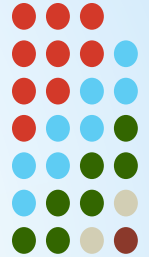




Being a Social Class Ally for Social Justice



General Assembly

Thursday, June 25, 2020

#uclasstories

Rev. Kimberly Johnson, Denise Moorehead
Diane Pansire, Rev. Megan Visser

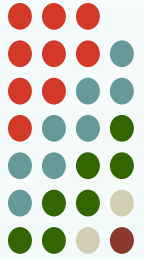
Funded by the Unitarian Universalism Funding Program and the New York State Convention of Universalists

UU Class Conversations

More at www.uclasconversations.org



UU Principle

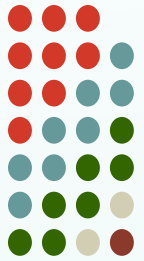


Third Principle

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations



Finding Class Background

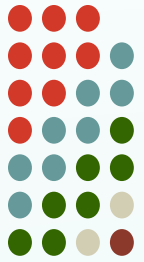


We will look at four different sets of what we at UU-CC call class indicators with corresponding numbers from 1-4. Think back to your life at 12 years old. That's the age when we begin to formulate our own world view. As I read each indicator, listen for the one that best describes your experience at 12 and write down the number that goes with that indicator.

Based on the activity *Four Corners* created by Betsy Leondar-Wright, PhD



Finding Class Background



Housing

- If you grew up in subsidized or poorly maintained rental housing, frequent moves due to \$ problems, or homelessness, **Write NUMBER 1**
- If you grew up in rented housing or modest homeownership, **Write NUMBER 2**
- If you grew up in a home your family owned, with trading up to bigger houses as an option, **Write NUMBER 3**
- If you grew up in a luxurious home and/or had multiple homes, a summer home, etc., **Write NUMBER 4**



Finding Class Background

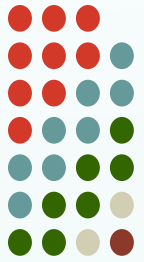


Caregivers' Employment

- If your parent's/caregiver's income was from hourly wages or from a very small business where they were a hands-on proprietor, **Write NUMBER 2**
- If your parent's/caregiver's income was from a salary or professional fees that afforded more than basic comforts, **Write NUMBER 3**
- If your parent's/caregiver's income was primarily from investments (w/ or w/out salary/ professional fees too), **Write NUMBER 4**
- If your parent/caregiver did not have steady work and/or their income was from from public assistance &/or charity, **Write NUMBER 1**



Finding Class Background



Caregivers' Education

- If your parent/caregiver went to elite private schools and colleges, **Write NUMBER 4**
- If your parent/caregiver had less than a high school education or earned a GED later in life, **Write NUMBER 1**
- If your parent/caregiver had a high school education or HS and vocational training or a paraprofessional certificate, **Write NUMBER 2**
- If your parent/caregiver had a college education or BA+ professional degree, **Write NUMBER 3**



Class Demographics



Comparison of:	U.S. Households	Unitarian Universalists
Housing/ Homeownership	66% own homes	77% own homes
Employment/ Income	33% have professional-management positions/average income: \$61,000	> 50% have professional-management positions/average income: \$79,000
Education	Fewer than 63% of adults have attended college 13% have an advanced degree (up from 8.6 % 20 yrs ago)	90% attended college 36% have an advanced degree (down from 52% 20 yrs ago)



Class Background Groups-A



- 1. Chronic poverty** (~5% of the general population)
- 2. Settled-living working class** (~60% of the general population)
- 3. Professional middle class** (~30% of the general population)
- 4. Owning class** (~5% of the general population)

Persistent poverty and working but still poor: Less than a high school education. Outside the mainstream labor market, with significant unmet basic needs. May experience periods of homelessness, live in substandard housing, or seek public housing and other forms of assistance.

Working class: High school degree and sometimes vocational education. In supervised wage jobs or hands-on small business. Renting or modest homeownership. *from our partner Class Action*



Class Background Groups-B



Lower middle class: Relatively stable and decent-paying working-class jobs or small businesses. May live in marginally middle-class neighborhoods, but lack social and occupational prestige.

Professional middle class: Four-year college degree or more and in professional/managerial jobs with relatively more autonomy and often higher income and security. Homeownership in safe community with good schools.

Upper middle class: College and graduate degree or business success, enabling home ownership in communities with excellent schools. Trading up to bigger homes.

Owning class: Elite private schools and colleges. Enough income-producing assets to not *need* to work, and with multiple homes or a luxury home.



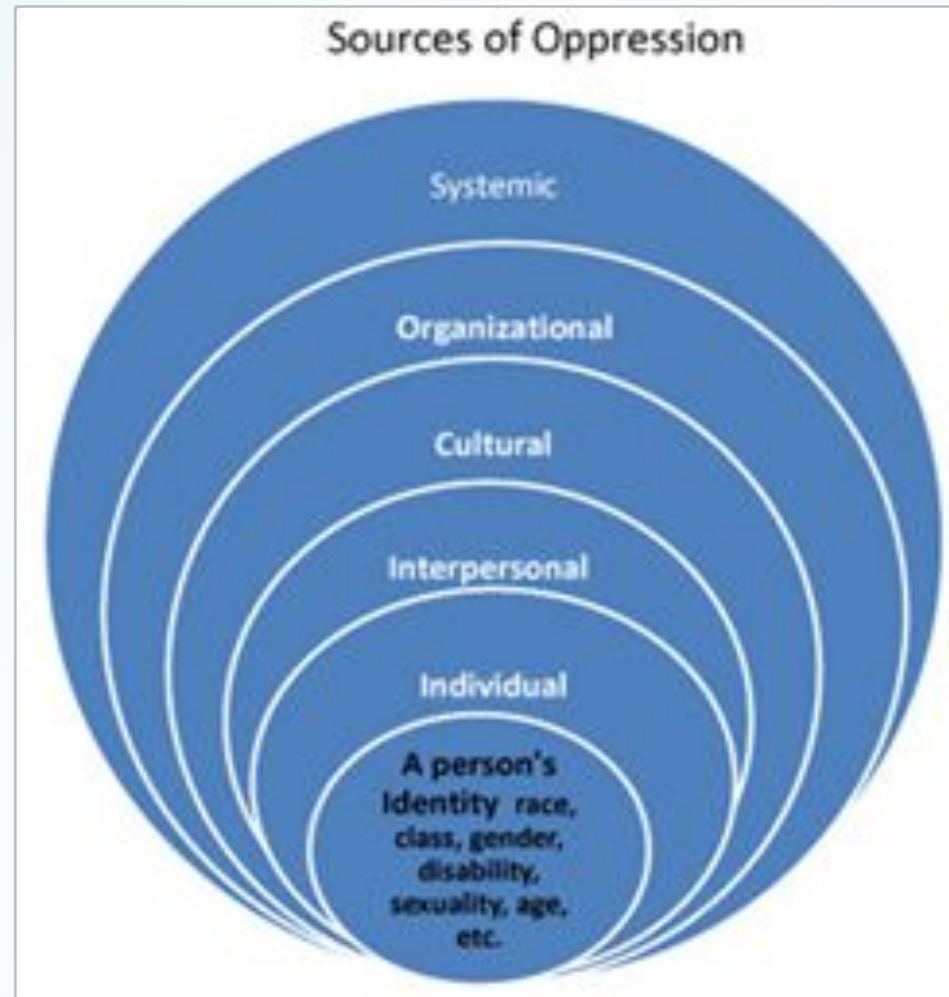
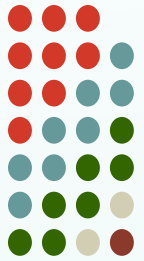
What Is Class/Classism?



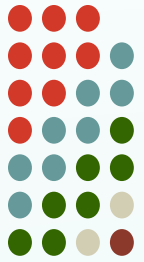
Class is the relative social rank assigned to people in terms of income, education, wealth, status/position, power and aspirations. Class is comprised of capital: **economic, cultural and social**. Class affects people not only on an economic level, but also *emotionally*.

Classism is the result of institutional, cultural and individual practices and beliefs that assign more or less value to people according to their socioeconomic class; **and** the economic system that creates excessive inequality and causes basic human needs to go unmet. *Definitions from our partner Class Action*

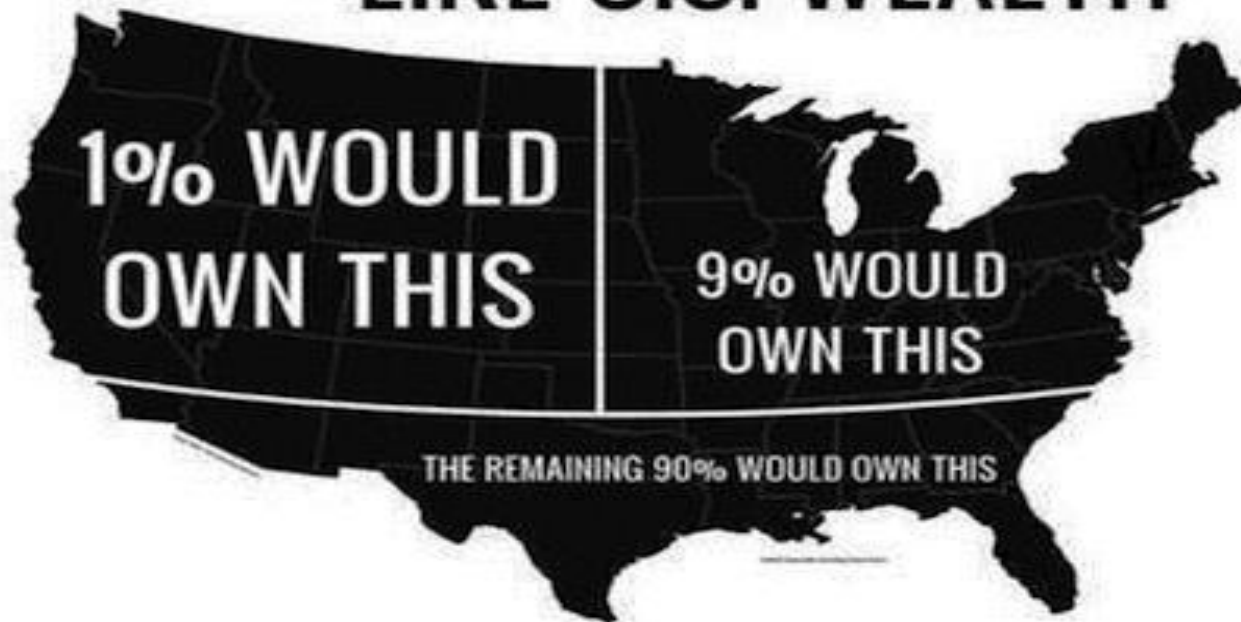
Circles of Oppression



Economic Inequality

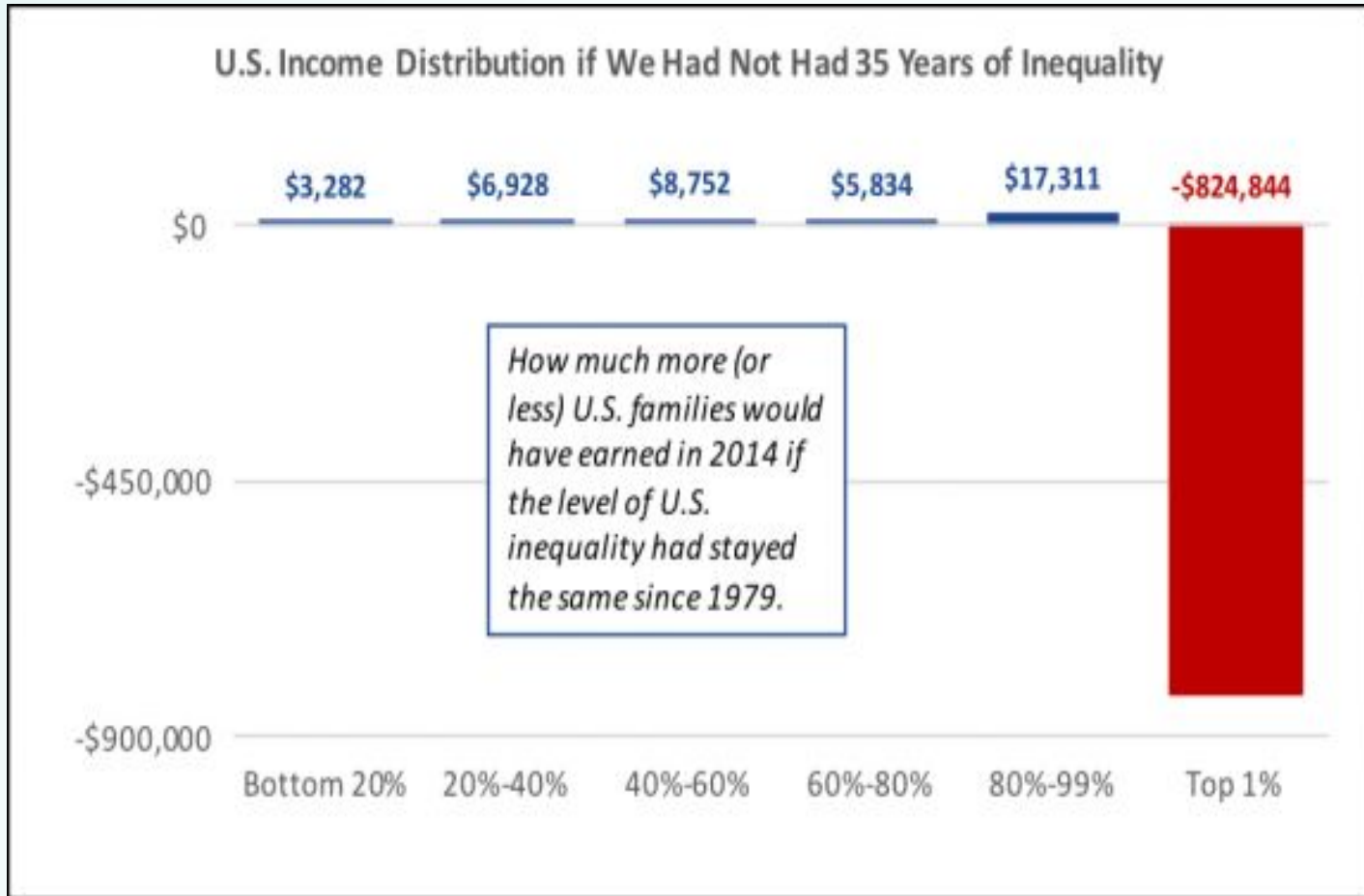
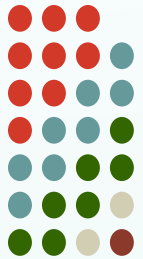


**IF U.S. LAND WERE DIVIDED
LIKE U.S. WEALTH**

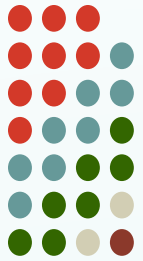




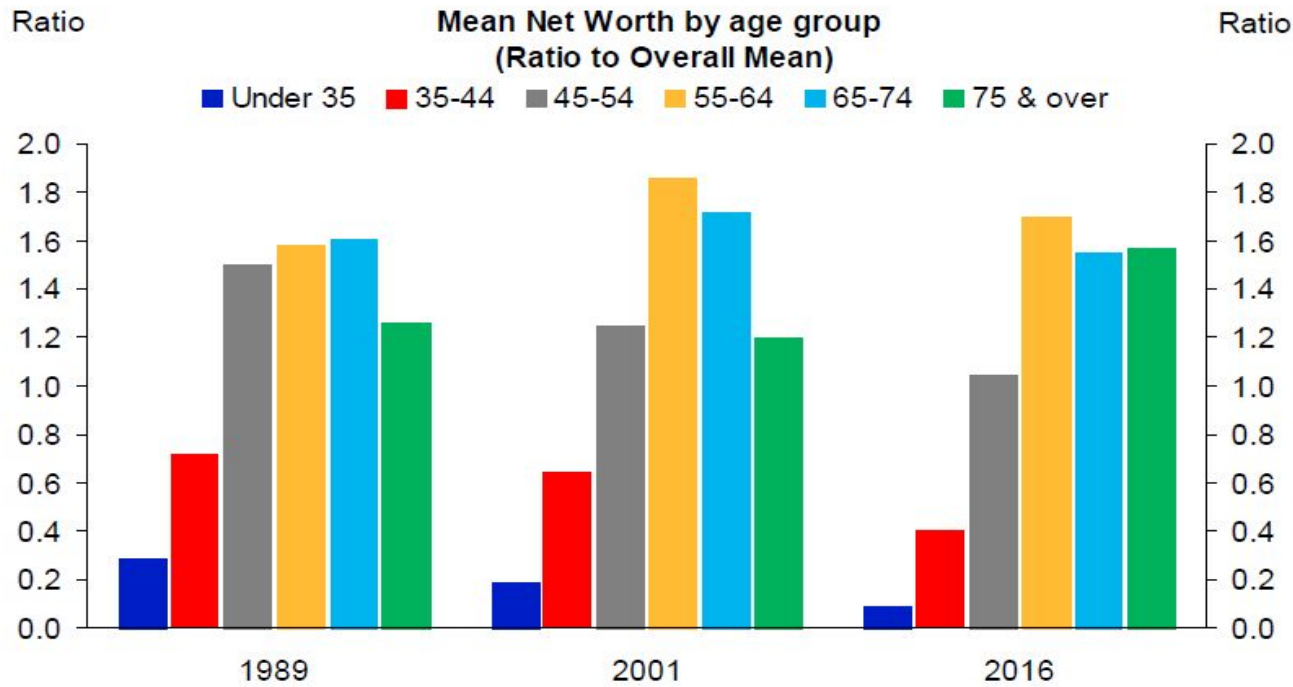
Rising Inequality



Generational Inequity



Younger generations have smaller and smaller net worth



Source: Edward N. Wolff (2017) . Survey of Consumer Finances, DB Global Markets Research

Rising Inequality After Pandemic

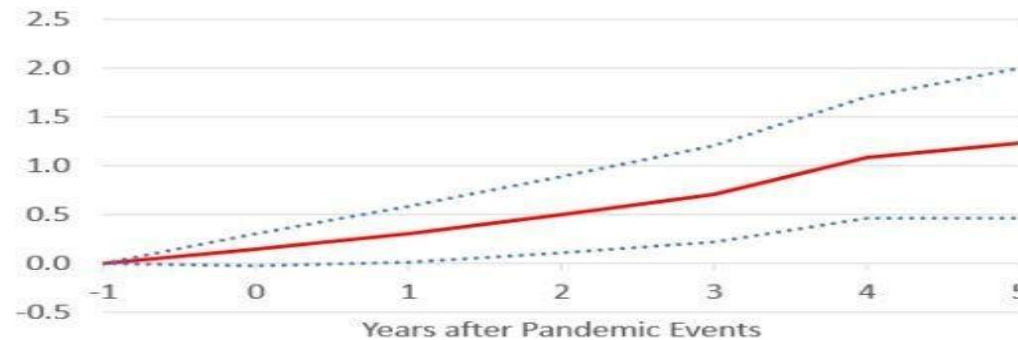


The Gap Widens

Pandemics progressively widen the gap between rich and poor, as measured by the net Gini coefficient, a common measure of inequality.

Average response (with associated confidence bands) of the net Gini to a pandemic for 175 countries, 1961–2017.

(change in Gini net, percent)

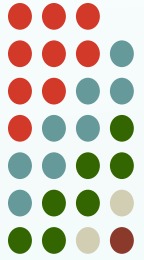


Source: Furceri, Loungani, Ostry, and Pizzuto (2020).

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND



Class Privilege

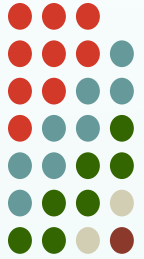


1. Politicians pay attention to your class, and fight for your vote in election seasons.
2. You can readily find accurate (or non-caricatured) examples of members of your class depicted in films, television, and other media.
3. You have access to funds (gifts or loans) to own a home or get higher education
4. If you become sick, you can seek medical care immediately and not just “hope it goes away.”

(Sam Killermann)



From Ally to Accomplice



Ally: Helper	Accomplice: Partner
Someone with privilege who helps marginalized people with a problem	Someone with privilege who challenges systems of oppression
Supporting individuals who are oppressed	Dismantling systems and structures of oppression
Safety and dignity now	Equity now and in the future
Working for	Working with
In front (paternalistically) or behind (timidly)	Solidarity: side-by-side



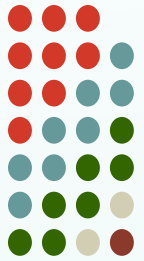
How to Be an Accomplice



- Cultivate relationships grounded in trust and accountable action
- Leverage *Power, Privilege, Resources*
- Be humble; Keep learning
- Collective *Liberation*



Practice Being an Accomplice

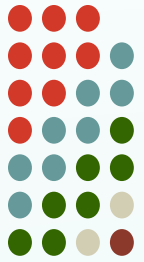


Questions – In pairs, please answer:

- Some examples of where you (your congregation) are/can be an ally?
- Some examples of where you (your congregation) are/can be an accomplice?

Share this information in the large group.

Being an Accomplice



If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is tied up with mine, then let us work together.
~ Lilla Watson

morefratnavquotes.com



UU Class Conversations



We're available to help you move forward with congregational change:

- **Denise Moorehead,**
dmoorehead@uuclassconversations.org
- coordinator@uuclassconversations.org

We can tailor this webinar for your congregation, organization or regional group. We also offer:

- UU-CC's *Organizing for Change Workshop*/consultation
- On the web: www.uuclassconversations.org
- Like and chat with us on Facebook: UU Class Conversations; Follow us on Twitter: @uuclasstories
- Worship Resources: [Embracing Social Class Inclusion](#)