GALBRAITH	The Importance of Being Sufficiently Equal	201
ALAN RYAN	Does Inequality Matter—For Its Own Sake?	225
DAVID SCHMIDTZ	Equal Respect and Equal Shares	244
RICHARD W. MILLER	Too Much Inequality	275
ERIC MACK	Equality, Benevolence, and Responsiveness to Agent-Relative Value	314
HILLEL STEINER	How Equality Matters	342
	Index	357

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

Is there a moral obligation to reduce differences in income and wealth? There is an egalitarian tradition that condemns these differences, particularly as they arise in free-market capitalist society, as unfair or unjust. The opponents of this view argue that the material disparities of capitalist society have been brought about by voluntary mechanisms and thus accord with the freely exercised liberties of its citizens. Hence, they conclude that capitalist inequality is not vulnerable to the ethical complaints of its critics. Furthermore, they maintain that the standard of living achieved as a by-product of the marketplace and its inequalities could not be adequately reproduced under egalitarian institutions.

The thirteen essays in this volume, written by prominent economists, philosophers, and academic lawyers, assess the empirical and theoretical questions raised by inequalities of income and wealth. Some of the essays consider empirical claims about the amount of equality in modern market economies, assessing the allegation that income and wealth have become more unequally distributed in the past quarter-century. Other essays consider the extent to which various government initiatives can ameliorate the problems inequality putatively poses. Some of the essays consider which standards of equality meet the requirements of distributive justice. Still others ask if inequality is intrinsically immoral regardless of its consequences.

The first two essays in this collection examine theoretical and practical considerations that arise from the welfare state's attempts to help the poor. In "Egalitarianism and Welfare-State Redistribution," Daniel Shapiro begins by noting that private charity is a serious rival to the welfare state. Contemporary egalitarians generally assume, however, that aiding those who are poor through no fault of their own requires government provision of aid. As welfare-state redistribution relies on coercive transfers, while private charity relies on voluntary transfers, Shapiro examines both sorts of aid provision by assessing the justness of each type of transfer. A system of coercive transfers takes some income and wealth that was accumulated through individuals' choices and voluntarily assumed risks, and this is unjust on egalitarian grounds. While a system of voluntary transfers will also involve injustice, since some who would be obligated to transfer income and wealth will not do so, egalitarians lack theoretical grounds for arguing that this injustice is worse than that associated with coercive transfers. Furthermore, Shapiro argues, private charities are more effective than state programs in helping those disadvantaged through no fault of their own. Unlike bureaucratic state agencies, private organizations have more flexibility in designing policies and

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

are better able to monitor their policies' effects. After laying out these arguments, Shapiro presents a pair of ways in which proponents of the welfare state might respond. Nongovernmental forms of aid, they could argue, cannot by themselves provide enough resources to alleviate the problems of poverty; alternatively, they might contend that welfare-state policies express a shared social commitment to justice that private charity fails to convey. In analyzing both of these claims, Shapiro argues that they suffer from serious flaws. As a result, he concludes, egalitarians should view a system of private charity in a much more favorable light.

In "Does the Welfare State Help the Poor?" Tyler Cowen considers how the American welfare state affects the poor. He first discusses the amount of money transferred to lower-income individuals, finding that it is small relative to the total stock of U.S. wealth. Those favoring the contemporary welfare state are, therefore, supporting an outcome that is not extremely egalitarian, nor does the system provide substantial aid to its recipients. While some conservatives and libertarians, led by the work of Charles Murray and others, claim that the welfare state has significant negative effects on aid recipients, Cowen contends that this argument suffers from poor empirical justification and relies on questionable theoretical assumptions. The *prima facie* belief that monetary transfers make recipients better off is, he says, a correct one, and the most plausible claim concerning the U.S. welfare state's effects on those it serves is that these effects are limited, but positive. But this, Cowen states, is not the end of the story, for the welfare state damages the interests of the poor—the poor more generally, not just current aid recipients—in two significant respects. First, economic growth is far better than the welfare state at lifting people out of poverty. As a result, to the extent that the welfare state lowers future levels of economic growth—and the evidence suggests that it does—people in the future will be worse off than they might have been. Second, the American welfare state operates without regard for much poorer individuals abroad. If the United States were truly egalitarian, it would reject its current welfare policies and instead send money to other nations, allow for significantly more immigration, or both. From these arguments concerning the future poor and the foreign poor, Cowen concludes that if the U.S. welfare state is to be defended, it must be done on non-egalitarian grounds.

The next three essays each use empirical data to reach different conclusions about the extent, direction, and desirability of inequality in the United States in the previous few decades. In "The Stagnating Fortunes of the Middle Class," Edward N. Wolff details a number of disturbing economic changes that the United States underwent in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Between 1973 and 1998, real wages declined by 9 percent. After doubling between 1947 and 1973, real median family income grew by only 12 percent in the next twenty-five years. Inequality of family income, which stood virtually unchanged between the end of World War

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

ix

II and the late 1960s, has been increasing sharply ever since. Though current policy discussions emphasize that we could increase income and reduce inequality by educating the labor force better, Wolff raises doubts about the efficacy of this potential solution. The problematic statistics just cited, Wolff points out, emerged as the United States underwent a significant rise in educational attainment. Even though average levels of education rose—and educational opportunities improved for societal groups that had historically lagged behind—these gains did not lead to a more equitable society. Wolff goes on to consider the claim that the stock market boom of the late 1990s led to wealth gains for the lower classes. Examining historical statistics on stock ownership, Wolff contends that the middle class and the poor by and large did not share in the benefits of that bull market. Faced with the increasing inequality of American society, and the fact that programs aimed at fostering educational advancement do not seem to effectively address this problem, Wolff closes his essay by advocating a different set of remedies: direct subsidies for the poorest Americans; tax relief for the middle class; and legal reforms to strengthen the labor movement.

Like Wolff, Donald R. Deere and Finis Welch begin their essay, “Inequality, Incentives, and Opportunity,” by noting recent increases in U.S. wage inequality. Nevertheless, they point out, people seem satisfied with the status quo. Why? Distinguishing opportunity from actual achievement, Deere and Welch suggest that what people truly care about is equality of opportunity. Surveying the empirical evidence on inequality of achievement, Deere and Welch argue that over the last thirty years, an increase in the wage differential between college graduates and high school graduates led to increased investment in education. This was good: unequal wages provided people with an incentive to act in ways that were more productive from a societal standpoint. Yet the authors point out that circumstances can create incentives that are more problematic. For example, because a social safety net lowers the relative value of work in comparison to unemployment, one should expect that the expansion of the U.S. welfare state in the 1960s would have reduced people’s incentive to work. In support of this expectation, Deere and Welch show that after the 1960s, employment among men with the lowest wage potential dropped. After making these points about inequality of achievement, the authors present empirical evidence on inequality of opportunity. The recent shrinking of the wage gaps between blacks and whites and between women and men implies, they contend, that wage differences emerge more from differences in individual actions than from uncontrollable individual characteristics. Economic opportunity, in other words, has become more equal. Given that inequality of achievement is not necessarily a bad thing, and that equality of opportunity has increased, Deere and Welch conclude that the economic changes in the United States over the past thirty years have been largely for the good.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

In “Misunderstanding Distribution,” Young Back Choi notes that social critics in the United States are much more concerned than the general public is about unequal distribution of income and wealth. For these critics, Choi claims, inequality is wrong and undesirable, and collective action is needed to reduce it. Choi attributes these critics’ concerns to three perceptions: that the United States has excessive inequality, that the competition displayed in the marketplace is rigged to favor the rich, and that inequality is unjust. Drawing on empirical evidence, Choi contests each of these claims. First, he argues that the critics’ estimates of the extent of income and wealth inequality are exaggerated. Once biases built into the data are properly accounted for—that is, once we adjust for factors such as household size, income fluctuations, and so on—we find that estimates of income inequality drop. Likewise, differences in wealth look smaller once we account for things like the value of entitlement programs and of human capital. Turning to the second claim, Choi points out that the critics’ assertions that the marketplace is unfair revolve around certain empirical beliefs—namely, that income and wealth are becoming increasingly polarized over time, and that income mobility is relatively low. Yet Choi suggests that inequality, after rising in the 1980s and early 1990s, has remained relatively stable; furthermore, income mobility is quite high. Lastly, he addresses the claim that inequality is unjust. Here, Choi argues that social critics find inequality of income and wealth to be a sign of injustice because they fail to appreciate how profit comes about and how the quest for profits benefits society. Choi concludes his essay by briefly noting that critics’ misunderstandings on all of these matters are paired with another important misunderstanding: the critics fail to adequately consider the dire economic consequences that a nation would suffer were it to attempt to engage in thoroughgoing equalization of income and wealth.

One tool governments use in trying to reduce inequality is progressive taxation. In “Can Anyone Beat the Flat Tax?” Richard A. Epstein explores the pros and cons of the flat tax, progressive taxation’s most prominent rival in recent years, and determines that it fares well as a matter of both equity and efficiency. Ordinary private firms use flat systems of assessment to support their own collective expenditures. They do this because flat systems offer overall administrative simplicity: while it might be “fairer” to try to make each individual’s payment into a venture correspond to the subjective value he derives from it, this goal is difficult to accomplish in practice. Dividing a venture’s costs in a flat fashion, though perhaps less fair, is vastly easier, and such a system’s increased ease may well compensate for its lower degree of fairness. The flat tax would serve the same goal in the public arena, where it would be superior to the more complex taxation arrangements presently in place. The flat tax represents a rough effort to tax citizens in proportion to the benefits that they receive from government. Yet at the same time, the flat tax also allows for limited

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

amounts of redistribution based on need. Proponents of progressive taxation argue that a flat tax does not generate an optimal level of redistribution. However, even if we put aside important questions about a state's right to coercively redistribute its citizens' assets, Epstein claims, progressive taxation's proponents will have a difficult time showing that the costs of their system, in terms of harmful incentives and administrative expenses, will outweigh its redistributive benefits. The flat tax's overall simplicity makes it a suitable replacement: though it might not be the ideal system in theory, our real-world circumstances make it extremely attractive.

Even if we could agree on which method of redistributing resources was the most practical, this would still leave open to question who ought to be helped and the extent to which they should be aided. In "Why Justice Requires Transfers to Offset Income and Wealth Inequalities," Richard J. Arneson examines two candidate principles of justice, exploring their plausibility in light of their implications. According to "sufficientarianism," justice requires that as many people as possible, of all those who will ever live, experience a "good enough" quality of life. In contrast, "prioritarianism" asserts that justice requires us to maximize a function of human well-being that gives more weight to securing gains in well-being for those who are worse off. Arneson argues that the prioritarian view is the superior of the two. Intuitively, it seems plausible to deny, as sufficientarians do, that how one's condition compares to that of others is in itself morally important. Yet sufficientarianism runs into trouble on a number of levels. First, it is difficult to specify a nonarbitrary definition of the good-enough quality of life. Examining the efforts of prominent sufficientarians such as Michael Walzer and Martha Nussbaum, Arneson argues that their accounts, the most plausible in the literature, fail. Second, even if it were possible to devise a satisfactory definition of the good-enough quality of life, the sufficientarian doctrine generates counterintuitive conclusions. A committed sufficientarian gives lexical priority to ensuring that people have good-enough lives, and it is easy to construct hypothetical cases that make this lexical priority look unappealing. Though one can construct modified versions of sufficientarianism that deal with this latter problem, Arneson argues that these versions themselves face serious problems of their own. After rejecting sufficientarianism, Arneson briefly discusses his preferred version of prioritarianism, which gives special attention to helping not simply those who are worse off, but those who are worse off through no fault of their own.

In "The Importance of Being Sufficiently Equal," James K. Galbraith analyzes the reasons why inequalities of income and wealth are bad. Looking first at income inequality, Galbraith argues that because income inequality is associated with high rates of poverty, it is aesthetically ugly. Furthermore, more equal societies have less unemployment, less crime, and better public services. Why, given this, do we accept inequality?

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Galbraith suggests that we do so because of the influence of the textbook view of economics, according to which attempts by government to reduce inequality create market inefficiencies and unemployment. But this textbook view is based on unrealistic assumptions, and we should be wary about drawing policy conclusions based on them. If there is no general reason in economic theory to favor large amounts of income inequality, the question becomes whether reducing such inequality would really have harmful effects. Canvassing studies of the United States, Europe, and developing nations, Galbraith argues that high levels of income inequality in fact retard economic growth. Fortunately, the means to ensuring that incomes remain relatively equal are straightforward—a minimum wage, progressive taxation, social security programs, and publicly funded education and health care. Turning to differences in wealth, Galbraith suggests that the problems that arise from this sort of inequality are political in nature. Societies with highly unequal wealth, he argues, are always dominated by the rich, and cannot function as coherent social units or govern themselves on legitimate terms. Political decisions reached in such systems will generally favor the wealthy and organized, at the expense of the common good. As a result, Galbraith maintains, for a collection of people to be considered a society, and to function together as a democracy, they must exhibit a sufficient degree of wealth equality. To accomplish this, a society must provide forms of capital wealth that everyone in the society can hold. Expanding access to social security wealth, home ownership, and education are key to a more egalitarian distribution of wealth.

The effect of inequality on society is also the focal point of the next essay. In “Does Inequality Matter—For Its Own Sake?” Alan Ryan starts from the presumption that the answer to that question is no. Several reasons support this presumption; each is connected to the idea that it seems absurd to secure literal equality of treatment where this is obviously wasteful—doing so does no good to any of the parties whose welfare is being compared. Once we tentatively reject the claim that inequality is inherently bad, a further assessment of why inequality matters requires an examination of inequality’s impacts. Ryan proceeds by surveying several effects of inequality. According to Rousseau, Ryan notes, inequality has serious psychological effects on people: because of the way human nature combines elements of animal instinct with higher-order rational thought, inequality creates in us a psychological war of all against all. Furthermore, inequality has effects on political life as well. Numerous theorists have discussed how inequalities of income and wealth lead to inequalities in individuals’ political power. Lastly, Ryan considers certain economic effects of inequality. Principally, he argues, it can lead to markets ignoring the desires of the poor because the purchasing power of the wealthy makes it uneconomic to attend to those desires. These effects and others suggest that inequality is problematic, but none demonstrates that

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xiii

inequality is inherently bad. Inequality, then, does not seem to matter for its own sake. Ryan ends his essay, however, by suggesting one way in which inequality might be intrinsically harmful. In a social context marked by a strong sense of fraternity and a mutual commitment by people to one another's well-being, equality could have an intrinsic value as the expression of that commitment. The possibility of creating and sustaining this sort of society is, however, another matter entirely.

The collection's final four essays each assess other theoretical aspects of egalitarian thought. Rawls contended that even under extreme egalitarian assumptions, unequal shares can be justified. David Schmidtz's essay, "Equal Respect and Equal Shares," provides the complementary argument that even within an otherwise nonegalitarian theory of justice, there is room for distributing some things according to an "equal shares" principle. He begins by briefly noting the virtues of allocating certain goods into equal shares. Schmidtz refers here to a story used by political theorist Bruce Ackerman: if you and I happen upon an apple tree with two apples, and you take both of them, it seems intuitively compelling that you've done something wrong—I should have received one of the apples. Though intuitively compelling, this equal-shares aspect of egalitarianism is not egalitarianism's most important component, Schmidtz maintains. Though the equal-shares principle's usefulness in certain sorts of cases ensures that the principle will play at least some role in any adequate theory of justice, the key commitment of contemporary egalitarianism is not to an equal-shares principle, but to a principle of equal respect. Important as each of these aspects of egalitarian thought is, Schmidtz argues, a proper account of justice ultimately will also make room for a rule of first possession; it will have to, not because that rule is necessarily a principle of justice in its own right, but because society would not be viable without it. The upshot of Schmidtz's pluralistic account of justice is a conception that makes room for egalitarian principles, but also acknowledges that they have limits.

In "Too Much Inequality," Richard W. Miller begins by noting that typical arguments egalitarians used in the 1970s and 1980s have fallen on tough times. Key premises common to these arguments no longer appear reasonable. Rather than give up on egalitarianism, Miller suggests that we adopt a "fragmented" view of its foundations. On this view, reasons to reduce economically based inequalities of various kinds emerge not from a single overarching argument, but from aspects of various specific relationships among parties who are unequal. Miller examines three such relationships. First, when citizens impose rules of self-advancement that give rise to lesser life prospects for some, the disadvantaged have reason to complain. Second, when government policies fail to show equal concern for all citizens in providing economic benefits, those whose relevant needs are neglected have reason to object. Finally, people sharing a social environment can find that economic inequalities conflict with the aspira-

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

tion to milieus that facilitate mutual appreciation and acceptance, both in political life and in personal interactions. In each of these three situations, terms of interaction provide certain people with morally serious reasons to object that a particular kind of inequality is too great; however, in all of these situations, the terms of interaction also give others—namely, those who benefit from the inequalities—morally serious reasons to object to remedies as going too far in pursuit of greater equality. In each case, the inequality that is ultimately at issue is not one of income or wealth. Nevertheless, the reduction of income and wealth inequalities is an important part of the pursuit of economic justice—above all, because it is appropriate to use monetary indices to monitor progress in reducing the primary inequalities. Miller concludes his essay by claiming that justice currently demands the reduction of inequalities in the United States on all the dimensions he explores, and that income and wealth inequalities are a sign of the need for such political measures and an appropriate gauge of their success.

Eric Mack's contribution, "Equality, Benevolence, and Responsiveness to Agent-Relative Value," begins with Mack's contention that differences in income and wealth matter morally only if they generate differences in well-being that themselves matter morally. On Mack's understanding, these differences matter morally only if they are inherently morally problematic, a condition that is met only if morality includes a strong presumption on behalf of an equal distribution among individuals of what really matters in life. It is difficult, however, to find any plausible argument for the inclusion within morality of such a presumption. Mack's essay explores two arguments for the presumption, both of which assert that it is an essential part of the best explanation for the goodness and reasonableness of benevolence. The "impersonalist argument" maintains that benevolence's goodness and reasonableness is best explained if one invokes the impersonal value of every individual's well-being. The easiest way to do this, the argument suggests, is to accept egalitarianism. The "pretheoretical argument" removes the impersonalist argument's intermediate step: it asserts that egalitarianism itself is the best explanation of our positive view of benevolence, and that this makes egalitarianism inherently plausible. Both arguments, Mack notes, depend on an impersonalist conception of benevolence, and thus would be undercut by an alternative conception of benevolence under which benevolence consists of a personally valuable responsiveness to the personal good of others. To the extent that this personalist account of benevolence is better than the impersonalist account—and Mack thinks that it is clearly superior—both of the major arguments supporting the egalitarian presumption fail.

In this collection's final essay, "How Equality Matters," Hillel Steiner considers how much egalitarian redistribution is justifiable if one respects a libertarian commitment to self-ownership. He begins by noting the common view that some moral value attaches to the "sibling parity" of

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xv

wealth. This notion of parity refers to the intuition that a set of parents with several children should act to ensure that, all other things being equal, their children enjoy equal well-being. Using sibling parity as our backdrop, we can consider various ideas about which disparities of wealth are permissible. Steiner states that the crucial issue for those interested in our moral responsibilities is how we ought to deal with differences in well-being created by bad luck that individuals suffer through no fault of their own. Assessing this “brute bad luck,” Steiner argues that we must see it as caused by the doings of nature—no one is liable for them. If an individual is not compensated for the losses suffered due to brute bad luck, he is effectively being held liable for something for which he is not really responsible. As a result, if we are to ensure that liability for adversities will adequately track personal responsibility, we must pool the costs of those adversities that occur as a result of brute bad luck. This idea, Steiner suggests, is perfectly compatible with libertarianism, and motivates the egalitarian provisions of Locke’s famous “enough and as good” proviso on the ownership of natural resources. Though Steiner’s discussion of these points emerges in an overall framework of sibling parity, Steiner ends his essay by observing that there is no obvious reason why parity of wealth among nonsiblings should not also be subject to the considerations that emerge in the sibling context.

How we should measure and evaluate differences of income and wealth, and what, if anything, we should do about them, rank among the most contentious questions in contemporary political philosophy. The thirteen essays in this volume, written from diverse viewpoints, provide valuable contributions to these ongoing debates.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editors wish to acknowledge several individuals at the Social Philosophy and Policy Center, Bowling Green State University, who provided invaluable assistance in the preparation of this volume. They include Mary Dilsaver, Terrie Weaver, and Carrie-Ann Khan.

The editors would like to extend special thanks to Publication Specialist Tamara Sharp, for attending to the innumerable day-to-day details of the book's preparation; and to Managing Editor Matthew Buckley, for providing dedicated assistance throughout the editorial and production process.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTRIBUTORS

Daniel Shapiro is Associate Professor of Philosophy at West Virginia University. He has published articles in social and political philosophy on such topics as rights theory, liberalism, communitarianism, free speech, drug policy, Social Security, and national health insurance. He is currently at work on a book, *Justice, Community, and Efficiency: Can the Welfare State Be Justified?* in which he compares welfare-state institutions and free-market alternatives with respect to the central values of contemporary political philosophy.

Tyler Cowen is Professor of Economics at George Mason University, where he holds the Holbert C. Harris Chair in Economics. He is also General Director of the Mercatus Center and General Director of the James M. Buchanan Center for Political Economy. He has published in such economics and philosophy journals as the *American Economic Review*, the *Journal of Political Philosophy*, *Ethics*, and *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. He is the author of two books on the economics of culture, *In Praise of Commercial Culture* (1998) and *What Price Fame?* (2000); his next book, *Minerva's Owl: The Sources of Creative Global Culture*, is forthcoming from Princeton University Press.

Edward N. Wolff is Professor of Economics at New York University, where he has taught since 1974. He is also a Senior Scholar at the Jerome Levy Economics Institute at Bard College, Managing Editor of the *Review of Income and Wealth*, and Vice President of the Eastern Economics Association. His principal research interests are productivity growth and income and wealth distribution. He is the author of *Growth, Accumulation, and Unproductive Activity* (1987) and *Top Heavy: A Study of Increasing Inequality of Wealth in America* (1996), and is a coauthor of *Productivity and American Leadership* (with William J. Baumol and Sue Anne Batey Blackman, 1989) and *Competitiveness, Convergence, and International Specialization* (with David Dollar, 1993).

Donald R. Deere is Associate Professor of Economics at Texas A&M University, and also teaches in the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. His research interests are in labor economics, with particular emphasis on government labor-market policies and their impact on wages and employment, education-system incentives, and wage inequality. His research has been published in various economics journals, including the *American Economic Review*, the *Journal of Political Economy*, the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, and the *Journal of Labor Economics*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTRIBUTORS

Finis Welch is Distinguished Professor of Economics and George T. and Gladys H. Abell Professor of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University. His early studies of income changes among blacks and whites over time have played a role in advancing understanding of how the incomes of minorities are affected by education, affirmative action, and business conditions. More recently, he has published work on the growth, in the U.S. economy, of both wage inequality and the value of skill.

Young Back Choi is Professor of Economics and Finance at St. John's University. He is the author of *Paradigms and Conventions: Uncertainty, Decision Making, and Entrepreneurship* (1993), and a coeditor of *Economic and Political Reforms in Asia* (with Thomas Chen and Sung Lee, 1992), *Financial and Economic Integration in Asia* (with Thomas Chen and K. Thomas Liaw, 1993), and *Borderlands of Economics* (with Nahid Aslanbeigui, 1997). He has also published articles in such journals as *Kyklos*, *Constitutional Political Economy*, and *History of Political Economy*.

Richard A. Epstein is James Parker Hall Distinguished Service Professor of Law at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *Forbidden Grounds: The Case against Employment Discrimination* (1992), *Simple Rules for a Complex World* (1995), *Mortal Peril: Our Inalienable Right to Health Care?* (1997), and *Principles for a Free Society: Reconciling Individual Liberty with the Common Good* (1998). He is an editor of the *Journal of Law and Economics* and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Richard J. Arneson is Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, San Diego, where he was department chair from 1992 to 1996. His teaching and research interests are in the areas of political and moral philosophy. He has published essays recently in *Ethics*, the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, *Philosophical Issues*, *Social Theory and Practice*, the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, and *Social Philosophy and Policy*.

James K. Galbraith is Professor of Public Affairs and Government at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs and the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin. He is also Director of the University of Texas Inequality Project and a Senior Scholar at the Jerome Levy Economics Institute at Bard College; he previously served as Executive Director of the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress. The author of *Created Unequal: The Crisis in American Pay* (2000), he is also a coeditor of *Inequality and Industrial Change: A Global View* (2001).

Alan Ryan is Warden of New College, Oxford University. He is the author of *Property* (1987), *Russell: A Political Life* (1993), *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (1995), and *Liberal Anxieties and Liberal Education* (1998); he is also the editor of *Mill: A Critical Edition* (1997).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-00535-7 - Should Differences in Income and Wealth Matter?

Edited by Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTRIBUTORS

David Schmidtz is Professor of Philosophy and Joint Professor of Economics at the University of Arizona. He is the author of *Rational Choice and Moral Agency* (1995) and a coauthor of *Social Welfare and Individual Responsibility* (with Robert Goodin, 1998). He is also the editor of *Robert Nozick* (2001) and a coeditor of *Environmental Ethics: What Really Works* (with Elizabeth Willott, 2001).

Richard W. Miller is Professor of Philosophy at Cornell University. His writings in social and political philosophy, ethics, epistemology, the philosophy of science, and aesthetics include numerous articles as well as three books: *Analyzing Marx* (1984), *Fact and Method* (1987), and *Moral Differences* (1992).

Eric Mack is Professor of Philosophy at Tulane University, where he is also a faculty member at the Murphy Institute of Political Economy. He has published numerous articles in moral, political, and legal philosophy in various scholarly anthologies as well as in *Ethics*, the *Journal of Ethics*, the *Monist*, *Nous*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, and *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. He has compiled new editions of Auberon Herbert's *The Right and Wrong of Compulsion by the State*, and *Other Essays* (1978) and Herbert Spencer's *Man versus the State, with Six Essays on Government, Society, and Freedom* (1981).

Hillel Steiner is Professor of Political Philosophy in the Department of Government at the University of Manchester, and a Fellow of the British Academy. He is the author of *An Essay on Rights* (1994) and a coauthor of *A Debate over Rights: Philosophical Enquiries* (with Matthew Kramer and Nigel Simmonds, 1998). He is also a coeditor of *Freedom and Trade* (with Geraint Parry, 1998), *The Origins of Left-Libertarianism: An Anthology of Historical Writings* (with Peter Vallentyne, 2000), and *Left-Libertarianism and Its Critics: The Contemporary Debate* (with Peter Vallentyne, 2000). His current research interests include the application of libertarian principles to global, and to genetic, inequalities.