

## **Newsletter 29 Princeton makes it official USA Has Become Oligarchy No Democracy**

Dear Readers,

For this installment of my free geopolitical newsletter I want to share a piece I wrote in 2014 well before the 2016 elections showed the overwhelming power of money in the US political spectrum, when a putative billionaire, Donald Trump, becomes President in one of the most bizarre election campaigns in not only US but world history and then, after promising to “drain the swamp” names a cabinet with more billionaires than any US President in history, and then goes on to push through a monumental tax “reform” that uniquely benefits the 1% to the detriment of the vast majority. I share this with you to give an indication from a quite other perspective how policies and politics in the United States over the course of the past decades has become so dangerously skewed to the one interest group which cares least about the health and welfare of the citizens of America or anywhere else for that matter.

If you find the installments of my free newsletter as well as my articles and interviews helpful to gain a clearer view of our world, I would very much hope that you purchase one or another of my several books via Amazon. I would also encourage you to consider making a support contribution at my website, [www.williamengdahl.com](http://www.williamengdahl.com), that I am able to continue offering my content for free.

Thank you again for your interest,  
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# Princeton makes it official USA Has Become Oligarchy No Democracy

November 11, 2014 Author: [F. William Engdahl](#)



**American media is fond of speaking about “Russian Oligarchs” as if Russia were the only nation that allowed accumulation of such unprecedented wealth. The Yeltsin days of dis-order and collapse indeed saw the rapid rise of many fortunes and oligarchs—persons of very much wealth. Some of them have proven patriotic citizens, some like Khodokorvsky or the late unlamented Boris Berezovsky proved to be loveless gangsters. A new study, however by a Princeton University Professor of the influence of very wealthy or economically powerful persons on American political policies makes clear for the first time in such a study that a genuine American Oligarchy has staged a slow coup d’etat over US foreign and domestic policy over the past three decades since the era of Ronald Reagan. This American oligarchy today is the major force for war and dis-order across the planet.**

I completed my undergraduate university studies in one of America’s most elite universities, Princeton. It was during the early 1960’s and classmates came from elite preparatory private schools like Andover or Exeter. Classmates with names like Firestone or Prince Faisal were attending. Then in those days tuition cost \$650 a year, the price I paid for my used 1956 Chevy. I was only able to

pay that because I was awarded a full university scholarship. Today tuition for one year at Princeton costs \$43,450. Princeton speaks of money and elite families. So I noted with great interest a new study published by a Princeton professor and a colleague from Northwestern on wealth in America since 1981.

Martin Gilens is Professor of Politics at Princeton University together with Benjamin I. Page Professor at Northwestern University have published results of a unique analysis “using a unique data set that includes measures of the key variables for 1,779 policy issues.”

The study concludes that, “Multivariate analysis indicates that economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on US government policy, while average citizens and mass-based interest groups have little or no independent influence. The results provide substantial support for theories of Economic-Elite [Domination...](#)”

Their study further concluded, “When the preferences of economic elites and the stands of organized interest groups are controlled for, the preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public [policy.](#)”

Finally they conclude, “...Our analyses suggest that majorities of the American public actually have little influence over the policies our government adopts. Americans do enjoy many features central to democratic governance, such as regular elections, freedom of speech and association, and a widespread (if still contested) franchise. But we believe that if policymaking is dominated by powerful business organizations and a small number of affluent Americans, then America’s claims to being a democratic society are seriously [threatened.](#)”

In a subsequent media interview, Gilens noted what they concluded in their analysis of volumes of data from 1981-2002 for government policy decisions and the role of elites versus ordinary citizens in some 1,800 different policy initiatives: “One central factor is the role of money in our political system, and the overwhelming role that affluent individuals that affluent individuals and organized interests play, in campaign finance and in lobbying. And the second thing is the lack of mass organizations that represent and facilitate the voice of ordinary citizens. Part of that would be the decline of unions in the country

which has been quite dramatic over the last 30 or 40 years. And part of it is the lack of a socialist or a worker's [party](#)."

The study verifies with ample empirical data what I have witnessed during the course of my own life as an American over the past four decades. There has been a silent coup d'état of the monied class, an American oligarchy. Names such as Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, David Rockefeller, Sheldon Adelson (main financier of Mitt Romney for President in 2012), the Koch Brothers (main financiers of the Tea Party political movement), George H.W. Bush and family. The top 1% have reshaped the fundamentals of American life, culture and above all politics. A decision to wage war today against Iraq, Afghanistan or Syria depends not on the will of average Americans. Obama was elected on a pledge to close the US Army torture center at Guantanamo and six years on has yet to do. He won a Nobel Peace Prize in his first month and proceeded to wage more war in Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya and most recently Syria and Ukraine.

It is important to have this huge shift in mind when judging "America." The United States of America today bears little resemblance to that I knew when I grew up in the early 1960's, when a used good Chevy cost \$650 and college tuition could be afforded by ordinary Americans if they were willing to study.

The oligarchy that has taken policy control behind a thin façade of "democracy" has ultimately ruined the industrial and social fabric of the United States. They are the ones behind the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or bank deregulation so they can loot the planet. This new study by Princeton's Prof. Gilens is a refreshing attempt, even if academic, from one of the most elite academic universities, to shed some light on what is fundamentally wrong with America over the past three decades.

<https://journal-neo.org/2014/11/11/princeton-makes-it-official-usa-has-become-oligarchy-no-democracy/>