# Common Error No. 22 [1]

Written by **Dr Madsen Pirie** [2] | Thursday 31 January 2008

**22. "The free market is unfair because we do not all have equal votes as we do in a democracy."**

The argument is that people with more resources unfairly have more market power than others, whereas in a democracy everyone counts equally. We would think it absurd if everyone voted on what kind of MP3 player people should have, and everyone received the one which gained the majority vote; yet this is how democracies work.

In a market we can all choose what type of MP3 player we want, and receive the one we choose, even if it is not the one preferred by a majority. This makes the market a source of greater freedom than a democracy. In a democracy we have to settle for the majority choice on a large package of issue taken together. In a market we can pick and choose to satisfy our preferences on individual items. We can take Apple for some products and Sony for others. We cannot in our government choose different parties for different policy areas.

People do not have the same buying power. Some people can offer goods and services worth more than those of other people. Older people might have more savings or command higher salaries than younger people. Those with more education and skills might become wealthier than others as a result, and the same applies to those with special talents, such as footballers, musicians, or entrepreneurs.

It means that some people can afford more or better goods and services in their market choices. This is because they offer more valuable service to others, and it is what spurs others to try and do likewise. If the rewards were allocated by equal votes, a majority could vote themselves a large share of the total, and make entrepreneurial activity no longer worthwhile. The economy would stagnate and no-one would benefit. This is not the kind of "fairness" that is worth having.

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