

AS WITH VOTING, IN MARKETING, REAL PEOPLE DON'T COUNT ANYMORE

For some time, it has become increasingly clear that our politicians can pursue policies that benefit just their rich donors—austerity, killing Medicare, bailing out banksters at the expense of homeowners—while ignoring their purported constituents.

So I guess it comes as no surprise that advertisers are beginning to adopt the same approach.

The top 10 percent of American households, [AdAge] adds, now account for nearly half of all consumer spending, and a disproportionate share of that spending comes from the top 10's upper reaches.

"Simply put," sums up *Ad Age's* David Hirschman, "a small plutocracy of wealthy elites drives a larger and larger share of total consumer spending and has outsize purchasing influence — particularly in categories such as technology, financial services, travel, automotive, apparel, and personal care."

[snip]

"As the very rich become even richer," as *Ad Age* observes, "they amass greater purchasing power, creating an increasingly concentrated market for luxury goods and services as well as consumer goods overall."

In the future, if current trends continue, no one else but the rich will essentially matter — to Madison Avenue.

"More than ever before," the new *Ad Age*

paper bluntly sums up, “the wealthiest households will be the households with significant disposable income to spend.”

Why market to the mere middle class (which is busy, in any case, falling out of the middle class) when marketing to the super rich is so much more lucrative?

If advertisers really do start blowing off the middle class, it might have an interesting mixed result. On one hand, there may be a greater gap between what people see on TV commercials and shows, driving insecurity about not matching the lifestyles you see on TV (then again, maybe advertisers will just stop advertising on TV).

But if the middle class isn't the target of a barrage of advertising, it may lead to a less materialist lifestyle, leaving people to invest in their communities rather than their toys.

Who knows? One thing is clear: increasing inequality is totally defining our society. And it's not entirely clear how the newly redefined society is going to end up.