

Rigging the Game

In Chapter 1 I said that inequality is often created initially by theft, extortion, or forced labor. But what happens then? A group with ill-gotten resources must find a way to safely hoard those resources. A group that expects to remain on top over time must also find a way to stabilize exploitive relationships with other groups. One way to think about how this occurs is via the metaphor of a game.

A *fair* game is one in which everyone plays by the same rules and is equally well equipped to compete.¹ Fairness also

¹A *game* can be fair in the sense of the same rules applying to everyone, yet the *competition* can be grossly unfair if the players are not equally matched. If the New York Yankees baseball team played a local high school team, the same rules would apply to both sides, yet no one would see this as a fair contest. The same principle applies to the reproduction of inequality. Even in cases where the same rules apply to everyone, if some people are, through no merit of their own, far better prepared to compete, then the game is not fair. For more on this, see the section "Getting In," later in this chapter.

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implies that everyone knows what the rules are. In a fair game, no one gets special advantages. When a game is rigged, some people get advantages that others don't. Not surprisingly, the people who rig a game in their favor usually win.

There are different ways to rig a game. Equipment can be tampered with. Competitors can be hindered. Referees can be bribed. Another possibility is to build unfairness into the rules themselves. Inequality is then the automatic result of people behaving themselves and following the rules, rather than the result of people breaking the rules.

When a society is set up to operate this way, we can say that the reproduction of inequality has been *institutionalized*. When few people think to challenge what's going on, we can say that the reproduction of inequality has been *normalized*. The practices that are institutionalized—that is, established as the routine ways that people do things together—are what constitute, figuratively speaking, the game that perpetuates inequality.

Understanding the reproduction of inequality thus requires studying the rules of the game in which people compete for resources. We might discover that the rules are fair and fairly applied to everyone, so that inequality results only from skill and chance. Or we might find that the game is rigged. In real life there is of course more than one game going on; people compete for different kinds of resources in different arenas, and not all games are rigged to the same degree. Some games, if not entirely fair, are fairer than others.

It is tempting to say that, in our society, the game is obviously rigged. Don't we have ample evidence of this already? Many people think so, but not everyone is convinced, especially those who are advantaged yet want to think of the game as fair. That's why it's important to show *how* the game is rigged, so that everyone can see it. Any attempt to increase the fairness of a system also requires an analysis of the rules that undermine fairness.

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Some of the rules that matter are found in law books and policy manuals. Others are not written down but are part of tradition or common sense. Both kinds of rules can help to reproduce inequality. Before looking at how this happens, I should explain a few things about rules and how they work in real life. Sometimes they work like they do in games, sometimes not.

HOW RULES WORK

A key point is this: rules don't *make* people do anything; people *use* rules to coordinate action with others. In chess, for example, you can't win by smashing your opponent's king, throwing the board in the air, and yelling "Spassky!" But the rules don't actually keep anyone from doing this. Rather, people use the rules to guide their behavior when they sit down to play, for the sake of being able to enjoy chess. No rules, no game.

Rules, in other words, are the ideas people share about what can and can't be done without making trouble for themselves and others. If we follow the rules that are understood to apply in a given situation, others will know what we're up to and probably won't give us grief. If we violate the rules for no obvious reason, others will wonder if we're naive, incompetent, or insane. If we go too far, we might get ourselves thrown out of a situation, or locked up. Then again, rules are often fuzzy and subject to negotiation, so it's not always clear what constitutes going too far.

While rules don't literally force us to do anything, they can compel certain kinds of behaviors and outcomes. The game of Monopoly, for example, compels people to be greedy and selfish, unless they stop trying to win.² And if Monopoly is

²The example of Monopoly is owed to Allan Johnson. See his *Privilege, Power, and Difference* (McGraw-Hill, 2006, 2nd ed.), pp. 82–84.

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played to its logical conclusion, one person ends up rich and the others go broke. As long as people follow the rules, this is what happens, no matter that the players are nice people and don't intend to be greedy and selfish.

Some parts of real life are much the same. In the game of capitalism, for example, managers must find ways to minimize labor costs while wringing as much value as possible out of workers. If managers in a competitive sector of the economy don't do this, they will be driven out of business by others who do. It doesn't matter if managers are nice people—if they don't play like tough capitalists, they will get knocked out of the game.

Capitalism is a good example of how the basic rules of a game ensure inequality. Consider the first rule of capitalism: those who own property can do what they want with it, regardless of what other people need to survive. That's the law. A capitalist can let a farm or a factory sit idle, if he or she so chooses, even if other people are starving for lack of jobs or land. It might seem odd to say that "property rights take precedence over human rights" is a basic rule of capitalism. We don't usually think of it that way. We take it for granted that people can do what they want with their property because, well, they own it. But this is exactly the kind of thing we should look at more closely. Sometimes the rules that matter the most are ones we think about the least.

In thinking about the rules that apply to economic behavior, we should ask who makes the rules, how they do so, and who benefits the most from those rules. Who gets to decide, for example, how much control is implied by ownership, or, for that matter, *what* can be owned? If I can own animals, can I own people? If I can own land, can I own air and sunshine, too? Who gets to say?

For our purposes, the rules that apply to the economy are especially important, because these rules bestow control not

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only over productive property, but also over workers and the results of their labor.³ Another term for "the results of labor" is wealth. So if we're going to understand how inequality is reproduced, we need to understand the rules that say who can determine where that wealth goes and what can be done with it.

There is of course the question of why anyone would stay in a rigged game. It's obvious why those who can rig a game in their favor would want to play. But why those who repeatedly get the short end of the stick? Perhaps because they don't see how the game is rigged and so blame themselves for losing. Or because they feel powerless to change the rules. Or because, as in the case of capitalism, it's the only game in town.

Capturing the State

I've said it's important to look at *who* makes the rules, but I've said little about how it happens that somebody gets to make the rules. In any given case, it would be necessary to study the matter historically, looking at how a person or group came to power in a particular place and time. But that's not the kind of answer I can offer here.⁴ My concern is what an individual or group must do, anywhere and anytime, if they want to make the rules that matter.

³In this context, "productive property" means factories, machines, and land. More broadly construed, productive property can also include the inventory of materials used to produce manufactured goods.

⁴In the intellectual division of labor, historians do the bulk of the work when it comes to documenting and explaining "how things got to be the way they are." For examples of historical studies pertinent to the matters at hand, see Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford University Press, 1986); Judith Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Beacon, 1966); and E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Vintage, 1966).

What they must do is *capture* the state. In the prevailing form of state means taking the reins of decision-making through a legitimate (appointments), through force (e.g., a might be total; in other branch of government

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What they must do, in short, is either *become* the state or *capture* the state. In this context, "the state" refers to whatever the prevailing form of government might be. Capturing the state means taking the reins of government by occupying positions of decision-making authority. This can be accomplished through a legitimate process (e.g., honest elections, legal appointments), through trickery (e.g., corrupt elections), or through force (e.g., a coup d'état). In some cases, the capture might be total; in others it might be partial, involving only a branch of government.

Imagine the child of a serf in medieval times. The child asks, "Mother, why must we work so hard for so little?" To which the mother might reply, "We must work to feed ourselves and to give a share of our crop to the king." The child asks, as children often do, why this is so. "Because," the mother replies, "that is how things are, and if we do not obey the king, who is God's arm on earth, we will be beaten, perhaps killed, by his soldiers."

In this case, the king, his advisers, his nobles, and his soldiers *are* the state. There is no one else to whom a serf can appeal or complain. The king is the ultimate rule maker, rule interpreter, and rule enforcer. Note that the king is also the chief economic exploiter. In modern capitalist societies, these roles have become distinct, though they are still bound together.

Imagine, then, the teenage child of a retail service worker today. The teen asks, "Mom, why do you have to work overtime for no extra pay?" To which the mother might reply, "Because that's what the boss expects, and I'd be fired if I refuse. Besides, there are no other jobs around here." The teen asks if it's true that the law requires overtime pay. "Yes," the mother answers, "it does, but if I file a complaint, the law will never be enforced before the boss finds an excuse to fire me."

In this case, the economic exploiter—the boss—is not the state. The state, in a modern society, consists of all the

branches of government, plus all the agencies that put laws and policies into practice. Technically the worker could appeal to some branch or agency to try to get the overtime pay law enforced. But the worker knows this is not likely to be effective. Why? Because the boss—or, rather, other members of the boss's economic class—have captured the state.

The "boss" in this case is not only the supervisor who interacts directly with workers, but also managers all the way up the ladder. The economic class that has captured the state includes those top managers, plus wealthy shareholders. And, in this case, "capturing" the state doesn't mean dictating, in detail, everything it does on a daily basis. It means exercising *dominant influence* over the making, interpreting, and enforcing of laws and policies.⁵

This is why capturing the state is so important in a modern society. It's how a group shapes the making, interpreting, and enforcing of the rules that apply to economic activity and determine the distribution of wealth. This is the group that can make rules to protect its accumulated resources and to keep a disproportionate share of wealth flowing to its pockets.

Because of what else the state can do, capturing it is crucial. Whoever controls the state can set tax rates, collect taxes, and decide how to use those revenues—all of which can greatly affect the distribution of wealth. Capturing the state also means controlling the police and the military. Police and soldiers can then be used to control people who try to change the rules of the game. Since the state can also

⁵In *Who Rules America?* (McGraw-Hill, 2006, 5th ed.), G. William Domhoff examines how this dominant influence is exercised by a power elite that serves the interests of the largest corporations in the United States and the richest 1% of the U.S. population. The main means of influence include campaign financing, lobbying, litigation (or the threat thereof), shaping public opinion, and controlling the policy-planning process.

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⁷See H. H. Gerth and *Sociology* (Oxford Uni Giddens, *Capitalism ar* Press, 1971), pp. 234–2

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In one way of looking at how inequality is perpetuated, what matters most is control over the means of production (land, factories, machinery, oil, etc.). This is indeed important, as I suggested in noting the basic rules of capitalism. But in a modern capitalist society it's the state that makes and enforces the rules that allow a relatively small group of people to maintain control of the means of production.⁶ That's why we have to look at the state, too, and at how it is used by those who exercise a dominant influence over it.

To stretch this idea a bit, and to borrow from the sociologist Max Weber, I would say that we need to look at who has captured the *means of administration* in a society.⁷ This refers to the bureaucratic organizations within which the efforts of millions of people are coordinated on a daily basis. It's in these organizations that people come together to make and interpret rules; to decide how and whether to enforce which rules; and to routinely distribute resources, such as money in the form of paychecks. Capturing the means of administration means controlling how things get done.

One more point: both within society as a whole and within organizations there can be struggles for control of the means of administration. On a societal level, the winning group

⁶The term "means of production" refers to the *major* means of production—factories, machinery, land, inventory, and utilities (e.g., privately owned energy companies)—that make possible the creation of all the material goods (and energy) on which society depends. The term does not refer to the hand tools, garden plots, and other personal property owned by ordinary folks.

⁷See H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 82. See also Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 234–235.

captures the state and thus gains the right to exercise the powers noted above. On an organizational level, the winning faction captures the top jobs or key decision-making positions and thus gains control over people and resources on a smaller scale. In both instances, this means being able to make, interpret, and enforce the rules—and thereby rig the game.

NUTS-AND-BOLTS EXAMPLES

So far, I've discussed rules in general terms. Now I want to look more closely at laws and policies that matter for the reproduction of inequality in the United States. In each case, the rules give one group an edge in accumulating and preserving resources. In each case, the rules tilt the game in favor of the group that has captured the means of administration. These examples also illustrate the ongoing struggle over the rules themselves and over who gets to make, interpret, and enforce them. I use these particular examples because they show how different kinds of rules can matter in ways that might not be obvious, even to people affected by them.

Limiting Solidarity

An individual worker is in a weak position when confronting an employer who acts unfairly, refuses to pay overtime, or violates safety regulations. That's why workers form unions: to have more power when dealing with employers over matters such as wages, benefits, and working conditions. An employer can easily ignore or get rid of one disgruntled worker. But the situation is different if workers organize. In this case, if workers feel dissatisfied they can collectively withhold their labor (i.e., go on strike) and shut the employer down. Usually this compels an employer to negotiate and make changes.

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So while employers seem to have more power than the workers whom they hire and fire, it is possible for workers to equalize things by organizing and acting collectively. There are, however, laws that give crucial advantages to employers. An example is the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947, also known as the Taft-Hartley Act, which still sets the rules of the game when it comes to union organizing.⁸

Imagine that workers in one department of a big company want to form a union. Perhaps everyone in the department agrees it would be a good idea to form a union. Can they just go to management and say, "We now have a union in our department; you'll need to deal with us collectively"? No. They would first have to petition the National Labor Relations Board to hold a union certification election. This process takes time.⁹

While the petition was being reviewed, managers could legally do a number of things: require workers to attend meetings in which they are told that unions are bad; take individual workers aside and lobby against the union; and

⁸For more on Taft-Hartley and U.S. labor law, see Christopher Tomlins, *The State and the Unions: Labor Relations, Law, and the Organized Labor Movement in America, 1880-1960* (Cambridge University Press, 1985); William Forbath, *Law and the Shaping of the American Labor Movement* (Harvard University Press, 1991); and Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labor and Liberalism, 1945-1960* (University of Illinois Press, 1995).

⁹There is a faster process called the "card-check" method. This method allows for the creation of a union if a majority of workers sign a form indicating that they want union representation. Under current law, however, the card-check method can be used only if an employer agrees to it. For reasons noted in the text, this seldom happens. In April 2005, the Employee Free Choice Act was introduced to Congress. This Act would require employers to recognize a union if a majority of workers signed cards saying they wanted union representation. If such a law were passed, it would change the rules of the game considerably. As of July 2006, the bill had yet to be considered by any congressional committee.

hire expensive consultants to mount an anti-union campaign. They could also argue about which workers should be included in the certification election. One thing they could not do legally, although this often happens anyway, is to fire workers for trying to organize a union.

Under the rules of the game, as set by the Taft-Hartley Act, managers would probably succeed in requiring that the election include most or all of the nonsupervisory workers in the company, not just those in one department. Why would this matter? Because it's hard for a few organizers to reach all workers in a big company with a pro-union message, while it's easy for managers to reach all workers with an anti-union message. And because, if certifying the union requires a majority vote of all workers—rather than a majority of those who vote—then every nonvote counts against the union. (If this rule were applied to U.S. presidential elections, no one would be president, because only about 25–30% of all eligible voters vote for any one candidate.)

The rules also say that front-line supervisors can't vote. This hurts the unionizing effort, because often front-line supervisors are more sympathetic to workers than to upper management and might vote in favor of a union. What usually happens is that supervisors are told by *their* bosses to discourage workers from supporting the union.

But suppose that a majority of all the workers in the company vote to have a union, and so the union is certified as the workers' legal bargaining agent. Now what? By law, managers must bargain in good faith with representatives of the union.

The purpose of this bargaining is to negotiate a contract that both sides are legally obligated to follow. In fact, managers (or those who bargain on their behalf) often stall and resist, hoping that workers will become unhappy with the union. After a while, *managers* can petition for another

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The rules of the game also specify what a union can and cannot do in trying to protect its members' interests. Suppose that a union succeeds in negotiating a contract. But then, when it's time for the contract to be renegotiated (every few years), managers refuse to bargain in good faith, or they try to lower wages and decrease benefits. What can workers do?

As a last resort, they can go on strike. This is of course hard on workers, who don't get paid if they aren't working. But the idea is to pressure the company—which loses money while the strike continues—to bargain in good faith, or to offer workers a better deal. Sometimes this tactic works, sometimes not. If a company can hire enough replacement workers (also called "scabs"), they might be able to keep operating during a strike. The rules of the game allow employers not only to hire new workers, but also to petition for a union decertification election *in which the replacement workers can vote*. When this happens, a union is almost always sunk.

But what if a union could get workers at other places—the companies that sell supplies to their employer, buy goods from their employer, or transport these products—to go on strike, too? This would really shut things down. A company that refused to bargain in good faith or to offer workers a fair deal would find itself without supplies, without transport for its goods, and perhaps without a market. This would put enormous pressure on managers. There is only one problem with this tactic: it's illegal under the Taft-Hartley Act. The rules of the game forbid sympathy strikes.

There are other Taft-Hartley rules that rig the game in favor of employers. For instance, under Taft-Hartley, states

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can enact what are called "right-to-work" laws.¹⁰ Such laws forbid unions to require all people in a bargaining unit (i.e., all the workers represented by the union) to be union members. This matters because it deprives unions of resources in the form of membership dues. Managers already have far more resources at their disposal than unions, but a rule that forces unions to tolerate "freeriders" (people who get union benefits without paying for them) puts unions in an even weaker relative position.

Where did the Taft-Hartley Act come from? It wasn't simply dreamed up by two U.S. senators (Robert Taft and Fred Hartley) in their spare time. The act was written largely by corporate lawyers working for the National Association of Manufacturers, a lobbying group for capitalists in the manufacturing sector.¹¹ This is an example of capitalists (or a subset of them) using the state to establish laws to limit how workers can act in solidarity with each other. So even when workers organize and act collectively as a way to offset the power of capitalists, they find that they are still caught in a rigged game.

The Taft-Hartley Act sets rules of the game that disadvantage workers directly. But there are other rules that have the same effect indirectly. Free-trade agreements created in the 1990s (e.g., the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA) allow capitalists to move production to other countries and then to bring the goods they manufacture back

¹⁰As of 2006, right-to-work laws were on the books in twenty-two states. These are often called right-to-work-for-less laws by union partisans. Independent economic analysis shows average wages to be lower, in comparable industries, in states that have right-to-work laws and low levels of unionization. See Oren M. Levin-Waldman, "Do Institutions Affect the Wage Structure? Right-to-Work Laws, Unionization, and the Minimum Wage," (1999), Levy Economics Institute (<http://www.levy.org/>).

¹¹Tomlins, *State and the Unions*, pp. 302–303. See also Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais, *Labor's Untold Story* (UE Press, 1955), pp. 345–348.

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to the United States without paying high tariffs (i.e., import taxes). This rule rigs the game against U.S. workers, who know that if they demand higher wages and better working conditions, an employer can move production to Mexico or Southeast Asia, where desperately poor people will work for less than a dollar an hour.¹²

Money Is Speech

One of the best rules in American society is this: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." This rule is called the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. By invoking this rule, people can speak out against what they think is unjust, even if powerful individuals and groups don't like it.

The First Amendment applies to everyone. It doesn't matter if you're a high school dropout or a Ph.D. If you have an opinion, you are free to share it publicly and try to persuade others. (Of course, you might get a lot of flak for expressing some opinions, but that's just how it goes.) Nor does it matter if you are rich or poor. You have the same right to speak out.

There is, however, the problem of actually reaching an audience. In a society as big and complex as the United States, it's hard to reach an audience of much size. To do so

¹²There is a considerable literature on "capital mobility" and its consequences for workers, in both the United States and the Third World. See, for examples, Alan Tonelson, *The Race to the Bottom* (Westview, 2000); Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello, *Global Village or Global Pillage* (South End, 1998); and Liza Featherstone, *Students Against Sweatshops* (Verso, 2002). On the persistence of slavery in the global economy, see Kevin Bales, *Disposable People* (University of California Press, 2000).

requires resources—a television station, a newspaper, a media corporation—that few people have. So even though everyone has the same *right* to speak out, inequality means that some people are able to speak much louder than others.

The basic rule about free speech is crucial in the arena of politics and political campaigns. Again, everyone has the right to speak out—as a candidate or as a concerned citizen. But in this arena the rules of campaign financing rig the game in favor of those who are already wealthy or who can attract contributions from others who are wealthy.

Suppose you decide to try to change things by getting elected to Congress. Unless you have enough money to fund your campaign out of pocket, you'll have to solicit contributions. If the changes you'd like to make are ones that will benefit low-income and middle-income people, your supporters won't be able to make big contributions. In fact, it's likely that you'll have to spend a lot of time soliciting many small contributions, and even then you'll probably have to run a low-budget campaign.

Now suppose that your opponent in the election is rich and can afford to spend millions of his or her own dollars on the campaign. If this person's platform appeals to high-income people with substantial wealth, his or her supporters will be able to make large contributions—up to \$2100 per election cycle (i.e., \$2100 in a primary election, plus another \$2100 in a final election). They could also encourage friends and family members to give similar amounts. They could give money (up to \$25,000) to your opponent's party. They could also form a nonparty group and spend an unlimited amount of money on "issue advertising" that favors your opponent.¹³

¹³These limits apply to candidates for federal offices. For more information on campaign finance rules and who gets money from whom, see the web site of the Center of Responsive Politics (<http://www.opensecrets.org/>). The limits

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Let's say that, altogether, your opponent can easily afford to spend ten times more on his or her campaign than you can on yours. Is this fair? It hardly seems so. But there's nothing you can do about it, because the rules of the game say that there is no limit on what your opponent can spend.

This rule is based on a U.S. Supreme Court decision in a 1976 case called *Buckley v. Valeo*. The case involved a challenge to campaign finance reform laws passed in the early 1970s. These laws sought to fight corruption and promote fairness by limiting campaign contributions and spending. In its ruling, the Supreme Court said that spending money to get one's message out is an exercise of free speech. And since the First Amendment protects free speech, it is against the rules to limit how much money a candidate or a candidate's supporters can spend to influence an election. Considering what it costs to run a campaign these days, especially for state or federal office, the rule established in *Buckley v. Valeo* rigs the game in favor of those who have more money or who can attract more money.

We can see here the importance of capturing not only the means to make the rules (i.e., to legislate) but also the means to interpret them. Judges always make their interpretations based partly on what's explicit in the law and partly on what they take for granted as "reasonable." That's why judges often disagree. It's not just that they interpret the law differently, but that they make different assumptions about how society ought to work and how people ought to behave. A group that wanted to rig the game in its favor might thus try to appoint judges—especially Supreme Court justices—who share that group's values and outlook.

that apply to candidates running for state offices vary from state to state. For more information on these limits, see the website of the National Conference of State Legislatures (<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legismgt.ContribLimits.htm>).

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Corporate Personhood

The rules governing the behavior of corporations have changed tremendously since the early part of the nineteenth century. Back then, laws were much more restrictive. For example, corporate charters (government permission to operate) were granted for a specific purpose for a limited period of time. This meant that people could form and operate a corporation only to accomplish a specific purpose (e.g., build a bridge, a road, or a canal), and then, when the job was done, the corporation was dissolved. What's more, a charter could be revoked if a corporation exceeded or failed to fulfill its charter.¹⁴

In that era, incorporation did not shield managers and stockholders from *personal* liability if a corporation couldn't pay its debts or was sued or fined. Other laws forbade corporations from owning stock in other corporations and from making political contributions. Corporate records and documents were open to the legislature or the state attorney general. And corporations had to have their headquarters and meetings in the state where their principal place of business was located. The idea behind these laws was that corporations could become too big and powerful—more powerful than communities and governments—if they weren't controlled.

Big corporations began to emerge during the Civil War period (1860–1865), partly in response to the demands of the war economy. A prophetic statement, often attributed to

Abraham Lincoln power: "I see in unnerves me and country. As a re enthroned and an and the money pc its reign by worki all wealth is aggr destroyed."¹⁵

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¹⁴In recent years the literature on corporations and corporate power has grown rapidly. Helpful sources include Charles Derber, *Corporation Nation* (St. Martin's, 1998); David Koren, *When Corporations Rule the World* (Kumarian Press, 2001, 2nd ed.); Dean Ritz (ed.), *Defying Corporations, Defining Democracy* (Apex Press, 2001); Thom Hartmann, *Unequal Protection* (Rodale, 2002); Ted Nace, *Gangs of America* (Berrett-Koehler, 2003); and Joel Bakan, *The Corporation* (Free Press, 2004). See also the website of the Program on Corporations, Law, and Democracy (<http://www.poclad.org/>).

¹⁵While numerous s authenticity is conteste ter to Col. William F. Lincoln Encyclopedia ars claim that the leti Lincoln in American whoever made this st tury, an estimable prc the growth of corpor

Abraham Lincoln, expresses fear of the growth of corporate power: "I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. As a result of the war, corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed."¹⁵

Since Lincoln's time, much of this prophecy has come true, because of changes in the rules of the game. Even though corporations still must be legally chartered, corporations now can live forever and engage in all kinds of business practices, regardless of what is said in their initial charter. Managers and investors are no longer held personally liable for corporate debt and fines. Corporations can also own other corporations, can make political contributions, can refuse to make information public, and can incorporate in one place while doing business elsewhere. Another thing that's different is that most people today take it for granted that corporations have a right to exist forever, to become huge and powerful, to influence governments, universities, and communities, and to shape our culture.

Most of the major changes in the rules that govern corporate behavior took place from about the 1850s through the early decades of the twentieth century. It was in this early

¹⁵While numerous sources attribute the quote to Abraham Lincoln, its authenticity is contested. The source of the quote is Abraham Lincoln, letter to Col. William F. Elkins, November 21, 1864, in Archer H. Shaw, *The Lincoln Encyclopedia* (Macmillan, 1950), p. 40. But other Lincoln scholars claim that the letter cited by Shaw was a forgery. See Merrill Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (Oxford University Press, 1994). In any case, whoever made this statement was, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, an estimable prophet when it came to foreseeing the consequences of the growth of corporations and corporate power.

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twentieth-century period that states began competing with each other for "incorporation business," which meant generating revenues by charging fees for issuing corporate charters. States sought to attract corporations by repealing laws that restricted their behavior. States that gave corporations the most freedom attracted the most business. Eventually, most of the state laws that had previously kept a tight rein on corporate behavior were repealed.

One of the most important rule changes came in the 1886 Supreme Court case of *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad*.¹⁶ The Court's decision in this case (which was about taxes) was widely interpreted as granting corporations the rights and protections of personhood under the Constitution. This opened the door to a whole set of rule changes that occurred over the next 50 years, greatly expanding corporate power in the twentieth century.

Corporations could now invoke the Fourteenth Amendment to claim a right to "equal protection under the law." This meant that if a community enacted laws that favored small, local businesses over a large corporation, the corporation could get those laws thrown out on the grounds that they were discriminatory. Corporations could invoke the Fourth Amendment to claim rights to privacy and to protection against searches without warrant. This meant that corporations could refuse to divulge information about their operations and refuse surprise inspections for compliance with safety regulations and anti-pollution laws. Corporations could also invoke the First Amendment to claim a right to free speech. This meant that corporations could try to influence elections, politicians, and public opinion—just like any other individual.

¹⁶On the *Santa Clara* case, see Robert Benson, *Challenging Corporate Rule* (Apex Press, 1999), pp. 40–51.

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Corporations today have tremendous power to shape the rules of the game. With far more resources at their disposal than individuals, corporations can amplify their "speech" (in debates over public policy) to the point where the voices of ordinary citizens are drowned out. Corporations can also influence candidates and elected officials by making campaign contributions.¹⁷ Altogether, communities and governments have lost a great deal of authority to monitor and regulate corporate behavior.

The example of corporate personhood shows how changing a fundamental rule—in this case, about who is a "person" and thus deserving of Constitutional protections—can have implications for the application of other rules. If the Constitution were amended to say that corporations are not persons, local communities could prohibit corporations from interfering in politics, keep out big corporations (e.g., Wal-Mart) entirely, or regulate their behavior so that small businesses were not hurt. Nor could corporate managers hide misconduct by claiming a right to privacy. Such changes in the rules of the game would return communities to the driver's seat.

Redlining

The rules that limit worker solidarity, define money as speech, and give corporations the rights of natural persons are big

¹⁷Corporations cannot write checks directly to candidates and politicians. The money that influences campaigns and politicians' behavior is thus given through various indirect channels, including donations to political action committees (PACs); donations to "527" issue advocacy groups; donations to political parties; "bundled" donations by corporate executives and their families; and lobbying junkets (i.e., vacation-like trips supposedly to "educate" politicians about issues of concern to corporations). For more information on types of political groups and the flow of money in elections, see the Center for Responsive Politics web site (<http://www.opensecrets.org/>).

rules—rules having to do with politics and the economy—that rig the game in favor of capitalists. Other rules operate on a smaller scale to create inequalities between racial groups. Today, for example, the typical white family has about eight times the wealth of the typical black family.¹⁸ And even when income is the same, white families have on average about twice as much wealth as black families. This situation came about in large part because the rules having to do with home buying rigged the game in favor of whites.

Suppose that to buy a home you had to muster a down payment of 50% of the price of the home, that you had only 5 years to pay off the mortgage, and that the interest rate was as high as today's interest rate on credit cards. Who could buy a home under those terms? Only people with a lot of money already. Ordinary working people would be out of luck.

But suppose that the federal government created a program that allowed people to take out home loans on much better terms. That's what the federal government did back in the 1930s and 1940s. Mortgage insurance programs operated under the auspices of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), and the Veterans Administration (VA) reduced down payment requirements to 10–20%, extended the payback period to 30 years, and greatly reduced interest rates. This made it possible for millions of middle-income people to buy homes and begin accumulating a bit of wealth.

¹⁸My discussion of disparities in wealth between black and white families draws on Dalton Conley, *Being Black, Living in the Red* (University of California Press, 1999); Melvin Oliver and Thomas Shapiro, *Black Wealth/White Wealth* (Routledge, 2006, 2nd ed.); Michael Brown, Martin Carnoy, Elliott Currie, Troy Duster, David Oppenheimer, Marjorie Shultz, and David Wellman, *White-Washing Race* (University of California Press, 2003); and Thomas Shapiro, *The Hidden Cost of Being African American* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

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Lenders and loan backers wanted to minimize their risks when making or insuring a loan, and so they naturally wanted to make sure that their clients bought homes in areas where property values would rise. In fact, to qualify for an insured loan and favorable terms, the home had to be in an approved area. That way, in case of foreclosure, the property would be worth enough to pay off the loan. So what kind of areas were considered low risk? Here is what it said in the manual for FHA loan evaluators: "If a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes."¹⁹

White neighborhoods, in other words, were supposed to stay white. Why? Because, if they didn't, whites would start to move out, the housing market would "go soft," and property values would drop. The effect of this rule was that blacks, who were legally (at that time) and illegally (then and now) kept out of white neighborhoods, either couldn't qualify for insured loans, or they had to pay higher interest rates—if they could afford it. To put it another way, the people who ran the federal loan programs refused to insure mortgages in neighborhoods that had even a few black families.

In deciding which homes in which neighborhoods were eligible for insured loans, underwriters referred to "appraisal maps." Neighborhoods that were ineligible because too many black families lived there were marked in red. That's why the term "redlining" came to be used to refer to the practice of discrimination in mortgage lending.

The FHA and VA programs were, from one perspective, very successful. Between 1934 and 1962 these programs

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¹⁹Quoted in Brown et al., *White-Washing*, p. 77. For more on the relationship between residential segregation and inequality, see Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Harvard University Press, 1993).

backed \$120 billion in home loans. About half of all suburban housing built in the 1950s and 1960s was financed by FHA and VA loan programs. As it turned out, however, more than 95% of the beneficiaries were white.²⁰ To produce this result, all people had to do was follow the rules that were in place at that time.

It's important to understand that the *results* of these rules are not confined to the past. Earlier I noted the inequality in the wealth of white families versus black families. That inequality is largely attributable to differences in home equity and inheritance.

Suppose that in 1950 a white family bought a new suburban home with an FHA or VA loan. That home might have been bought for \$20,000. Depending on location and upkeep, such a home today might be worth \$300,000 or more. That value could be the basis for a comfortable retirement, or for a sizable inheritance. The white family might even have been able to borrow against this value (i.e., take out a home-equity loan) and use the money to send its children to college.

Now suppose that a black family had bought a similarly priced home at the same time. But because of discrimination that kept black families out of the suburbs, this family had to buy a home in an integrated urban neighborhood. And because this area was redlined, the family got no help from the VA or the FHA and had to pay a higher interest rate for a mortgage. Also, over the years, whites kept moving out in part because they could get good loans to buy newer homes in the suburbs. As the demand for housing in this urban neighborhood dropped, property values stagnated or declined. Today the home bought in 1950 might sell for all of \$30,000. That would mean no comfortable retirement, little or no

²⁰Brown et al., *White-Washing*, p. 78. See also Massey and Denton, *Apartheid*, pp. 50–55.

inheritance, and no money for college tuition.

Redlining is a game of inequality that favors the position to rig the lending rules used by (white) bankers, and benefits (white) families. The result of these home buying rules will graduate from down payment on a home to actually inherit wealth. The game is in favor of those who are grown-up to the rules of the game. They simply have more awareness of how the rules of the game work.

Getting In

The game metaphor for the game has begun. We've looked at how people are affected by the rules of the game. The question of who gets to play the game and how a group can preserve its position to keep others out is the next question.

²¹This example is adapted from *Whites: The Houses of Illusion* (available from executive producer).

²²This process has been described by Max Weber, *op. cit.* boundary maintenance.

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Redlining is a good example of how rules can work to create inequality that favors people who were not originally in a position to rig the game in their favor. The discriminatory lending rules used by the VA and FHA primarily benefited (white) bankers, developers, and realtors while secondarily benefiting (white) home buyers. Today the (white) children of these home buyers are the beneficiaries. These children will graduate from college with no debt, perhaps receive a down payment on a house as a wedding gift, and then eventually inherit wealth to do with as they please. These children, who are grown-ups by now, did not rig the game in their favor. They simply benefited from it later, most likely with no awareness of how those benefits originated in discriminatory rules of the game.

Getting In

The game metaphor picks up the story, so to speak, after the game has begun. That's true of all the examples above. I've looked at how people who are already competing for resources are affected by rules of the game. There is, however, the question of who gets to compete in the first place. Sometimes a group can preserve its accumulated resources by making rules to keep others out of the game.²²

²¹This example is adapted from Larry Adelman, "Affirmative Action for Whites: The Houses That Racism Built," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 29, 2003. See also the excellent PBS video "Race—The Power of An Illusion" (available from California Newsreel), of which Adelman was the executive producer.

²²This process has been called *social closure* (Weber, in Gerth and Mills, *From Max Weber*), *opportunity hoarding* (Tilly, *Durable Inequality*), and *boundary maintenance* (Schwalbe et al., *Social Forces* [2000] 79: 419–452).

Getting in to college is a good example. The knowledge, connections, and degrees one gets by attending college are resources that pay off later. And, usually, the more prestigious the college or university and the harder it is to get in, the more valuable the resources and the greater the payoff. If anyone could just walk in, take a seat, and earn a degree, then the resources would be less scarce and thus less valuable. That's why it's in the interest of those who have already acquired these resources to keep too many others from getting them. It's a way to preserve the value of one's resources and to keep the game from being too competitive.

Most people don't see entry requirements as rigged. After all, it makes sense to require people to show that they're prepared to meet the demands of a school or a training program. Still, there are at least two ways in which unfairness can be built into the process.

Suppose that a prestigious university sets high standards for admission. Let's say that applicants must have a high-school GPA of at least 3.75 (out of a possible 4.0) and SAT scores in the top 10% nationally. Administrators might say that these tough requirements are necessary because students must be ready to meet the school's rigorous demands. It's only fair to ensure that those who are admitted are equally well prepared to compete with each other. Why admit someone who won't be able to hack it?

On the one hand, this seems reasonable. Where is the unfairness? It's not so much in the admission process itself, but in the processes that determine who is likely to be able to meet the admission criteria. Applicants from families with abundant resources are likely to have done better in school already and thus to look like better candidates for admission.

This isn't about raw intelligence. It's about growing up with books, living in a safe neighborhood, having enough to eat, and not having family life disrupted by economic emergencies.

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It's about having parents who know how school works and how to deal with teachers.²³ It's also about regularly interacting with, or at least seeing, adults for whom education has paid off. These resources and experiences don't guarantee success, but they make a huge difference, all else being equal, in how well one does in school.

To say that applicants from homes with abundant resources are advantaged is not to say that they haven't worked hard in school. Perhaps they have. The point is that they were equipped and trained at home, far more so than kids from resource-poor environments, to do the sorts of things that teachers and university administrators value. It's no surprise, really, that they end up with higher grades and test scores. And so they're more likely to be admitted to the next level of the game, where there are bigger prizes—money, status, power—to be won.

Imagine two applicants. One is from a home where both parents are high-income professionals with graduate degrees. The other is from a home where the mother is the only parent and has always worked in minimum-wage jobs since dropping out of high school. It's clear which child is going to have more of the kind of resources that aid success in school. Of course, neither child chose which family to be born into.

Suppose, then, that the applicant from the well-off home finishes high school with a 3.76 GPA and scores just inside the top 10% on the SAT. All without breaking a sweat. Suppose that the second applicant studies extremely hard, finds a teacher who becomes a mentor, and thus, despite the bad odds, manages to finish with a 3.25 GPA and an SAT score in the top 20%. And whereas the first applicant never needed a job and could concentrate fully on school,

²³An excellent study of how this occurs is Annette Lareau's *Unequal Childhoods* (University of California Press, 2003).

the second applicant had to hold down a half-time job throughout high school.

According to the rules, the first applicant should be admitted to Prestige University and the second applicant shouldn't. Some people would say that this is fair because the first applicant met the requirements and the second applicant didn't, and the same criteria were applied to everyone. I would say that the game is rigged, because getting in depends on performances that are heavily influenced by an unequal distribution of resources.

People who make admissions decisions often do take more than grades and test scores into account. They might look for other signs of potential, such as whether an applicant has overcome obstacles that usually impede academic performance. Most people would say that this is okay, since someone who shows other signs of potential, in addition to good grades and test scores, ought to get a chance to compete. But then there is another common practice, another rule of the game, that works against fairness: legacy admissions.

Think of a scoring system that gives applicants a certain number of "points" for grades, test scores, extracurricular activities, and other achievements that might be signs of potential. Applicants might then have to score, say, 100 points to be admitted. Is it fair for a university to give extra points to applicants who are the sons and daughters of its alumni? Not really, because this has nothing to do with an applicant's merit. But it's a common practice, one that gives an unearned advantage to applicants who already have the advantage of being children of college graduates.

Similar kinds of exclusionary rules can be found in many places where the group making the rules has resources or opportunities it wants to protect. Once upon a time, to get an apprenticeship in a high-paying trade (e.g., machining, carpentry, plumbing, electrical work) you had to get a sponsor

who was already established. If no one would sponsor you, or gender, you couldn't get in.

Personal connections are important. But back in the early 1970s, when there was a push to create more openness in hiring, openings were often not open to only people in the boss's inner circle. If the boss was white, most of the people hired were white. So a lot of qualified people of color didn't get good jobs because they were excluded, thus never had a chance.

Exclusionary entry rules make it hard to change other rules. When the United States owned land could vote, but workers couldn't simply because politicians they didn't like collapsed in the late 1800s, people from voting, there

²⁴See Mark Granovetter, *Economic Action and Social Structure* (rev. ed.); Nan Lin, "Social Networks and Social Capital," *Annual Review of Sociology* (1999) 25; and *The Invisible Hand: How White Collar Jobs* (University of California Press, 1997).

²⁵These rules are known as "affirmative action," see Barbara Reardon, *Affirmative Action: How It Works and How to Succeed in a Diverse Environment* (American Sociological Association, 1998); see Donald Tomaskovic-Devey, Robinson, Tiffany Taylor, and others, *Segregation in American Society, 1966–2003*, *American Sociological Review* 68 (2003): 102–12.

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who was already established in the trade. That was the rule. If no one would sponsor you because of your race, ethnicity, or gender, you couldn't get in.

Personal connections are still important for getting jobs.²⁴ But back in the early 1970s the rules of the game changed to create more openness in the process.²⁵ Before then, job openings were often not widely advertised, which meant that only people in the boss's networks even heard about those jobs. If the boss was white and male, as was typical, chances were that most of the people in his personal networks were white. So a lot of qualified people of color were kept out of good jobs because they never heard about the openings and thus never had a chance to apply.

Exclusionary entry rules reproduce inequality not only by allowing some groups to hoard resources, but by making it hard to change other rules that rig the game. For example, when the United States was founded, only white men who owned land could vote. Women, blacks, and indentured workers couldn't simply organize a voting bloc and get rid of politicians they didn't like. In the South, after Reconstruction collapsed in the late 1800s, whites created laws to keep black people from voting, thereby severely limiting their political

²⁴See Mark Granovetter, *Getting a Job* (University of Chicago Press, 1995, rev. ed.); Nan Lin, "Social Networks and Status Attainment," *Annual Review of Sociology* (1999) 25: 467-487; and Deirdre Royster, *Race and the Invisible Hand: How White Networks Exclude Black Men from Blue-Collar Jobs* (University of California Press, 2003).

²⁵These rules are known as "affirmative action" policies. For more on affirmative action, see Barbara Reskin, *The Realities of Affirmative Action in Employment* (American Sociological Association, 1998). For more on how affirmative action has helped decrease racial segregation in the workplace, see Donald Tomaskovic-Devey, Catherine Zimmer, Kevin Stainback, Corre Robinson, Tiffany Taylor, and Tricia McTague, "Documenting Desegregation: Segregation in American Workplaces by Race, Ethnicity, and Sex, 1966-2003," *American Sociological Review* (2006) 71: 565-588.

power. Some of these obstacles remained in place until the early 1960s. And it was only in 1920, after more than 70 years of bitter struggle, that women in the United States gained the right to vote.

Keeping people away from the rule-making apparatus means that those who are marginalized must beg, plead, or raise a fuss to make changes. Working politely within the system isn't an option if the rules keep a group from even getting a seat at the table. Of course, those who make the rules will argue that things are as they should be and no major changes are needed. After all, they will say, the best and brightest have achieved legitimate authority and are now running things in the best interests of everyone. But once the game is shown to be rigged, these claims to legitimacy can evaporate like mist.

THINKING ABOUT HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

There are many more laws and policies that reproduce inequality than the few I've discussed here.²⁶ The point of the examples has been to show why it's important to examine the rules of the game if we want to understand how inequality is reproduced. I've also tried to show *how* to look at the rules of the game. The same strategy—looking at how the rules are

²⁶Another example is tax policy. The rules of the game with regard to taxation can limit and/or redistribute income and wealth. According to some analysts, reduced tax rates on the very rich and on corporations are largely responsible for the upward shift in wealth during the past 25 years. See, for examples, Paul Krugman, "The Tax-Cut Con," *New York Times Magazine*, September 14, 2003; and Chuck Collins and Felice Yeskel, *Economic Apartheid in America* (New Press, 2005), pp. 96–104. For current analyses of the effects of actual and proposed tax policies, see the website of Citizens for Tax Justice (<http://www.ctj.org>).

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used to create an unequal distribution of resources, to hoard resources and opportunities, and/or to preserve control—can be used to analyze any specific case. Let me suggest what else to keep in mind when looking at things this way.

Keep in mind that this is not about personalities. It's about understanding how a system works.²⁷ Or, in terms I used earlier, it's about understanding how the reproduction of inequality becomes institutionalized; that is, how it gets built into the routine ways that people do things together on an everyday basis. As I said, these routines are created and preserved in part because people play by the rules—ideas we share and usually take for granted about how things *ought* to be done and about how they *can* be done without causing trouble.

It's not that individuals and personalities are irrelevant. The rules of a game never say how *everything* should be done under *every* circumstance. Nor can every possible circumstance be anticipated. This means that there is always room for people to improvise, in part as a consequence of their personalities. On the other hand, a complex set of relationships, practices, and processes cannot be understood by reference to the personalities of the individuals involved. Football, for example, is a violent game not because of the personalities of the players, but because the rules of the game specify how players must interact to make the game we call "football" happen. The same principle applies to the economy. To understand the game and its possible outcomes, the game itself is what must be examined.

This perspective implies that when trying to understand how inequality is reproduced, we should not be misled by the

²⁷The distinction between the individual and the system is crucial to sociological thinking about inequality. Allan Johnson's discussion of this distinction in Chapter 2 of *The Gender Knot* (Temple University Press, 2005, rev. ed.) is exemplary. See pp. 27–50.

absence of conscious intent to discriminate or to dominate. Instead, we should focus on what happens when people follow the rules. The sociological principle here is that people's intentions do not determine the consequences of their actions. Which means that inequality can result whether most of the people whose actions produce it intend to do so or not. So, again, we have to look at what people *do*—what rules of the game they follow—such that inequality is the result.

It's also important to keep in mind that some groups do try, with conscious intent, to create rules that will advantage them at others' expense. In fact, this happens all the time as groups try to use the means of administration to make rules that will benefit them (or to interpret and enforce the rules in ways that will benefit them). That's part of how inequality is accomplished and why we should always look at where the rules come from as well as at who uses them, how, to do what.

On the other hand, even elaborate laws and policies are subject to negotiation. What's on paper or in people's heads still has to be translated into action, which always requires interpretation and, if conflict arises, some degree of negotiation. So we can't look just at the rules in the abstract. We have to look at what people do with them in interaction and at how people sometimes argue about the meaning of the rules. Resistance to the rules of a game, especially when we're talking about a real-life "game," is as much a part of the process as is compliance.

Even though focusing on the rules of the game and how the system works can make it seem as if inequality just happens, that's not true, either. Rules are always created by someone somewhere, and the rules always serve someone's interests or they wouldn't have been created in the first place. Likewise, when it comes to interpreting and enforcing the rules, someone is always choosing to act in one way when they could, in principle, choose differently. This is

another reason why people actually do invoke in concrete

We should also consider the creation of the rule in the case of redlining, say that they were as they were supposed to be treating everyone else. The rules were built into the rule.

The point here is that the claim that fairness is to everyone. To us it's important to look at groups of people whose rules produce results over others—and sometimes, too, the game is rigged by being equipped to compete.

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another reason why it's important to pay attention to what people actually do, especially how they decide which rules to invoke in concrete situations.

We should also keep in mind that the idea of a "fair application of the rules" itself needs to be critically examined. In the case of redlining, the VA and FHA loan analysts could say that they were just following policy and doing their jobs as they were supposed to. They could also claim that they were treating everyone fairly, because they applied the same rules to everyone. What they didn't see was the unfairness built into the rules they were applying.

The point here is that it's important not to be misled by claims that fairness consists simply of applying the same rules to everyone. To understand the reproduction of inequality, it's important to look at how the rules might affect different groups of people differently. We might thus discover that the rules produce results that consistently favor some people over others—and not for reasons of legitimate merit. Sometimes, too, as in the example of college admissions, a game is rigged by pretending that everyone is equally well equipped to compete.

Another thing to keep in mind is that rules have the consequences they do because of the conditions under which they're created and applied. Imagine there was no racism motivating white people to leave integrated neighborhoods and to keep black families out of the suburbs. Imagine there was no shift of industry out of urban areas. Imagine there was no history of discrimination that kept blacks out of secure, high-paying jobs. Imagine that blacks and whites were as likely to intermarry as to marry within their own ethnic groups. Under these conditions, redlining would have made no sense.

Earlier I called the rules concerning unionization, campaign financing, and corporate personhood "big rules." By this

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I meant to stress the importance of looking at rules that apply to the realms of work and politics, because what happens in these realms has enormous consequences for the distribution of wealth. But we should also examine seemingly small rules, because they can have big effects over time.

Restrictive entry rules can keep people from acquiring the resources needed to accumulate more resources, thus allowing one group, after a generation or two, to outdistance another—and keep on going. The example of redlining also suggests how the effects of a rule can be magnified over time. So no rule or practice is too small to consider. When the analysis is complete, it might turn out that a rule or practice doesn't have much consequence. But that should be a discovery, not a foregone conclusion.

Finally, it's important to think of "enforcing the rules" in broad terms. If we're looking at *laws*, then police and courts may be part of the picture. More often, however, rules are not enforced directly by agents of the state, or even by bosses. They're enforced by ordinary people who expect each other to behave in sane, predictable ways so that things can get done. Which means that to understand how inequality is reproduced, we have to consider not only the rules of the game, but why people keep playing a game that is not rigged in their favor. That's what I'll try to explain in Chapter 4. But, first, a story.

CHAPTER 3

The Valley

In an article titled "The Valley," the sociologist Robert Merton (1968). He describes how people who have more resources tend to get more resources, and how scientists at less prestigious universities tend to get less prestige. He also discusses the Matthew effect (XXV:2) and how it is given, and he shows how the fable about how inequality results from unequal opportunities or be revised entirely.

Long ago there was a valley that grew in its own right. Three of the Hen clan and the Ji clan. Each