

Wayne Rooney and the Inequality Issue

Anthony Harrop examines why there are very large differences in wealth within a society. It appears that long periods of peace allow special interest groups to accumulate wealth for themselves, whereas wars tend to level wealth. Is there an alternative solution to war? The Bible persistently associates corruption and injustice with wealth accumulation, but perhaps scandal has a role to play.

Is Wayne Rooney's £300,000 a week (£15million pa) either reasonable or just, or is it a prime example of capitalism red in tooth and claw? And if we accept 30-year-old Rooney's 27,000% more than the average British wage (<http://www.whatfootballersearch.com/player/wayne-rooney/>) why do we think it strange that 50 year-old bankers hanker after the same compensation?

Global sport is the worst current example of inequality and – too often – corruption. FIFA, the IAAF, the IOC and some aspects of the gentleman's game cricket compound ambition, status, inefficiency and corruption, whether state-sponsored or private. Sport has become a mirror that we hold up to ourselves, testing our willingness to overlook vast inequality merely because it's a

spectator activity. If we condone the wage inequality of the high-flyers in global sport, why not of those at the summit of global business?

The twin issues of inequality and corruption have been major themes of academic research. Thomas Piketty's blockbuster *Capitalism in the 21st Century* published in 2013 has done for wealth inequality what Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* (2006)

Wayne Rooney's £6m home in Prestbury, Cheshire



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