Tray Robinson: Welcome to our first Conversation on Diversity for the fall 2014 series. My name is Tray Robinson. I serve as the Director of Diversity programs and Inclusion for our fine institution Chico State. I also serve as a lecturer Multicultural and Gender Studies Department. Thank you all for being here today. Hopefully we'll see you at more Conversations on Diversity throughout the semester. Just a show of hands how many of you all have attended a CODI. Very good. We have a great semester ahead of us. There are some flyers in the back to see what the first series is going to be. But we are excited about this first one. Which she is going to talk about issues surrounding socioeconomics which we face here on our campus as well as throughout our state and so forth and so on. So without further ado I’d like to introduce Dr. Susan Roll from the School of Social Work who will be presenting today’s Conversation on Diversity. I’m sure you are going to enjoy it and please ask questions, engage each other in regards to your thoughts and opinions about the topic and enjoy.

Audience: [Applause]

Dr. Susan Roll: It’s very exciting to see you all here. I’m Susan. I brought 25 handouts obviously expecting a little smaller group. But what I’m going to ask you to do is start off with a little quiz. So if you would maybe share with a neighbor just pass these around. But I will read the questions out loud. So just to kind of prime the pump, just to get you thinking a little bit because this is going to be an interactive dialogue here, right? So I’m not going to be doing all the talking. So I want you to think about, there's only five questions on this survey. I want you to think about the following
things.

In all countries there are differences or conflicts between different social groups. In your opinion in America how much conflict is there between young people and older people? Just think about that a little bit. Would you say there’s very strong conflicts, medium conflicts, not very strong conflicts, or not much at all?

So if I were to ask you another question similar in the United States are there strong conflicts between poor people and rich people? What do you think? Very strong conflicts, kind of medium, not really a lot conflicts? Think about that for a minute.

And what if I asked you about Blacks and Whites? Are there strong conflicts in America between Blacks and Whites, medium conflicts, or not really a lot conflicts?

And then my last similar question about that is immigrants. If you were to think about people who immigrated to this country versus people who were born here, do you think that we have pretty strong conflicts in America or not really?

Just start to think about what's going on in America today, what's the dialogue about and where do we have conflict and tension, and where are the places that we have to pay attention to?

Here's my last question for you and then we will move into some slides. Which of these statements comes closest to your own views? The first statement is most rich people today are wealthy mainly because of their own hard work, ambition, or education. Or might you think this is more closely aligned with your values, most rich
people today are wealthy mainly because they know the right people or were born into wealthy families.

Which one of those tends to be more of your belief system, folks work hard and that's why they're wealthy or folks were connected and were born into the right family? Or do you think that's maybe about half and half? About half the rich people are there because they worked hard and about half the rich people are there because they knew somebody. So just give a little bit of thought to that. And we will get back to these questions in a minute. I have a little clicker, there it is, okay. Hopefully everything is going to work.
I want you to also give a little thought to the old pull yourself up by your bootstraps. What does that mean for folks? Raise your hand if you've heard the expression pull yourself up by your bootstraps. Hm not everybody has. Does anyone feel like they can explain what that means? Anybody want to? What do you think?

**Audience Member:** Like they, the person who does that pride themselves on their own hard work that they have a right to for their own hard work. They feel kind of out. But they have hard work and they feel good, and they feel like they have certain privileges or rights.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** Okay so someone worked hard and that's how they were able to get somewhere, yeah. Any other thoughts on what pull yourself up by your bootstraps means? Any thoughts on that? Anyone else want to share? What do you got!

**Audience Member:** You did it on your own.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** It kind of means you did it on your own, didn't it? You were having a tough time and what did you do you reached down and you pulled up your bootstraps and you made a go for it in America, right? So that is an expression that we use quite a bit. So I want you to think about that.
Here is a great, a great quote from my friend Stephen Colbert he says "I believe in pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps. I believe it is possible — I saw this guy do it once in Cirque du Soleil. It was magical. (Stephen Colbert)". Sort of making fun of that. Thank you Stephen Colbert for that comic relief.
I want to tell you this expression of pull yourself up by your bootstraps is used quite a bit in America isn't it. We talk about it. People come to America and they can pull themselves up by their bootstraps. And I'm going to give you an example of when this was used recently.

I'm very into sports and this guy's name is Vivek Ranadive. And if anyone is into the NBA you'll know that the Sacramento Kings have a basketball team, right. They were being courted by the business folks up in Seattle, they said "Oh don't stay in Sacramento we want you to come up to Seattle". So a bunch of business people in Seattle got together and they were wooing the Kings to come up. Well people in Sacramento were concerned about that, right. Because what does that mean for that community? The NBA team obviously brings a lot of money in. So this guy Vivek Ranadive comes to Sacramento from Silicon Valley with a lot of money and he says "Don't worry Sacramento I'm going give you a bunch of money and you're going to be able to keep the Kings". So people in Sacramento are really excited, they get to keep their NBA team. Pretty exciting right? So they wrote this guy up in the Sactown magazine. So I bought it because I am into sports, I wanted to know a little bit about this guy.
So here's the headline of the article it said Game Changer. How did an Indian teenager who arrived in America with $50 in his pocket become the entrepreneur who saved the Kings? For Vivek Ranadive, it came down to innovation, teamwork, toughness—and a vision for Sacramento that's far bigger than basketball. Pretty impressive. What do you mean this guy came to the United States with 50 bucks? Pretty cool, do you think you could do that if you came to the United States with 50 bucks? Hm, and then you start to read the article a little bit more. And I started to get kind of pissed off to be really honest with you about how they frame this guy. So I wrote a letter to the editor which was not printed as far as I know, surprise, surprise. But I want to read you, if you'll bear with me I am going to read you my letter to the editor and it will reveal why I was feeling angry.
To the editors: "I was glad to read the article about Vivek Ranadive in this month's issue of Sactown. Like many of us, I am excited to see what his investment will bring to Sacramento. However, I was disappointed by the author's choice to frame Vivek as a poor immigrant who came to America with "$50 and a dream" when in reality Ranadive lived a privileged life in India and has skillfully capitalized on his early advantages and benefited greatly in Silicon Valley.

The author of the article went so far as to liken Ranadive to Horatio Alger, the prolific 19th-century author known for his rags-to-riches tales, when in fact, here's the backstory, Ranadive was raised in the "Malibu of India". So exclusive was his community that there were "servants and drivers and private schools favored by international diplomats". This school, according to the article, gave out the Ranadive Award to the top students each year, and "Ranadives usually won it". The article proceeds to describe his grandmother, a prominent attorney, his father a general secretary of a national pilots association, and the list goes on in terms of the great wealth and success of his family.

While Ranadive is clearly a remarkable man, framing him as a "pulled himself up by his bootstraps" kind-of-person is not only inaccurate it's infuriating. Propagating the myth that all one needs is a little tenacity to succeed in this country does a great injustice to the many Americans who are raised in poor communities, in under-performing school, with myriad of other barriers to success.

In a city which prides itself on diversity, I hope you will consider choosing your words more carefully so that the citizens of the North Valley can see both the opportunities for success while recognizing the very real barriers that so far; public policy and
public will have been unable to tear down."

Like it? Why didn't they print that huh?

[Audience Applause]

Dr. Susan Roll: Thank you very much, didn't want to just get the cheap applause. But I did just want to share with you, so this is sort of an interesting nick that we say. Well this guy really, did he really just show up with $50 in his pocket and suddenly he owns the Kings? So let's keep thinking about that idea that anybody that has a dream can come to America and be a millionaire. Let's keep thinking about that. I'm going to try to play a video that hopefully will play.
Oh this is one of my favorite quotes, "Some people are born on third base, and claim they hit a triple".
So let me see if I can get our video going. And hopefully we have some volume.

[YouTube video starts - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPKKQnjnsM ]
There’s a chart I recently saw that I can get out of my head. A Harvard Business Professor and Economist asked more than 5000 Americans how they thought wealth was distributed in the United States. This is what they thought they said it was.
Dividing the country into five rough groups of the top, bottom and middle three 20% groups, he asked people how the wealth in this country was divided.
Then he asked them what thought was the ideal distribution. It’s 92%, that’s at least nine out of 10 of them said it should be more like this.
In other words more equitable than they think it is. Now that fact is telling admittedly the notion that most Americans know that the system is already skewed unfairly.
But what’s most interesting to me is the reality compared to our perception. The ideal is as far removed from our perception of reality as the actual distribution is from what we think exists in this country. So ignore the ideal for a moment. Here’s what we think it is again.
and here is the actual distribution. Shockingly skewed. Not only do the bottom 20 percent in the next 20 percent,
the bottom 40% of Americans barely have any of the wealth. I mean it’s even hard to see them on the chart but the top 1% has more of the country’s wealth than nine out of 10 Americans believe in entire top 20% should have, mind blowing. But let’s look at it another way because I find this chart kind of difficult to wrap my head around.
Instead let’s reduce the 311 million Americans to just representative 100 people. Make it simple.
Here they are teachers, coaches, firefighters, construction workers, engineers, doctors, lawyers some investment bankers, a CEO and maybe a celebrity or two. Now let’s line them up according to their wealth, poorest people on the left, wealthiest on the right just steady row folks based on their net worth.
We will color code them like we did before based on which 20% quintile they fall into.
Now let’s reduce the total wealth of the United States which was roughly 54 trillion dollars in 2009 to this symbolic pile of cash and let’s distributed among our 100 Americans.
Well here’s socialism. All of the wealth of the country distributed equally. We all know that won’t work. We need to encourage people to work. And work hard to achieve that good ol’ American dream. Keep our country moving forward.
So here’s this ideal we asked everyone about. Something like this curve. This isn’t too bad. We’ve got some incentive as the wealthiest folks are now are about 10 to 20 times better off than the poorest Americans but hey even the poor folks aren’t actually poor sense the poverty line is almost entirely off the chart. We have a super healthy middle-class with smooth transition into wealth and Republicans and Democrats alike chose this curve. Nine out of 10 people, 92% said this was a nice ideal distribution of America’s wealth. But let’s move on.
This is what people think America’s wealth distribution actually looks like. Not as equitable clearly but for me this it still looks pretty great.
Yes the poorest 20 to 30 percent are starting to suffer quite a lot compared to the ideal, in the middle class is certainly struggling more than they were while the rich and wealthy are making roughly 100 times that of the poorest Americans in about 10 times that of the still healthy middle-class. Sadly, this isn’t even close to the reality.
Here is the actual distribution of wealth in America. The poorest Americans don’t even register. They are down to pocket change and middle classes barely distinguishable from the poor. In fact even the rich between the top 10 in 20 percentile are worse off. Only the top 10% are better off and how much better off?
So much better off that the top 2 to 5 percent are actually off the chart at the scale.
And the top 1%, this guy, well his stack of money stretches 10 times higher than we can show. Here is his stack of cash re-stacked all by itself. This is a top 1% we been hearing so much about. So much green in his pockets that I have to give him a whole new column of his own because he won’t fit in my chart. 1% of America has 40 percent of all the nation’s wealth. The bottom 80%, eight out of every 10 people or 80 out of these hundred only has 7% between them. And this is only gotten worse in the last 20 to 30 years.
While the richest 1% take home almost a quarter of the national income today. In 1976 they only took home 9%, meaning their share of income has nearly tripled in the last 30 years.
The top 1% own half the country stocks, bonds and mutual funds.
The bottom 50% of Americans only own half a percent of these investments. Which means they aren’t investing. They’re just scraping by.
I’m sure many of these wealthy people have worked very hard for their money but to really believe that the CEO is working 380 times harder than his average employee. Not his lowest paid employee, not the janitor, but the average worker in his company.
The average worker needs to work more than a month to earn what the CEO makes in one hour. We certainly don’t have to go all the way to socialism to find something that is fair for hard-working Americans.
We don’t even have to achieve what most of us consider what might be ideal. And all we need to do is wake up and realize that the reality in this country is not at all what we think it is.

[YouTube Video ends]
So I’m going to invite you just to take a few minutes and talk to a couple two or three people next to you. What’s your reaction to this video? Do you buy it? And then I’m going to ask you a harder question, how did we get here? So take a couple minutes and just talk with your neighbor about what you learned right here. What do you think about this video?
Alright ready? Anybody feel like they want to share a little bit about what you talked about? Who wants to share some of your ideas you came up with in your group? Any thoughts on this? Yes, thanks.

**Audience Member:** Well I think maybe a reason is a lot of big corporations that we have in the US, maybe like Walmart for example, where they have things that are really cheap but they get it from places like... I don't know maybe like China or something where workers work for really cheap. So they are making all this money off of everyone going there because it's really cheap. And the workers are getting enough to barely get by.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** Yeah, so how many people talked about that? We're having goods and services produced often in other countries at very, very low wages right? Because there are a lot of other countries don't have any minimum wage standards like we have. Although ours could be debated right? But is that why, is that what some folks talked about? So we are importing these goods that were made very cheaply and then we can sell them still inexpensive by American standards but we can sell them at a greatly increased cost. Yeah. What else?

**Audience Member:** Yeah well I come from a really conservative family and my parents are always saying, like you know, “Those big CEO's are giving jobs.” But, like, especially with me I will be, like, those jobs necessarily might not be going to middle class, maybe going to, like, you know, sweat shops.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** So they're giving jobs but what is getting jobs mean? What do the jobs look like?
Audience Member: Yeah, right, exactly, so.

Dr. Susan Roll: Good. And even if we aren't even talking sweat shops you brought up my favorite company, not so much, Walmart right. What do we know about Walmart? They pay pretty crummy. And we know that a substantial number of folks that work at Walmart are also getting public benefits like our friends in the back SNAP, right. They're getting food stamps because they can't live on their Walmart wages. Who else had some ideas? What do you got?

Audience Member: We talked about how the US is such an individualistic culture. [Inaudible] focus on our own successes and whatever it tends to reach for those kind of successes versus me and my friends [Inaudible] you know worried about every part of the country as a whole and what we [Inaudible].

Dr. Susan Roll: Good. Yeah. Great point. How many other folks talked a little bit about that? That idea that in our culture in this country is very individualistic which really goes to the bootstraps idea, right. Well pull yourself up by your bootstraps, you can do it alone in this country right. You don't need any help, you can just do it alone. And we've gotten away from a sense of community. Did anyone else talk about that? Yeah that's a lot of what we talk about in social work, just a little plug for my profession. We talk a lot about bringing things back to community right. Yeah, good answer. What else?

Audience Member: We talked about how we are kind of a good ole boy country, we have to take care of our own. So similar to self or interested in our community like keeping our family name alive rather than people who are working in our shops.
Dr. Susan Roll: Yeah very interesting. Yeah so a lot of cronyism, right? I'm trying to think of how else you would say that. That we kind of take care folks that are like us and then it leaves other people behind, right? So if I'm taking care of people that are like me and I'm a wealthy white billionaire I'm giving my wealthy white billionaire's kids jobs, right? Those kinds of things. And then we all kind of stick up at the top together. So we're building a community but it's a very exclusive community, right? A little bit of a country club. What else? Yeah.

Audience Member: Well we talked about deregulation of a lot of industries particularly finance industry. And the unions private sector are less commercial oppose to middle class. And also talked about going back to the idea that we don't like to consider ourselves poor ourselves. And that poverty is something to be ashamed of because we have this idea that if good things happen to you, you deserve it. So if bad things happen to you, you must deserve it as well.

Dr. Susan Roll: Yeah it must be your fault. You do something wrong that is why you're poor. Yeah really good. That was lots of good answers. Perfect. And kind of getting a little bit into some policy, right? So you said there were deregulation. That has to do with policy, right? So what do we require of these corporations and what don't we require? What else do you think?

Audience Member: We talked about how some Americans just in general support high paying jobs. Like you're attending football games, you're going to baseball games, you're going to concerts. They get payed a lot of money. But the reason they get paid all that money is because fans are supporting them. So, I mean, I think one thing is that a lot of people that are in that type of industry, like the reason why they
are so famous, the reason why they get all this money is because you're paying for that ticket. You're supporting their success.

Dr. Susan Roll: Yeah right. And how many people get to be famous athletes? About this many right. It's really just a few folks that get to be at that level. And who is really making money off those athletes and the concerts? All the corporate sponsors, all the support of those. So interesting, good point. What else?

Audience Member: We talked about how people are [Inaudible] in poor areas. And they are not getting an opportunity for a good education or jobs.

Dr. Susan Roll: In America? Yeah good. Yeah what else?

Audience Member: Like a lot of my [Inaudible]

Dr. Susan Roll: Good right. Why don't they just get out? Why don't they just get a better job? Yeah right. So I love that you used the word systematic, right. So there's something about how we set things up here in this country that are really holding people down, aren't there. What else?

Audience Member: We kind of talked about something similar. How when you have a whole system of other inequalities in the US that are gender inequality and racial inequality it directly rise inequality. The fact that men get paid more than women generally is a proven statistic. And so that alone creates inequality.
Dr. Susan Roll: Good, yeah. So there's gender roles to this, there's some race and ethnicity layers to this right. Who gets to be rich? Who are these people over here off the charts? What's the color of their skin? What's their gender? Where are they from? Those kinds of things right. That's really real. It's ugly but it's what we like to talk about at these conversations on diversity because it's really real. And we need to be talking about it more in this country. I think we like to pretend that that's not happening. And the problem, what I would say the number one problem is that we are not talking about it. So my hats off to Trey and for those of you who come to come and talk about these things. Let's say it out loud, right. We're systematically leaving people behind in this country, right. Good. Any other thoughts folks who want to share about this? Do you have any thoughts policy? I'm just pushing the policy thing because it's my favorite thing. Yes.

Audience Member: And also related to the ratio of inequalities that needs to, the quality of health [Inaudible]

Dr. Susan Roll: Big issue right. Health and health care right. So who has, there's this new thing called, what's it called? No it's the, wealthy people have these doctors that are on call for them now.

Audience Member: Concierge.

Dr. Susan Roll: Yes concierge medicine, right. So you can pay a whole lot of money and your doctor is available to you 24/7. Can you imagine that? As oppose to the working mom that got to go stand in line at a clinic for eight hours to get her kids some antibiotics. Is that equality? Right, those kind of things. So great point. And our
healthcare system it's really clear. What else?

**Audience Member:** Another myth that is related to this is that the US has very, very high class mobility. That you can be born poor but if you work hard and go to school and do the right things that we have high class mobility. [Inaudible]. When the reality is that probably we are the last of the industrialization.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** Yes perfect. And thank you that's a perfect segway into my next slide.
So is it true that you can sort of pull yourself up by your bootstraps and move to the next class? Here's a graph I won't spend too much time on. But here's a really interesting thing this idea that David just shared about mobility, right. So can you actually move classes? If you're born to a poor family how easy is it to go ahead and move up to the middle class or to the upper class? Here's just a graph, sorry a geography of the United States, right. And this is talking about mobility. And what is saying in the places that have darker colors here and here there is less social class mobility. Why do you think that would be? Why do you think if you're born in the South it's harder to move up to middle class? If you were born poor in the South. Why is that? Why isn't it the same in the middle of the country or way out here where we are where there is some poor class mobility? Looks like Butte County is about middle, about average maybe. Any thoughts on that? What do you think?

**Audience Member:** The density of minorities?

**Dr. Susan Roll:** Okay might have something to do with density of minorities. Then what might that mean?

**Audience Member:** A larger, populations of minorities have less chance to be given a job.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** Okay yeah. So I think there's some race issues to this. And race also closely correlates with class doesn’t it in this country, right. Yeah good. What else?

**Audience Member:** I was going to say race.
**Dr. Susan Roll:** Race. Yeah, right. So we know heavier concentrations of African-Americans in the South is that what part of this is going on? Yeah. And it goes back to what you shared about systematic, right. There's something going on here. So are these, are the kids that are raised in the South getting as good in education as we're getting here in Butte County? Probably not. So we're talking about things like schools, benefits, all kinds of opportunities that we know help us move in this country. There are places in this country you don't have access to that. So again does this have to do with pulling yourself up by your bootstraps or doesn't mean where you're born is where you probably are going to stay in terms of class?

**Audience Member:** Another thing about race is the disproportionate number of people of color who are arrested and convicted for crimes that. And that huge prison population are talking about slave labor or cheap labor. It's a profitable business.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** Yeah great. I'm so glad you brought that up. Do you think we have some issues in our justice system that might be creating some of this too? Our justice system is fair to white people and brown people equally. No. Poor people and wealthy people who can afford to get a good lawyer, right? Who can afford to go to court? All these many, many layers. How we do sentencing differently based on the color of your skin. So thanks for bringing that up. Are whole justice system is fraught with these inequalities. Another layer of why this idea of mobility is not really real. What else?

**Audience Member:** I think it's also [Inaudible] what we learn about is majority white.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** Is that true? Yeah good.
Audience Member: Women or women of color are people and so a lot of people view, like me I walk into the classroom and a lot of the times I can identify with the people [Inaudible], not the same.

Dr. Susan Roll: Yeah good. So I think what you're getting at here which I think is really interesting layer to this is almost like the emotions behind that, right. So it's like if they're talking about me and the people that look like me I know that I'm welcome in this country. I'm a part of the history of this country, I'm a part of future of this country. But if I'm reading textbooks and hearing in classrooms not about people that look like me, what does that say about me then? Can I make it in this country too? Right. Great point. And it's a very subtle point, isn't it? And I think a point that when folks say you can pull yourself up by your bootstraps they're are not thinking about the subtle ways that we tell people that they're not going to make it in America, right. Any other thoughts on that? Yeah really good discussion. This is a smart group. Let me see what's next.
This is just one more thing about mobility. And then we are going to get to that survey I gave you. Here's a recent study found that upward mobility varies substantially within the US with greater mobility tend to have five characteristics. This is very interesting. Less segregation, less income inequality, better schools, greater social capital, and more stable families. Okay. So if you think about who has these things less segregation, less income inequality, better schools, greater social capital, more stable families those people have a more, a better opportunity to be able to move. And people in areas that are not, can't count those characteristics have less opportunity.
So okay. I’m going to move on to the survey that I asked you to take. This is really interesting I thought. So I want to talk about it. In some ways you know we could talk about this for a long time. We know there’s a lot of problems here. I want to tell you one other quick policy story. I'm convinced that our social policies has a very big reason why there is a lack of mobility in this country. And I want to tell you just one quick example. I did a study on something called the cliff effect and it has to do with benefits in this country. And we have this idea that we give welfare benefits to folks and they don't make good choices with their money often. And we had a lot of bad things to say about people on welfare in this country don't we. I did a study of something called the cliff effect which is this idea that when you go to apply for benefits there is a cutoff, right? So if you make up to a certain amount you can qualify for the benefits and once you get beyond that you no longer qualify for the benefits. Well I did a study looking specifically at the childcare benefit, because the childcare benefit is one of the ones that's most significant particularly for low income families. The government says if you're going to get welfare you have to work so families are going to work they need to get child care benefits, right? So the problem with this benefit I think really is a good example of where are public policies are falling short for families. Let's say Wendy here is a single mom and she's working and she has the childcare benefit because she's under that, just under the income limit and she's doing a really good job. And her boss comes to her one day and says Wendy you're doing such a good job I want to give you another $50 a week raise. If she takes the raise she loses her benefits. And $50 a week is that going to cover Wendy’s childcare? Definitely not, right? So what does she do? What do you do when you hit that right? You might stay on the benefit. I would. I would say anyone that’s smart and savvy with their money as smart and savvy as people on Wall Street would say you stay on the benefit. So what sometimes that happens in our public policies is we keep people
down, right? It's like someone was saying we have this systematic way of keeping people down. That's just one really basic example of Wendy wouldn't take the raise. Or she might get paid under the table, or she might reduce her hours, or she might cheat her paperwork. Whatever it's going to take but she's not going to go over that income limit because she can't afford to lose the childcare benefit. And in our welfare policies, in all kinds of policies that we have there are these pitfalls that keep people down in poverty. It's not because Wendy doesn't want to work hard because I believe, I believe very deeply that people on welfare really want to be working. Welfare is crappy, it's crummy to be on, it's hard to apply for, and it's hard to keep it. People don't want to be on welfare, people want to be working. It's a safety net and that keeps you there. So interesting. I want you all to be thinking a little bit about how does policy affect these things. So let's talk for just a few more minutes.
I want to ask you to think about the survey. And I asked you to think about the conflict between different groups. So this is in 2009, the Pew Research Center surveyed people about the conflict in America around these different issues. And then again in 2011. And so the blue lot, the blue bar represents 2009 and the red bar represents 2011. So it looks like people are starting to see or people are starting to be concerned that there is more conflict between rich and poor. Do you believe that? Did most people think that there is some significant conflict between rich and poor? I think this one is also very interesting between Black's and White's people think there's actually little less conflict between Black's and White's these days. Do people believe that? No. Yeah I think that's interesting. Let's look at a couple more.
Percent of Americans who say there is a strong or very strong conflict between rich and poor. Let’s see by race what people thought. It used to be that about 43% of White people thought that there is conflict between rich and the poor now it’s 65%. Okay Blacks started out much higher than White 66% of them said there is significant conflict between rich and poor now about 74% of Blacks would say that. Interesting huh. And the Latinos also was above Whites and is now about 61%. I thought this was interesting too, a little politics for you. Republicans in 2009 about 38% of them thought that there was a significant conflict between rich and poor. More recently about 55% do. Democrats it started at about 55% in 2009 and are now up to about 73%. Interesting. Any thoughts on that they want to share?

**Audience Member:** [Inaudible]

**Dr. Susan Roll:** I don’t think it’s the politicians. I think these are just folks who identify either Republican or Democrat. But that’s a good question, right. And who up there in Washington knows this is going on and what are they going to do about it? Now you bring up an interesting point. Who is in Washington? Who is making the policies? What’s the color of their skin? What’s their social class background? If you think about all who they are who’s making the policies around here?

**Audience Member:** Or their corporate sponsors.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** Or their corporate sponsors, right. And they’re heavily lobbied by corporations, right. So pretty interesting. I think there is a very significant policy issue here and if we are talking about changing policy you have to think about who has the power to change policy. Well it’s Congress and what do they look like? What do you
got?

**Audience Member:** [Inaudible] consider how gerrymander there areas are so it's going to influence people's ideas has changed. Like the polices have changed because they are gerrymandered people in and out get what they want.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** And when you say gerrymander you're talking about districts? Yeah so thank you for making that point. So what's happened is often politicians will carve out certain geographies, right, in their districts. So that the people that think like them vote for them. And they leave out the folks that don't vote like them, right. So you're absolutely right. That's one of the many policy issues that causes this is that we kind of play around with who gets to have the power essentially. Good.
Here's the answer to that last question. I wanted y'all to think about what you thought about this. Most people are wealthy because 46% of people say they know the right people or were born into wealthy families. 43% of people say of their own hard work, ambition or education. What do you think? I'm going to ask you to take a minute and talk your neighbor again and think about this a little bit. Do you believe this? Where were you on this spectrum? And have you changed at all after seeing that video, after some of the ideas here? Go ahead and talk to your neighbor for just a minute.

[Several minutes pass]

So any thoughts anybody wanted to share about this? Anything you talked to your neighbor about? What do you got?

Audience Member: I think most people that are wealthy were born on third base.

Dr. Susan Roll: You like that born on third base thing. Other folks think that? A lot of wealthy people born on third base. Does it mean that nobody can make it? No, right? But it's stacked up, right. What do you got?

Audience Member: Every once in a while there's that one story about this person that works really hard, [Inaudible].

Dr. Susan Roll: Good. Great point. The media really plays into our idea that you can make it in American, doesn't it. You're absolutely right. And is it good to celebrate folks that were born in rough neighborhoods and made it somewhere? Absolutely.
But is it a very small percentage? For sure. Yeah great point. But the media really plays into our ideas about this. What else?

Audience Member: [Inaudible]

Dr. Susan Roll: Yeah it wouldn't be a story anymore. Like so what we all made it. Yeah good point. Yeah so we really sensationalized those and it points out that it really is just a small percentage of people that can do it. What else?

Audience Member: [Inaudible] more aware of what's going on between the [Inaudible].

Dr. Susan Roll: That's interesting.

Audience Member: So there are more like educated people like [Inaudible].

Dr. Susan Roll: Oh so you think that's what these people are. These are the smart ones.

Audience Member: It was just a thought.

Dr. Susan Roll: It's a good thought. Yeah what else?

Audience Member: Well partly think about too is that whole issue about the social mobility that when you don't come from means that even if you make it, nobody else in your family has. You're still taking care of all these other relatives who are not
doing well. And you don't inherit what your parents pass on. And you don't get a condo when you get married.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** People get condos when they get married?

**Audience Member:** So those are things that people don't get. They don't get all the other accessories.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** Absolutely that's a really good point, right? So you might have one kid in your family that did great and went to college and got a great job. And that kid is still having to support his mom, his brothers, and sisters, and all those kinds of things. And doesn't get a condo when he gets married, good point. Yeah good. Yeah really good ideas. So let's look a little bit more about who these folks are.
So this is how people voted on the same survey, okay? So all people say it's about a 50-50 split, right, 46, 43 people. But if you look at men and women differently a few more women than men believe that people knew the right people and that's how they were able to advance. Okay. Let's look at it by race. About 44% of White people said it's because you are born into wealthy families. But 54% of Blacks said it's because you're born into wealthy families. Interesting right? I wonder why there is a race difference there. Let's look at political affiliation. About 32% of Republicans say it's because you know people, you were born into the right family. But about 58% of Democrats say it is because you were born in the right family. Interesting. And then last and I thought this was really interesting. I'm not sure if you can see this. But by age the older folks in our communities about 37% said if you're born in the right family, sorry the folks are rich because they were born in the right family. But younger people, many of you all in this very room between 18 and 34 about 51% of you said it's because they were born into the right family, right. So I wonder if that's, that's pretty interesting what might that tell us? Any thoughts on what that means? What do you think?

**Audience Member:** [Inaudible] 65 or above is from a time when people could work hard and you could live a nice life style. And then because times change we see a different type of culture than they did.

**Dr. Susan Roll:** Good yes absolutely. So maybe the mobility has changed and actually it's closely connected when we stopped supporting unions as much in this country. I'm glad you brought that up. So times have changed. What else might be a part of this? Did you also have something to share?
Audience Member: Well I was going to say because when those people were younger [Inaudible]. It wasn't as I guess difficult for them because the poor people to the wealthy people wasn't such a big gap.

Dr. Susan Roll: Absolutely right. Yeah. So it kind of more was like this but as we saw in the film it's much more like this now, isn't it. I also think that we are just starting to be more aware of it. I think part of this is we're talking about it. We're talking about it here at Chico State today right. We are starting to talk about this idea that well wait a minute did that CEO of Walmart really pull himself up by his bootstraps. By the way the Walmart family I believe is 3 of the top 10 richest people in the country are all Walton's. Very interesting. Do you think the Walton's worked harder than the rest of us? Yeah, no way. So interesting to think about. So I'm glad that I hope this is an indicator that we're talking about this more. Younger people are starting to be more aware of the fact that we had this income disparity and it’s problematic. And I hope it means we're also going to go out and change public policy.
Paul Krugman’s column “How Fares the Dream?” examines income inequality in the United States:

If King could see America now, I believe that he would be disappointed, and feel that his work was nowhere near done. He dreamed of a nation in which his children “will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

But what we actually became is a nation that judges people not by the color of their skin — or at least not as much as in the past — but by the size of their paychecks. And in America, more than in most other wealthy nations, the size of your paycheck is strongly correlated with the size of your father’s paycheck.

I’m going to read you one last quote, because I thought it was a good one. When I was doing some homework for this presentation I’m a fan of the New York Times which I will admit is very left-leaning. But one of my favorite columnists is Paul Krugman and he says this "If King could see America now, I believe that he would be disappointed, and feel that his work is nowhere near done. He dreamed of a nation in which his children will not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character. But what we actually became is a nation that judges people not by the color of their skin -- or at least not as much in the past -- but by the size of their paychecks. And in America, more than in most other wealthy countries the size of your paycheck is strongly correlated with the size of your father's paycheck". Do you believe it? Good. Go out and start talking about it. Thank you.

[Audience Applause]