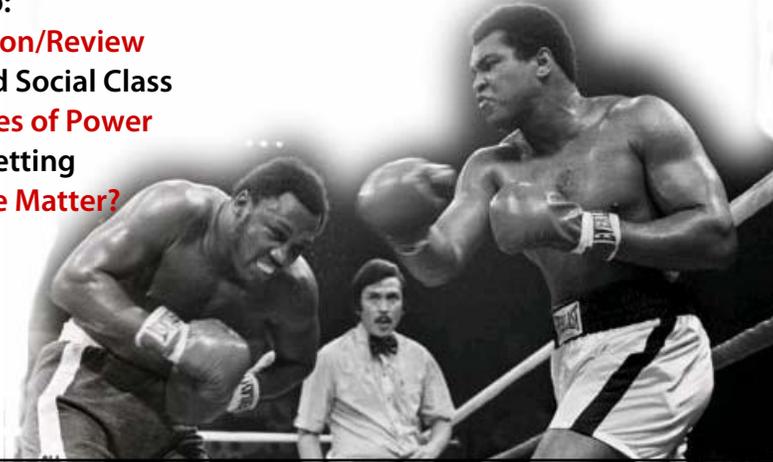


# POWER & POLITICS

Week Two:  
**Introduction/Review**  
**Power and Social Class**  
**Three Faces of Power**  
**Agenda Setting**  
**What's the Matter?**



## who rules America?

domhoff on social and economic class

why do people promote the openness of the system  
 when they are aware of glaring inequalities?

The New York Times

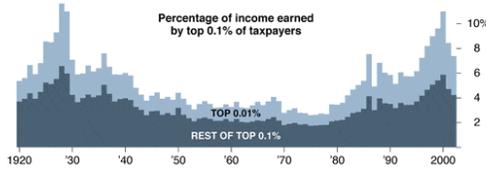
June 5, 2005

### Not Since the 20's Roared

The very wealthiest Americans — the 145,000 or so taxpayers whose incomes start at \$1.6 million and put them in the top 0.1 percent — have pulled away from everyone else in recent decades, an analysis by The New York Times shows .

#### GROWTH IN INCOME

The share of the nation's income earned by the taxpayers in the top 0.1 percent has more than doubled since the 1970's, and in the year 2000 exceeded 10 percent, a level last seen in the 1920's.



#### GROWTH IN WEALTH

Even after adjusting for inflation, there are five times as many households as there were two decades ago with a net worth of more than \$10 million. Not all have high incomes.

Number of households	Households with inflation-adjusted net worth of:			
	ALL HOUSEHOLDS	\$1-5 MILLION	\$5-10 MILLION	\$10 MILLION+
in 1983	84 million	2.2 million	180,500	66,500
in 2001	106 million	4.8 million	729,400	338,400
Percent increase	+27%	+123%	+304%	+409%



who rules  
America?

domhoff on social and economic class

why do people promote the openness of the system  
when they are aware of glaring inequalities?



MAURICE MITCHELL  
SELF-DESCRIBED CLASS: WORKING  
Wilson, N.C.

Mr. Mitchell, 37, manages his family's septic tank company, earning up to \$75,000 a year. "I hold the mortgage to my home," he said. "I have the vehicle I want." A high school graduate, he never married but has two sons. "I'm able to raise my children in a manner so they won't be picked on or laughed at in school." He said he believed that "a man can start with nothing and work hard and get somewhere." But the "gap between rich and poor will never close," he said. "It's hard to get wealthy if your family isn't."

FRED R. CONRAD/The New York Times

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who rules  
America?

domhoff on social and economic class

Group of people who occupy the same position in the economic system, such as business owners and workers.

*economic class*

An economic class is limited in its political power if it does not see itself as a social class.

*social class*

Group of people who interact with one another, sharing the same lifestyle, tastes, and cultural practices.



what is

**POWER?**

collective versus distributive

why do those with power in America deny they have any?

*collective power*

The degree to which a community or nation has the capacity to pursue and achieve its own goals and interests.

*distributive power*

The degree to which a social class within a community or nation is successful in conflicts with rivals over its goals and interests.



what is

**POWER?**

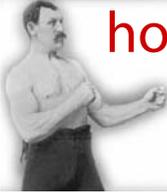
domhoff's three indicators

**WHO BENEFITS? WHO GOVERNS? WHO WINS?**

According to Domhoff, the corporate community controls the public agenda in America through four networks of power:

1. Special-interest process
2. Policy-planning process
3. Candidate-selection process
4. Opinion-shaping process

*But we're getting ahead of ourselves...*



how does  
**POWER**  
work?

“...in situations of inequality, the political response of the deprived group or class may be seen as a function of power relationships, such that power serves for the development and maintenance of the quiescence of the non-elite.” (Gaventa, p. 4)

Is power really about winners and losers  
*if the losers didn't even know they were playing?*




visible  
**POWER**  
the first face

“A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B wouldn't otherwise do.” (Dahl 1957, p.203)

Also known as “community power.”

Focus is on visible behaviors in the decision-making process.

*Who participates and who wins?*





**visible**  
**POWER**  
the first face

key assumptions:

1. People recognize that they have particular grievances.
2. Grievances acted upon in open decision-making arenas.
3. Leaders use resources to represent the people.

But what is the problem here?

*Non-participation is not a political problem.*




**hidden**  
**POWER**  
the second face

"Power is also exercised when **A** devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that **limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues that are comparatively innocuous to A.**" (Bachrach and Baratz 1970, p.7)

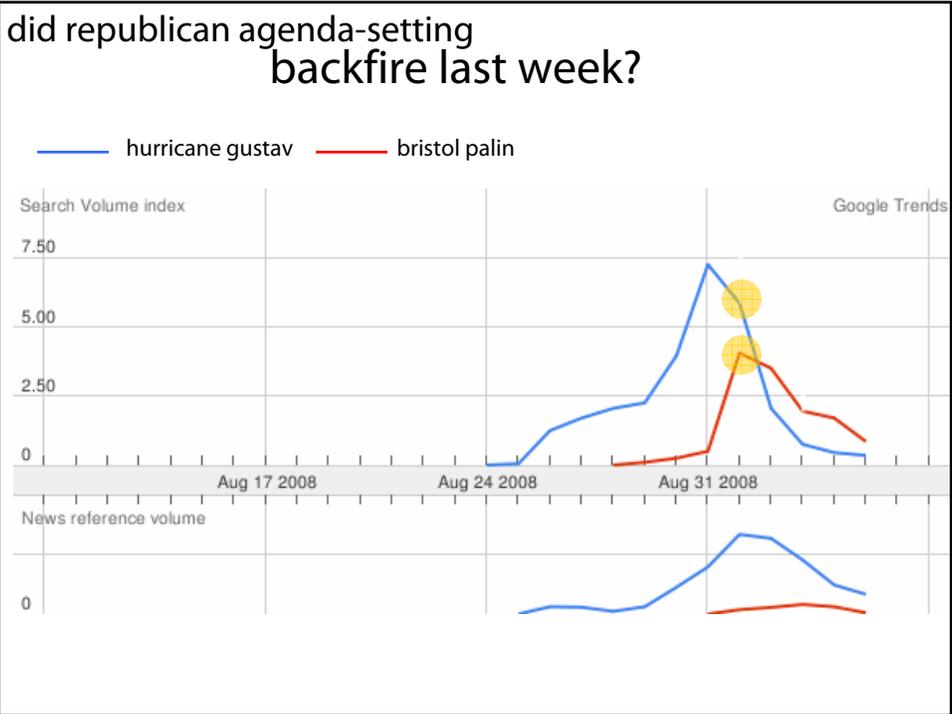
what if power is exercised so that some issues or participants *never become part of the decision-making process?*

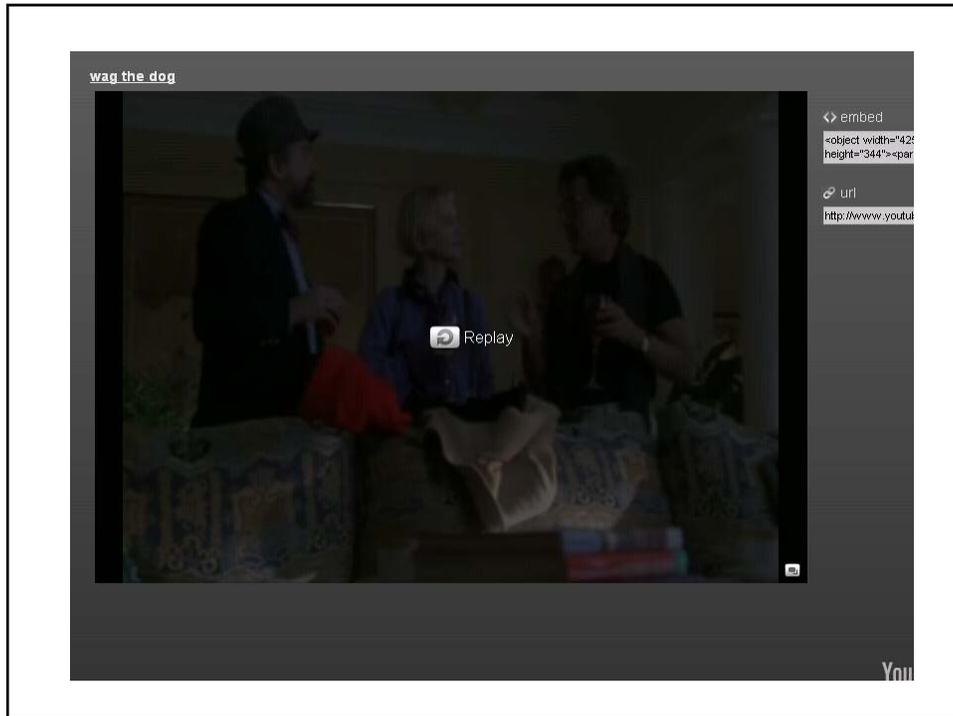


**hidden**  
**POWER**  
the second face

**agenda setting (or non-decision making):**  
The process through which some issues are organized into the political process and other issues are organized out of it.

**“mobilization of bias”**  
values, beliefs, rituals, and procedures that  
*privilege one group or perspective over another.*



**hidden**  
**POWER**  
the second face

**non-decision making:**

1. Through force.
2. Through sanctions.
3. Through rules, norms, and procedures.
4. Through new barriers and symbols.
5. Through anticipated reactions.

But what is the problem here?

***It assumes that people are aware of their own interests.***





**invisible**  
**POWER**  
**the third face**

*The most sinister use of power is to keep conflict from arising at all.*

"...A may exercise **power** over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises **power** over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants. **Indeed, is it not the supreme exercise of power to get another or others to have the desires you want them to have - that is, to secure their compliance by controlling their thoughts and desires?"** (Lukes 1974, p.23)

**In other words, powerlessness is internalized.**



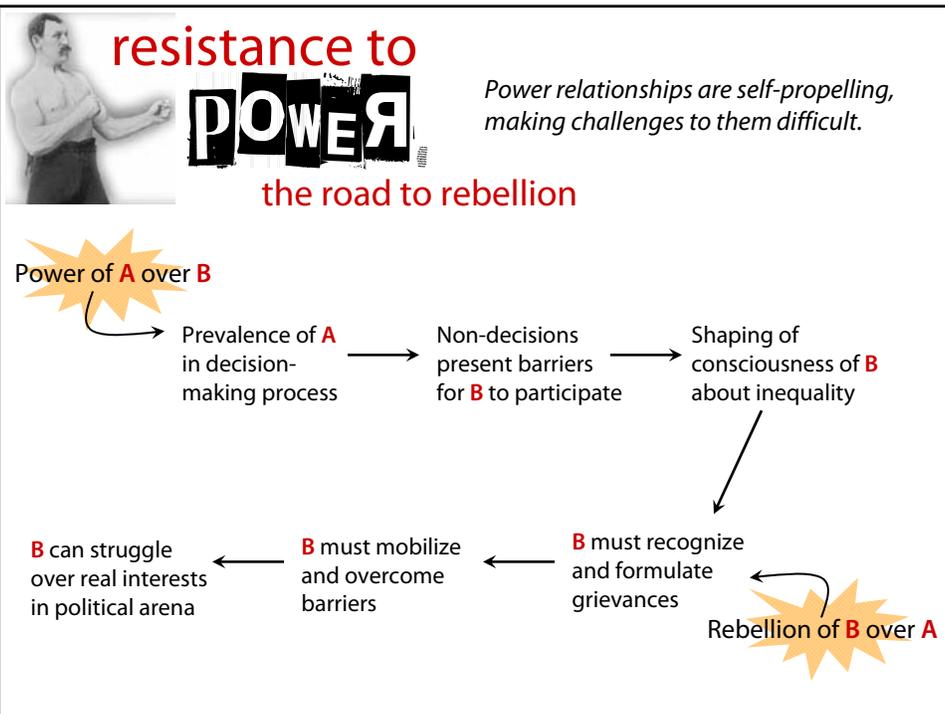
**invisible**  
**POWER**  
**the third face**

Contradictions between the interests of the powerful and the *real interests* of the powerless.

It is the power to keep latent conflict **from becoming manifest conflict.**

**How?** **Direct:** socialization, information control  
**Indirect:** continual defeat, loss of political consciousness, ambiguity of consciousness

*What does it mean for power to be accumulative?*



what is **POWER?**

back to domhoff's three indicators

**WHO BENEFITS? WHO GOVERNS? WHO WINS?**

According to Domhoff, the corporate community controls the public agenda in America through four networks of power:

THESE ARE NETWORKS THROUGH WHICH THE THREE FACES OF POWER ARE EXERCISED

1. Special-interest process
2. Policy-planning process
3. Candidate-selection process
4. Opinion-shaping process

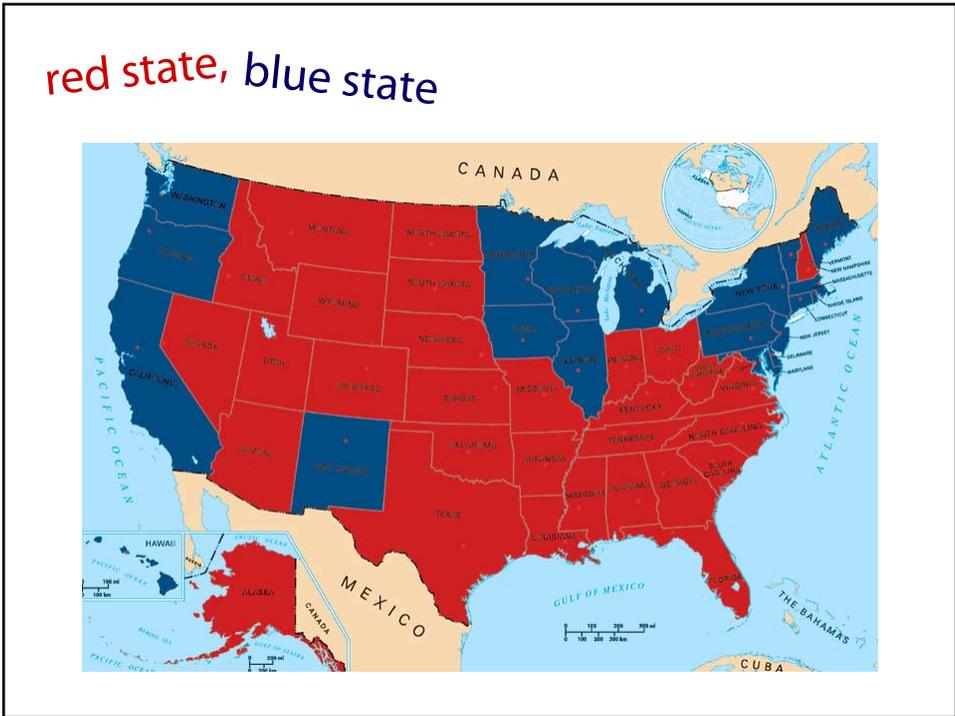
what's the matter with **Kansas?**

power, voting, and values in the Heartland

**the Great Backlash**

the marriage of "explosive social issues" with "pro-business economic policies" that began in the late 1960s and took shape in the 1980s (Frank 2004)

*Why do people vote based on values rather than economic interests?*





what's the matter with  
  
power, voting, and values in the Heartland

“At the center of it all is a way of thinking about class that both encourages class hostility of the kind we see in Kansas and simultaneously denies the economic base of the grievance. Class, conservatives insist, is not really about money or birth or even occupation. It is primarily a matter of *authenticity*, that most valuable cultural commodity. Class is about what one drives and where one shops and how one prays, and only secondarily about the work one does or the income one makes.” (Frank 2004, p.114).

what's the matter with



discussion questions

Do you agree with Frank's depiction of Midwestern voters?

How does Frank's definition of class relate to Domhoff's ideas on social class and economic class?

(hint: if voters who vote on values belong to the same social class as the more "authentic" politicians, then why don't they have more political power?)

Think about the upcoming presidential election. What are some examples of each of the three dimensions of power that might explain the types of voting choices that we make?

(In other words, what are the agendas and/or issues that make the news? And, how do we know what our *real* interests are?)