

How the Power Elite Emphasize Class in America

Although America is an amazing country, and many people are given amazing rights in America, there are several issues with our class system. For example, there is a group that many know as the power elite, the 1%, the CEOs, the money makers (and keepers). This group are the leaders of the world and have lots of power in the nation, and maybe even the world. This group controls a lot of the world, and what happens in it, as well as the rest of our class system. The class system contains everyone in the US and separates them into several groups based on the money they make and the money they have. However, the class system is utterly and intensely rigid and broad, placing the majority of the population in one class, the middle class, despite the fact that they all have seemingly drastically different lives. The majority of the population is in the middle class, while the top class is so incredibly small yet so incredibly powerful.

In the chapter *Class in America - 2006* by Gregory Mantsios, in the book *Understanding Racism, Sexism, Heterosexism, and Class Privilege*, the author explains the classes of America and demonstrates both the broadness and the rigidity of the class descriptions. The article describes three families, who are all described to be in the middle class but participate in extremely different activities, from the school they attend to the vacations they go on, to the extracurricular activities they participate in. One family, who was seemingly the highest class of the three, went to an extraordinarily expensive private school, and went on multiple expensive family vacations throughout the year, including tropical trips, summer camps for the kids, and winter skiing trips for the family. Furthermore, they had two permanent residents that they lived in. However, the utterly opposite family described, which seemed to be the lowest class of the

and participated in social activities at their church, with no family vacations. The mother and father are a waitress and a janitor, respectively, with only one semester of community college to be classified as their higher education. Some how, in some way, these two families are categorized as the same class, the middle class, despite the vulgar, drastic difference as can be seen in the descriptions. Personally, I would be categorized in the middle, working class, but would fit more with the first family, than the second family. My father is a physician's assistant, and my mother is a school nurse. We go on around two family trips each year, not including summer camps for us kids. We live in a nice five-bedroom house, in a nice neighborhood, and each attends good schools. I may be in the middle class, but I have been given incredible opportunities that some of the other families in the middle class do not have. These two families are likely the extremes of both sides of the middle class, but it continues to prove how broad these classes are. The greatness of the class makes it harder for everyone to join together, and gain power, as the power elite do.

In the article, *The Class Domination Theory of Power*, by William Domhoff, the author describes the power elite, and how they use their power in society, specifically to emphasize and limit the class system of America. The upper class in society is extremely limited, including almost exclusively people who have worked their way to the top, after attending extremely rigorous schools and getting majorly impressive degrees and job positions. The people in this group of power elite can work with the government, and making processes, specifically the special interest process, the policy-making process, and the candidate selection process, corrupting the processes that are in society. They are given outright benefits which may not be awarded to others. Through the special interest process, they almost avoid taxes directly, and

on policies that are made in the government. Finally, through the candidate selection process, they can influence electoral campaigns and elections. All of these processes make them more powerful, and make it harder for anyone else to join this upper class, forcing everyone to be a part of the simple middle class.

Overall, the power elite in our society is given incredible amounts of power, forcing the majority of society to be placed and categorized into the middle class, making this categorization extremely broad and unruly. Since the middle class is so large and diverse, it is difficult for the members to join together and make something happen in society. The power elite end up making all of the final decisions, and impact many things in society, including the class system.