

Abstract:

Incomes in Canada, as in many other countries, are becoming increasingly unequal. In North America this process has several notable features. First, after 40 years of stability, income has since 1980 been increasingly concentrated in the hands of the top 0.01% of earners. Second, this concentration correlates with an explosion in the relative earnings of corporate CEOs, a sort of "corporate kleptocracy." Third, the top earners have appropriated most of the productivity gains over this period. The resources and political influence of the super-rich underlie the growing prominence of the "elite" agenda: lower taxes, smaller government and privatization or shrinkage of social programs. The marketing of this agenda may explain much of the nonsense that contaminates health policy debates.

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