



Reaction Paper

Student's Name

Instructor

Course

Date



Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Wealth Gap

Last Week Tonight is a political comedy program that is aired every week Sunday on HBO and on other cable channels – on different days. The program is hosted by a renowned comedian, John Oliver. He uses his wit to satirize various political, social, and economic issues taking place in the American society. In episode 10 that was aired on 14th July 2014 on HBO, John discussed the issue of wealth gap in the United States and why the problem is likely to worsen in future. To enlighten the audience on the issue of income inequality, John dug into various statistics that exposed the widening gap between the rich and the poor in the United States. John occasionally used humor to explain how the issue of wealth inequality has been legitimized and how deeply it is embedded in the American culture.

In his program, John explained that since the 1980s, the rich have continued to amass more wealth, while the poor, who are at the bottom of the pyramid, have continued to sink into abject poverty. His view on the growing wealth gap trends were, indeed a matter of concern to many. Statistics shows that since the early 1980s, about 5 percent of America's national income has slowly shifted from the middle class and is now owned by America's top rich individuals. That means that about 6000 super rich Americans earned extra \$650 billion. This statistics indicates clearly that the economic pie is poorly divided in the United States.

Even though the United States economy is firmly pegged on capitalism ideals, the current trends of wealth distribution are dangerous. If left unchecked, the issue of income inequality may erode the economic gains that America has attained over the year and may shake the nation's social cohesiveness.

John Oliver, the program host, stated that president Barack Obama has been experiencing difficulties in addressing the issue of wealth gap in America. The president admitted that current wealth gap trends may soon become a challenge. The problem also admitted that those who are benefitting from the current economic setup have made it difficult for Americans to discuss the problem of wealth inequality without looking like they are engaging class warfare.

The question of economic fairness or what constitutes economic fairness has always elicited strong reactions from various quotas. Just like president Obama said, the poor American are the ones struggling to raise massive profits for the super-rich and big corporations in the United States. The rich and big corporations have a great influence on the society. They are able to lobby the enactment for taxation regimes that favor their businesses.

Towards the end of the show, John ridiculed the rich and demonstrated how they fight to frustrate pieces of legislation that aim at economic fairness. They try hard to get tax exemptions in the name of business incentives. Personally, I have no problems with the super-rich individuals and big corporations in this country. However, I have a problem with multinationals and super-rich individuals, who do not want to pay taxes and raise minimum wage and who hinder the reforms geared towards economic fairness. I firmly believe in the principles of capitalism, but just as John Oliver said during his show, the American dream is firmly built on the principles of equality. Every American citizen has a right and is entitled to his or her rightful share of the national cake. To end the problem of wealth inequality, authorities must avoid partisan politics and put the interests of the country first. They must enact policies that promote economic fairness.