

SOC 105

Third Graded Essay

In American social society today, we have been taught to refrain from acknowledging the existence of socioeconomic classes and ignore the disadvantages that those of the lower classes face. This is because the pure concept of a class system in America goes against the core ideology of our nation's collective consciousness: that we all have equal opportunity to strive for success in America. But despite what our collective consciousness encourages us to believe through views circulated by academic institutions and our government, the class system is alive and well in the United States. Mantsios' "Class in America" provides explanations on how we are disadvantaged from the very beginning with obvious differences in schooling. From there, Domhoff's "Power in America" dives into the detailed, more subtle inner workings of the upper class, and how they go on to gain increasing power in our government and economy - making us even more powerless to stop them.

Class standing impacts a person's development in many ways, one way being through education. Mantsios states that students born to wealthier families have the opportunity to attend higher-level private institutions than peers coming from families with lower incomes. Along with more quality education that comes with private schooling, wealthier parents can also afford extracurricular enrichment opportunities in the form of tutors or summer programs. These benefits for upper class pupils add up to provide an overall better education, which is evidenced through correlational research showing average standardized test scores as being higher for students from families with larger incomes. Nonetheless educational institutions hold a common philosophy that regardless of socioeconomic background, your educational merit and

discredits this ideology by pointing out that even with many different financial aid packages available, costs for post-secondary education for economically disadvantaged students can sometimes be too overbearing. He acknowledges that while rates of lower income students enrolling in higher-level/private universities is increasing, the withdrawal rate is also increasing as the cost of tuition and textbooks simply becomes too much.

The differences in education obtained by upper class students versus students of the middle or lower class manifest into further divides in post-collegiate career opportunities. When upper class children graduate, they are inducted as full members of the upper class by participating in one or multiple categories - the social upper class, the corporate community, and/or the policy-planning network. As Domhoff illustrates in his essay, these separate groups serve to function in the perpetuation of upper class control in our government and economy by instilling upper class worldviews in its members, boosting corporate control over the economy, and spreading their views to the rest of the American population. Reigning supreme among these different groups in the upper class is what Domhoff terms the power elite, which consists of working members within the upper class that actively concentrate upper class power into corporations that drive the economy, discussions that shape the policies in government, and politicians that direct the fate of the nation. The working class is stifled under the tight grip the upper class holds in these systems through measures that discourage their rights to organize, heavy taxation, and growing deregulation of corporations. One of the core ideas that America was founded on was that you can choose leaders that will represent your beliefs, but the candidates on the ballots are supported by the upper class members that placed them there. These conditions that the working class face actively disprove the views projected by the U.S.

the core dominators or our own political system.

In a system that works to serve the needs of the dominant group in society, the vast majority suffers the consequences. The top one percent of our society keeps the largest portion of the nation's profit, which actively goes against the American collective consciousness ideology that this nation is a land of equal opportunity for all. In an economic and political system that was built to serve everyone, it really only serves a minority. The underrepresented and underappreciated middle and lower classes in our country deserve economic and political reform to make this country what the collective consciousness claims it to be.