

In the 1900s an idea was developed called “The American dream”. The phrase became widespread and was attributed as a widespread motivation to move to America. The United States was known as a place of freedom, where everyone is on the same pedestal and has an equal chance to succeed. That was only partly true back then and is especially false in the modern age. While there is still a large amount of people who are coming to America for a better life, the “American dream looks very different today”. Two of the biggest proponents of who succeeds in achieving their dreams in the United States boil down to what power you have, and what class you are in. Two prominent opinions discussing class and power in the United States are William Domhoff’s work titled “The Class-Domination Theory of Power” and Gregory Mantsios writing titled “Class in America”. Both Domhoff and Mantsios writings analyze wealth and power in the United States and illustrate how the dynamics between them are resulting in a changing of the “American Dream” and overall greater economic hardship for the American public.

The American dream means different things depending on who you ask, but it is often categorized as the belief that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed, if they possess the skills and perseverance needed. Recently, this has become less of the case, and in many places it is untrue. Gregory Mantsios work “class in America” analyses parts of the American dream, and other aspects that go into determining. Class is something you are born into, and while it is possible to gain standing in a higher class, it is growing harder to do so. Mantsios also portrays several misconceptions about the United States and illustrates how they are incorrect. He mentions 4 myths, they are that the United States has no class system, the United States is mostly a middle-class nation, the United States is climbing up the economic ladder, and that everyone

ideas show how distorted many people view of the United States is. The class system in America is present but not discussed often, and the skew is very distorted. There are way more people on the left side of the skew than on the right. Mantsios states that 1 percent of the population holds 34 percent of the wealth, while 13 percent of the population meets the official standards for poverty. There is also a large percentage of people that are close to the poverty line, more than people who are close to that illusive 1 percent. The fourth myth is also very telling when it comes to the American dream. Not everyone has an equal opportunity to gain wealth, and many people face discrimination based on race or gender. Discrimination is often based upon what class people fall into as well. This has helped to create what is known as the cycle of poverty, which for some is generational and inescapable. Another aspect of both the class system and the American dream is power, which is even harder to obtain.

William Domhoff explores power in his work “the class domination theory of power”. The main idea present is that like wealth, the power in America is held by the top 1 percent. Domhoff attributes those with power as “the power elite” and describes this class as those who hold positions of power and control important and valuable things. The main people in this elite class are people like CEO's, directors of organizations, and anyone who helps control major institutions in America. This small group controls things like banks, large corporations, and often works with and influences the government. This relation between elites, and especially between the elite and the government drives many changes in society. Many of these changes being detrimental to the American public. A good example of this is mentioned when Domhoff writes about the working class of America. The working class in America has little to no power in America, and many policies are enacted without the workers in mind. For example, the stock market, controlled by the elites' crashes, the working class sees most of the turmoil. Just like the

gain any. The power over life in the United States is skewed, and that has made life more difficult for those who don't have any.

Both Domhoff and Mantsios ideas in my view are accurate and correctly express the skewed power and class systems in America. Class does exist and many happen to fall into the lower categories, and with that possess no power. Those in lower categories also have a very little percentage of wealth. With these factors addressed, it is safe to say that the preconceived ideas of The American dream have changed. However, this does not mean the dream is gone and many people still chase the American dream today, albeit a different version. There is also hope for change in America, mostly revolving around helping those trapped in the endless cycle of poverty, and possibly increasing taxes on the 1 percent. Overall, the core idea of the American dream is not present in modern times, and the hierocracies of power and wealth distribution have caused greater poverty and economic turmoil for millions of Americans.