

In analyzing all the readings this week, I found them all to be very eye opening pertaining to the numerous problems our current society has with poverty and equality. However, I did find particular interest in the reading by Shapiro and his ways of relating inheritances to privilege in America. The part in which I found most interesting was that throughout the interviews conducted, these people were very open to indicating that they had in fact been given financial support through either a parent or grandparents. But when these couples were asked in different ways how they obtained more of their prized possessions (houses, vehicles, support of children, etc.) many were quick to turn to the notion that “we worked for it.” (Shapiro, 79). Given the statistics in this reading I am obviously referring primarily to middle class white families as provoked by Shapiro. As his reading and others indicated, there are many factors that play into this societal predicament. On page 75 of Shapiro he says that, “Americans believe in a strict form of meritocracy that mandates that we should only get what we earn through ability and effort.” (Shapiro,75).

Having read the interviews conducted, I feel like this contradicts the majority of what these couples had to say about their current state in society and how it was achieved. It was hard for me to wrap my head around this. I think it was mostly because of its accuracy. To me personally, I think this makes these families oblivious to what is happening in the rest of the world restricting their ability to consider people who cannot even have GOVERNMENT support because they have an INCREASE in income (“Cliff Effect”, Prenevost and Youngblood). In an article I found online referring to a summarization of an economic book written by Thomas Piketty, the author (Paul Mason) uses relentless logic stating, “Inherited wealth will always grow faster than earned wealth. So the fact that rich kids can swan aimlessly from gap year to internship to a job at father's bank/ministry/TV network – while the poor kids sweat into their barista uniforms – is not an accident: it is the system working normally.”. Paul Mason goes on to use many more points from Piketty’s new book in an overall dispute toward the negative direction capitalism has us headed toward today.

Individuals cannot help where or what kind of financial or social class they are born in to, everyone knows this. Having been through these analytical readings and seeing the current trends in our society that dictate the direction we are heading because of social inequality (stemming from various reasons), which theories or ideas mentioned do you think serve as a primary contributor to poverty in America and more importantly what do you think can be done to conduct positive modification toward poverty in our “rich” society?

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/apr/28/thomas-piketty-capital-surprise-bestseller>