The American Pie: Visualizing Wealth Inequality in the United States

Izvor: https://minbarlive.com/videos/american-pie

> A street-level demonstration uses a real pie to show how Americans estimate the distribution of $98 trillion in household wealth — and how far those guesses are from reality. When the actual figures are revealed (the top 20% own about 90%, while the poorest 20% are net debtors), participants react with shock.

SAŽETAK

This segment turns the abstract debate over US wealth inequality into a tangible exercise using a real pie representing roughly $98 trillion of American household wealth. Members of the public are handed slices and asked to divide them across five groups, from the wealthiest 20% down to the poorest 20%, according to how they believe wealth is actually distributed. Most participants give the top group around two slices and allot meaningful portions to the middle and lower-middle classes. The reveal shows that no one came close: the wealthiest 20% hold about nine of the ten slices — roughly 90% of the wealth — while the upper-middle and middle classes share about one slice between them. The lower-middle class receives roughly 0.3% of a slice, described as 'crumbs', and the poorest 20% receive no pie at all — in fact they are in 'pie debt', owing on average more than $6,000. The segment then narrows its focus to the top 1%, who alone hold four slices. The gap between public perception and the actual numbers is the through-line, with reactions ranging from surprise to dismay. Readers who want a clear, visual entry point into the numbers behind wealth inequality will find the full transcript useful, as the contrast between guesswork and reality is laid out slice by slice.

KLJUČNE PORUKE

- The exercise frames US household wealth as a pie worth about $98 trillion, divided across five groups from the wealthiest 20% to the poorest 20%.
- Participants consistently overestimated how much wealth is shared by the middle and lower-middle classes, and underestimated the concentration at the top.
- In reality, the wealthiest 20% hold roughly 90% of the wealth — about nine of the ten slices.

> The upper-middle and middle classes together share about one slice, with roughly 80% of a slice and 20% of a slice respectively.

> The lower-middle class holds about 0.3% of a slice — described in the segment as 'crumbs'.

> The poorest 20% have no pie at all; on average they are more than $6,000 in debt and are described as being in 'pie debt'.

> Zooming in further, the top 1% alone hold four slices — a concentration that surprised participants when revealed.

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A Simple Question: Who Gets What?

You want to talk about **wealth inequality**? No. All right. The topic may be everywhere on the campaign trail. You want to talk about wealth inequality in America? Not really. But off it? Not so much. Hey, you want to talk about wealth inequality? Oh, another time. We'll catch you later.

So we got some free pie here. Free pie? We turned America's economic pie into a real one. This is the American pie. And found a lot more people willing to address a simple question: Who gets what?

Dividing Up the Pie

We have five plates. All righty. This represents everybody in America. Okay. So you've got your wealthiest 20% all the way down to your poorest 20%. And that is the American pie. The pie itself represents about $98 trillion of household wealth in America. We asked people to dole it out as accurately as possible.

I guess start off with two slices on the wealthiest. Okay. How many pieces of the pie would you put on the middle class? Put four. Four. All right. That's the middle class. Let's do half a piece to the poorest. Like right in the middle there. Yep. Okay, perfect. Sorry. We're gonna have to move some of the wealthiest to the lower class. How much? Two pieces to the lower middle, lower middle class. Okay.

The Reality Check

So can I show you what reality looks like? Not like this, obviously. Unfortunately not. No one was even close. So it's actually nine pieces of pie. Wow. Yeah. 90% of the wealth is right here in the top. That's terrible.

Now, the upper middle class and the middle class. They share one piece. So these guys, they've got about 80% of a piece. They get 20% of a piece. And then the lower

middle class, they've got 0.3% of a piece. Yeah. They have some crumbs there. There you go. That's what they get.

And the poorest, they have no pie. In fact, they have less than no pie. They actually have a bill for pie. They're in pie debt. They owe pie. People in the poorest 20% are, on average, more than $6,000 in debt. It's very sad. Yeah, it's very sad. It's very depressing. I grew up here. Really? Uh-huh. That was me.

Zooming In on the Top 1%

Let me show you something else. So even if you just look at the wealthiest and you go to the top 1%. So the wealthiest 1% of everybody, these people alone have not one, not two, not three, but four slices of pie. What do you think? I don't know who these people are. Is that what you expected? Not at all.

#wealth inequality #US household wealth distribution #economic pie visualization #top 1% wealth concentration #public perception vs. economic reality #debt among the poorest 20%

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