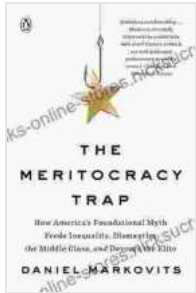


How America's Foundational Myth Feeds Inequality, Dismantles the Middle Class, and Undermines Democracy



The Meritocracy Trap: How America's Foundational Myth Feeds Inequality, Dismantles the Middle Class, and Devours the Elite by Daniel Markovits

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 5937 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 442 pages



America's foundational myth of rugged individualism and meritocracy has shaped the nation's history and culture. This myth holds that individuals can achieve success through hard work and determination, regardless of their social or economic background. However, this myth has also had a profound impact on inequality, dismantling the middle class, and undermining democracy.

The Myth of Rugged Individualism

Rugged individualism is the belief that individuals should rely on themselves to achieve success, rather than on government or social programs. This belief is deeply rooted in the American psyche, and it is

often invoked to justify policies that benefit the wealthy and powerful at the expense of the poor and middle class.

The myth of rugged individualism ignores the role that social and economic factors play in success. For example, children born into wealthy families have access to better education, healthcare, and nutrition than children born into poor families. This gives them a significant advantage in life, and it makes it much more difficult for poor children to achieve success.

The Myth of Meritocracy

The myth of meritocracy is the belief that individuals are rewarded based on their talent and effort. This myth is often used to justify inequality, as it suggests that the wealthy and powerful deserve their wealth and power because they have earned it through hard work.

The myth of meritocracy ignores the role that luck and privilege play in success. For example, many wealthy individuals inherited their wealth from their parents, and many successful individuals were born into well-connected families. These advantages are not based on talent or effort, but they give individuals a significant advantage in life.

The Impact of America's Foundational Myth on Inequality

America's foundational myth of rugged individualism and meritocracy has contributed to the nation's high levels of inequality. This myth has led to policies that benefit the wealthy and powerful at the expense of the poor and middle class. For example, tax cuts for the wealthy and deregulation of corporations have increased inequality, while cuts to social programs have made it more difficult for the poor to get ahead.

The myth of rugged individualism has also led to a decline in social mobility. In the past, it was possible for individuals to move up the economic ladder through hard work and determination. However, today, it is much more difficult for poor individuals to achieve success. This is due, in part, to the fact that the wealthy and powerful have captured the nation's political system and have used it to rig the system in their favor.

The Impact of America's Foundational Myth on Democracy

America's foundational myth of rugged individualism and meritocracy has also undermined democracy. This myth has led to a decline in civic engagement and a rise in political polarization. It has also made it more difficult for the government to address the needs of the people.

The decline in civic engagement is due, in part, to the myth of rugged individualism. This myth suggests that individuals should rely on themselves to solve their problems, rather than on the government. As a result, many Americans have become disengaged from politics and have stopped voting.

The rise in political polarization is also due, in part, to the myth of rugged individualism. This myth suggests that individuals should compete with each other for resources, rather than cooperating with each other. As a result, American society has become more divided, and it has become more difficult for the government to find common ground.

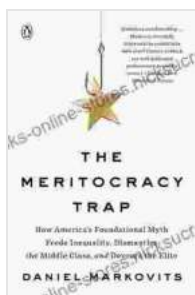
The myth of rugged individualism has also made it more difficult for the government to address the needs of the people. This myth suggests that the government should not intervene in the economy or provide social

programs. As a result, the government has been unable to effectively address issues such as poverty, inequality, and climate change.

America's foundational myth of rugged individualism and meritocracy has had a profound impact on the nation's history and culture. This myth has contributed to the nation's high levels of inequality, dismantled the middle class, and undermined democracy. It is time for Americans to challenge this myth and to create a more just and equitable society.

References

- Bellah, R. N. (1985). Habits of the heart: Individualism and commitment in American life. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Domhoff, G. W. (2010). Who rules America? Power and politics in the Obama era. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Piketty, T. (2014). Capital in the twenty-first century. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Reich, R. B. (2018). The common good. New York: Picador.
- Sen, A. (2009). The idea of justice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

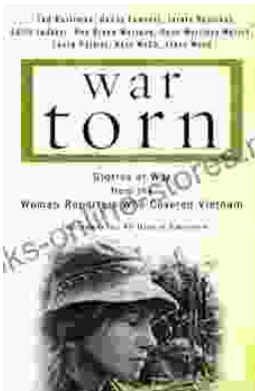


The Meritocracy Trap: How America's Foundational Myth Feeds Inequality, Dismantles the Middle Class, and Devours the Elite by Daniel Markovits

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

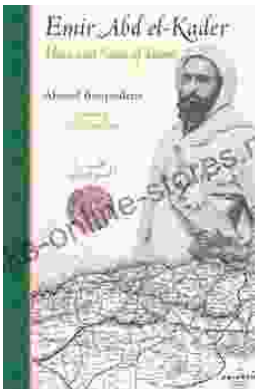
Language : English
File size : 5937 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
X-Ray : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 442 pages



Stories of War from the Women Reporters Who Covered Vietnam

The Vietnam War was one of the most significant events of the 20th century. It was a complex and controversial conflict that had a profound impact on both the United States...



The Hero and Saint of Islam: A Perennial Philosophy

Ali ibn Abi Talib, the fourth caliph of Islam, is a figure of great significance in the Muslim world. He is revered as a hero and a saint, and his...