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About Birmingham Policy Commission IV

The Distribution of Wealth in the UK

The fourth Birmingham Policy Commission explored dimensions of the distribution of wealth in the UK, reviewing existing knowledge on wealth inequality and questioning the extent to which such inequality is a problem.

Background

The level of wealth inequality in the UK is extremely high and, in the current Global Financial Crisis, public attention is increasingly turning to the top 1 per cent who now own approximately one fifth of all personal wealth in the UK. The recent Occupy protestors have used the phrase 'we are the 99 per cent' to draw attention to the very wealthiest and this slogan has started to enter more mainstream discussion. While the top 1 per cent has received most attention, wealth is also concentrated among the top 10 per cent who now own 100 times more wealth than the bottom 10 per cent.

Birmingham Policy Commission on the Distribution of Wealth in the UK

This Commission, chaired by the Right Reverend David Urquhart, Lord Bishop of Birmingham, reviewed existing knowledge about the distribution of personal wealth across different groups in UK society, focusing on three particular kinds of personal wealth:

- Pensions
- Housing/property
- Financial savings/investments

The Commission's focus included -

- The extent to which, and the ways in which, the unequal distribution of wealth may be a problem for individuals and the economy
- Whether the unequal distribution of wealth is beneficial, for example, through providing incentives for entrepreneurial job creation
- Opportunities to accumulate wealth in the UK
- The relationship between wealth inequality and socio-economic problems and social divisions

Policy options are presented in light of the Commission's findings.

Learn more about this Policy Commission

- **Find out who the Commissioners were (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/wealth/members-of-the-commission.aspx)**
- **Policy Commission at the Conservative Party Conference (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/wealth/commission-launch.aspx)**
- **Watch Commissioners discuss their motivations for participating in the work of the Wealth Commission (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/wealth/commissioner-comments.aspx)**

This Policy Commission was jointly led by **Professor Karen Rowlingson (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/social-policy/rowlingson-karen.aspx)** and **Professor Andrew Mullineux (/research/impact/policy-commissions/wealth/commissioners/andy-mullineux.aspx) (http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/karen-rowlingson/policy-commission-on-uk-wealth-distribution-get-involved)**

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