

Thursday, march 26,
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[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



Thursday, March 26, 2009 Class in America- Gregory Mantsios " Myth 1: The United States is fundamentally a classless society. Class distinctions are largely irrelevant today, and whatever differences do exist in economic standing, they are - for the most part- insignificant... Myth 2: We are, essentially, a middle-class nation... Myth 3: We are all getting richer. The American public as a whole is steadily moving up the economic ladder, and each generation propels itself to greater economic well-being... Myth 4: Everyone has an equal chance to succeed... Reality 1: There are enormous differences in the economic standing of American citizens. A sizable proportion of the U. S. population occupies opposite ends of the economic spectrum. In the middle ranger of the economic spectrum: Sixty percent of the American population holds less than 6 percent of the nation's wealth.... ... Between 1979 and 2000, the gap in household income between the top fifth and middle fifth of the population by 31 percent. During the economic boom of the 19990s, four out of five Americans saw their share of net worth decline, while the top fifth saw their share increase from 59 percent to 63 percent.... Reality 2: The middle class in the United States hold a very small share of the nation's wealth and that share is declining steadily. The gap between rich and poor and between rich and the middle class is larger than it has even been. Reality 3: ... Class affects more than life-style and material well-being. It has significant impact on our physical and mental well-being as well. Researchers have found an inverse relationship between social class and health. Lower-class standing is correlated to higher rates of infant mortality, eye and ear disease, arthritis, physical disability, diabetes, nutritional deficiency, respiratory disease, mental illness, and heart disease...

Reality 4: From cradle to grave, the class standing has a significant impact on our chances for survival. Reality 5: Class standing has a significant impact on chances for educational achievement. Class standing, and consequently life chances, are largely determined at birth... One study showed that fewer than one in five men surpass the economic status of their fathers. For those whose annual income is in six figures, economic success is due in large part to the wealth and privileges bestowed on them at birth. " (Mantsios, Class in America- 2003) This article, the myths and realities Mantsios addresses show that in fact people in the United States do not have the simple, easy, freedom of just becoming rich and it is not just a matter of working hard to get there. The class system and the power of oppression keep citizens in the classes they are born into. One who is born into a lower class in the U. S. is at a constant disadvantage from birth. The statistics Mantsios uses illustrate the economic gap between the rich and the middle class and the rich and the poor in the United States- showing an increase in the gap: " the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. " The fact that laws and the class systems are acting as traps to keep the people in poverty, or at least keep them from becoming affluent, is a violent act. And as an even more literal act of violence, even though it isn't much of an act, the correlation between poverty and disease is outrageous. And so again, poverty is violence