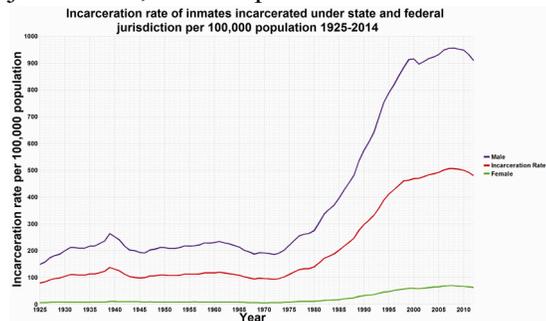


Incarcerations and the Media

Progress on many and perhaps all major issues facing humanity today is blocked, because every plausible countermeasure threatens someone with substantive control over the mainstream media.

A not-quite-counterexample is the incarceration rate in the US, which jumped from 0.1 to 0.5% of the population in the last quarter of the twentieth century after being stable for the previous half century. This was created by “get tough on crime” policies enacted in response to changes in media policies to focus on the police blotter and reduce spending on investigative journalism; see the plot:



Investigative journalism is vital to democracy and a threat to people with power over the media.

Countries with better media tend to have less corruption.¹

1 Brunetti and Weder (2003) “A free press is bad news for corruption”, *Journal of Public Economics*, **82**.

An example of the problems with news deserts followed the closure around 1999 of the local newspaper in Bell, CA, a city of roughly 35,000 souls. The city manager decided, in essence, that the watchdog was dead, and it was time to party. When problems were documented in 2010, his compensation was over \$1 million per year, and the city was near bankruptcy.²

The US and the world are facing much bigger problems from the suppression of honest coverage of the range of perspectives in the research literature on almost anything.

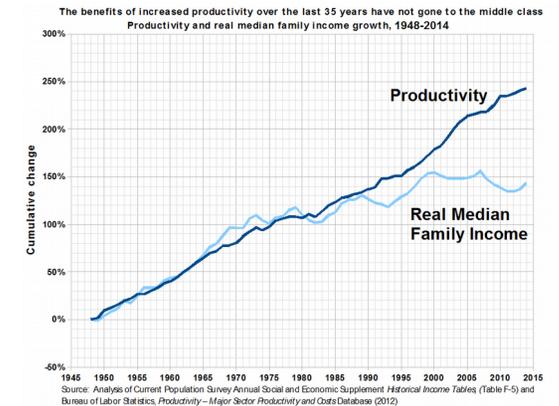
For example, on political economy, the mainstream media have primarily pushed “supply-side economics” or “Reaganomics,” claiming we need to give more money to “job creators.” The US has done that increasingly since 1981. The economy has continued to grow, but the gains were no longer broadly shared; see the accompanying plot of productivity and median family income in the US since 1947.³

The designated “job creators” failed to create enough jobs, and the median family income in the US

2 Wikipedia, “City of Bell scandal”, accessed 2017-01-23.

3 Wikipedia, “Income inequality in the United States”.

increased only 23% while the average doubled between 1973 and 2013. The gap amounts to roughly \$39,000 per year for the median family. *That's over \$100 per day that the typical American family pays to watch television.*⁴



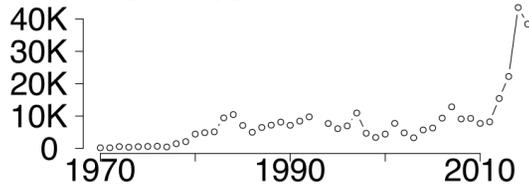
By contrast, “demand-side economists” insist that the primary problem slowing economic growth throughout US history has been that consumers have never had enough money to buy the goods and services that the economy could produce without driving up inflation. They recommend a federal job guarantee and free education from the cradle throughout adult life.⁵

Similarly, the September 11 attacks and the rise of Islamic terrorism (involving at most 0.14% of Muslims) have both been primarily driven by US support for the autocratic Saudi royal family. This support motivated the September 11 attacks. The

4 Wikiversity, “Documenting crony capitalism”.

5 Wikiversity, “Winning the War on Terror”, accessed 2017-03-28.

US response to September 11 drove people off the sidelines to support our opposition, generating the recent spike in terrorism; see the accompanying plot of terrorist deaths:



We argue here that the US might not have provided such support to the Saudis without impact on the media of the advertising budgets of the major oil companies -- and the recent spike in international terrorism would not have occurred.⁵

*We have enemies
because we have friends like these.*

Major advertisers also seem to have benefitted from US actions against democracy in Syria in 1949, Cuba 1952, Iran 1953, Guatemala 1954, Vietnam 1954, Brazil 1964, and Chile 1973 plus US-led invasions of Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq 2003, to name only those with solid documentation.⁵

What can we do?

*Trump is right: The media are dishonest
and an enemy of the people.
Turn them off.*

If this concerns you, seek alternative

sources of information and turn off ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox, and cable television. Support instead noncommercial investigative journalism with transparent funding that puts everything they produce on the web in the public domain. These are the first and most important measures outlined in “Winning the War on Terror” on Wikiversity.⁵

If only 3.5% of the population does this, we will have major change, according to leading conflict scholar Erica Chenoweth: She found that success came to every major governmental change effort of the twentieth century that got support from 3.5% of the population.⁶

We can do this. Yes, we can. *Si, se puede.*

Help with technology

Low-income people can get a desktop for \$50 and a laptop for \$100 from “ConnectingForGood.org”:

⁶ Erica Chenoweth, Nov. 4, 2013, My Talk at TEDxBoulder: Civil Resistance and the “3.5% Rule” (<https://rationalinsurgent.com/2013/11/04/my-talk-at-tedxboulder-civil-resistance-and-the-3-5-rule>)

NE Wyandotte County Computer Center
2006 North 3rd Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101
ph: 913-730-0677

They also offer classes.

The Johnson County Library provides classes and events to help people improve tech literacy. To find what's available go to "jocolibrary.org" > Events (upper right) > "All classes and events" > "Event Type": Technology > Apply.

Social Media Training

Online, on-demand training on social media is available from “socialmovementtechnologies.org”. On that web site, click “Training”, then “Click here for our On-Demand training recordings”. The first class is free for anyone.

With questions and comments, please contact:

Spencer Graves, PhD
Founder
EndowmentForJournalism.org
EffectiveDefense.org
spencer.graves@effectivedefense.org
M: 408-655-4567 2017-04-11