

Political Savvy and Labor

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A bit about me ...

- 2nd generation Polish-American, Grandparents emigrated to the Pennsylvania coalmines
- Working class family - father an ironworker, mother a homemaker.
- BS in Biology (NEIU), MS in Adult Ed, Doctoral candidate in Adult ED (NIU)
- 29 years at M&M MARS from sensory analyst to quality engineer to line manager to technical training
- A passion for labor and working class history and social democracy
- www.truty.org
- www.clcr.org

The construction of PS within much of the lit

- Goal Orientation (the company's, your boss's and yours -- in that order)
- Mostly seen within the context of hierarchy (issues of power)
- Generally upward gaze
- Constructed so that by you going along, you get along
- Tends to be an individual act

critique Why is this important when speaking of PS?

- Goals tend to be defined within a positive business interest
- Worker benefits after business benefits, and the ratio of benefits tend to be in the company's favor
- Seeks to maintain the asymmetry of power
- Acting in concert with peers to change the above will be viewed dimly...

Working Girl

(1988)

Industrious secretary Tess McGill (Melanie Griffith) dreams of climbing the corporate ladder and may be on her way after landing a job with Katherine Parker (Sigourney Weaver), a top brokerage firm executive. When a skiing mishap puts Katharine out of commission, the secretary discovers her boss has stolen Tess' idea for saving a client. Hooking up with investment broker Jack Trainer (Harrison Ford), Tess takes over the deal and turns the tables.

What to watch for ...

- A normalize view of political savvy
 - Win the promotion by providing value to the firm
 - End justifies the means
- Position - power - hierarchy
- Formation of relationships
- Return to the status quo? Reinforcing acceptable notions of political savvy

Storyline

- Katherine goes on away to to set up her boyfriend, Jack Traynor (Harrison Ford) ... a merger...
- Breaks leg, must stay there for several weeks
- Tess, can you watch over things: dry cleaning, mail,
- While at Katherine's apartment ...

Storyline

- Goes to party
- Meets a guy
- Booze and Valium kick in
- Alarm rings... this is not my bed...

Point of View

- Hegemonic & Counter-hegemonic
- Normative & Transformative
- The notion of "fair & balanced" ...

Labor and Working Class History

- What is a union?
- Union Movement 35% at it peak ...
 - so what about the other 65%???
 - In 2005, 12.5 percent of wage and salary workers were union members
- Working classes shared in the power
- Sabotage
 - Removal of efficiency
 - Counter Scientific Management
 - Re-interpretation of Hawthorn

An issue of class

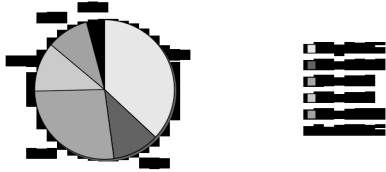
- Social class refers to the hierarchical distinctions between individuals or groups in societies or cultures.
- The following traits are sometimes used to define social class: -
 - occupation · race · gender · sexual orientation · education · income · net worth · power · ownership of land, property, means of production, slaves · political standing vis-a-vis the government · reputation of honor or disgrace · social prestige · language

Average household wealth by wealth class

(in 1998 dollars)

| Wealth class | Average wealth of class |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Top 1% | \$10,203,700 |
| Next 4% | \$1,441,200 |
| Next 5% | \$623,500 |
| Next 10% | \$344,900 |
| Next 20% | \$161,300 |
| Next 20% | \$61,000 |
| Next 20% | \$11,000 |
| Last 20% | -\$8,900 |

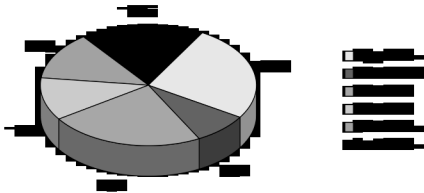
Household distribution of common stocks in 1998



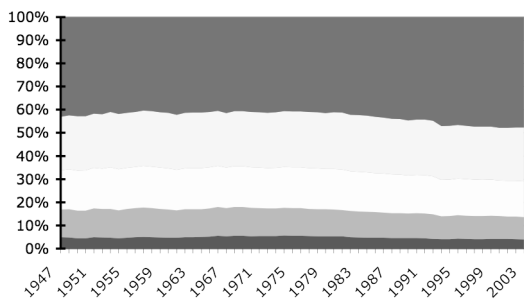
include indirect ownership through mutual funds, 401k plans, etc.

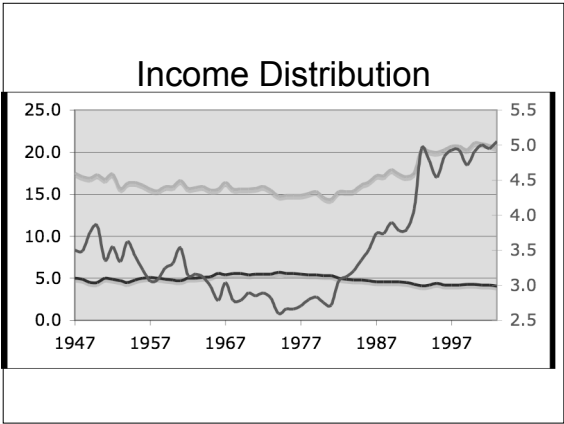
Household distribution of net worth

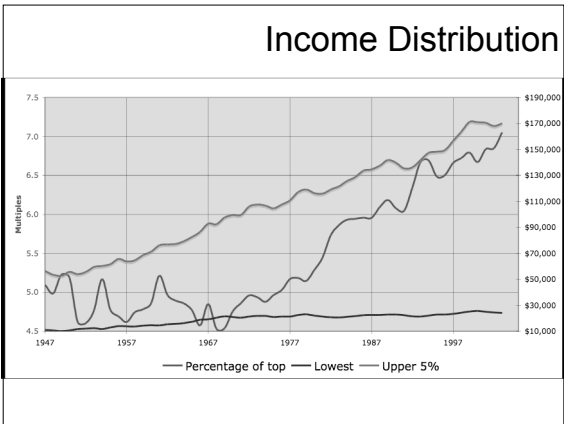
(1998), i.e. total value of assets

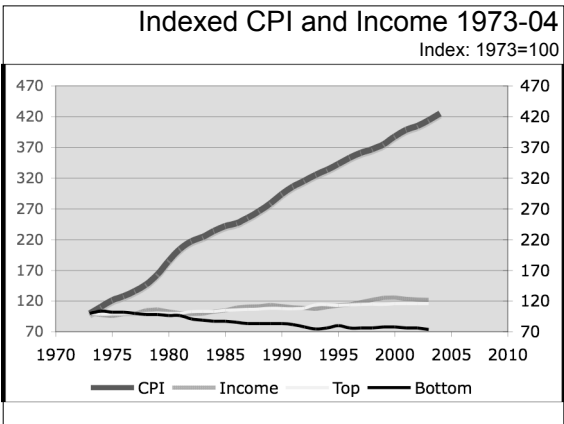


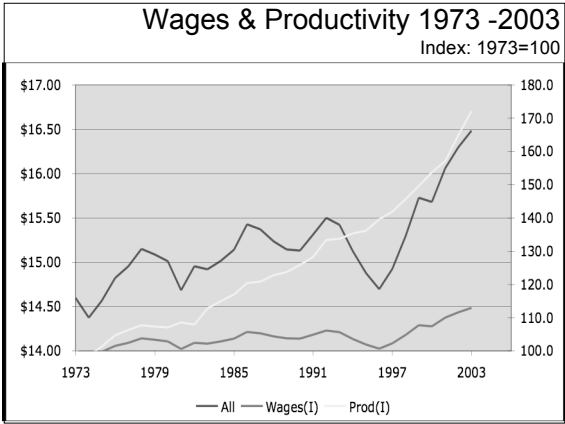
Income Quintiles 1947 -2004

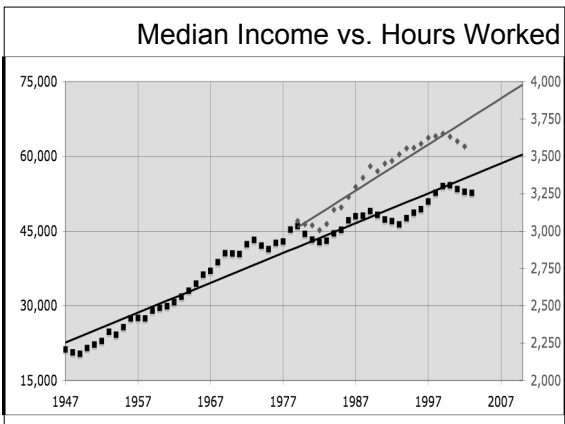












Who are these people

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Haywood • A. Phillip Randolph • Elizabeth Gurley Flynn • Samuel Gompers • Mary Harris Jones • John L. Lewis • Walter Reuther • Terrence Powderly • Eugene V. Debs • Cesar Chavez | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry Ford • Andrew Carnegie • Cornelius Vanderbilt • John J. Astor • Gustavus Swift • Alfred P. Sloan • Bill Gates • Howard Hughes |
|---|--|

Are you familiar with these organizations?

- Knights of Labor
- Industrial Workers of the World
- Congress of Industrial Organizations
- American Federation of Labor
- United States Steel
- Pullman Railcar Company
- General Motors
- Microsoft
- Nike
- Caterpillar

What are these events

- Great Railway Strike (1877)
- Haymarket (1886)
- Homestead (1892)
- Pullman (1894)
- Ludlow (1914)
- Matewan (1920)
- Sit-down Strikes (1936)
- Memorial Day Massacre (1937)
- Staley Strike (1995)

What are these?



And these?



Working People

If hard work were such a wonderful thing, surely the rich would have kept it all to themselves.

Lane Kirkland

If capitalism is fair then unionism must be. If men have a right to capitalize their ideas and the resources of their country, then that implies the right of men to capitalize their labor.

Frank Lloyd Wright

Every advance in this half-century-Social Security, civil rights, Medicare, aid to education, one after another-came with the support and leadership of American Labor.

Jimmy Carter

We believe that the class struggle existing in society is expressed in the economic power of the master on the one side and the growing economic power of the workers on the other side meeting in open battle now and again, but meeting in continual daily conflict over which shall have the larger share of labor's product and the ultimate ownership of the means of life.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn

How did these come about

- 8 hour work day
- Sick pay
- Pension benefits
- Health insurance
- Vacation pay
- FDA
- OSHA

Norma Rae (1979)

In an Oscar-winning performance, Sally Field is unforgettable as Norma Rae, the Southern millworker who revolutionizes a small town and discovers a power in herself she never knew she had. Under the guidance of a New York unionizer (Ron Leibman) and with increasing courage and determination, Norma Rae organizes her fellow factory workers to fight for better conditions and wages. Based on a true story.

Norma Rae

- Become part of the group
- Breaking in / acceptance

Norma Rae

- Threat ... met with warning and bribery
- Spot Checkin ... Issues of work speed and quality
- Divide and conquer
- Selective reward and punishment ... very public

Norma Rae

- Fixing of beliefs
 - Convenience
 - Fear
 - Faith
 - Inquiry
- Counter-hegemonic argument
 - Goes against "common sense"
 - Question what is? Question the assumptions

Norma Rae

- New belief
 - Working for a cause
 - Using social skills of persuasion

Norma Rae

- Using the insider to gain acceptance
- Looking for converts
- Inclusively
- “One Big Union”...

Norma Rae

- Events / opportunities
- Tipping point

What happened here?

- Individual acts for the good of the collective
- Group solidarity
- Personal costs
- The creation of a better world?

Matewan (1987)

Well-intentioned labor leader Joe Kenehan (Chris Cooper) arrives in Matewan, West Virginia, intending to unionize the men and women of this company town. But his efforts to organize the workers of the Stone Mountain Coal Company ignite a powder keg of racial hostility, corruption and betrayal -- and touch off one of the most violent incidents in the history of the Coal Wars of 1920-21.

What to watch for ...

- How groups are separated
- Indentured servitude
- Points of solidarity
- Costs to the participants

The Company Store

- Issues of working conditions
- Who owns what?
- Payment in company script
- Indentured servitude ... modern slavery

Building trust

- Why all the questions?
- The “Wobblies”
- The Palmer Raids
- Issues of fairness/justice

Use of Violence

- Why is there such a history of violence in labor organizing?
- Company spy
- Out groups keeping a low profile

Intimidation

- The company store
- Use of the “law”
- All you got is guns
- Creating the other ...”he’s the red”

Salt of the Earth

(1954)

A controversial drama about the struggles of striking mineworkers in a small New Mexico town whose views are socialistic and surprisingly feminist. Many of the actors and the film's director were blacklisted after its release.

What to watch for ...

- Issues of gender, feminism
- How the "cause" is expanded beyond work to life ... to community
- The power of the group
- The power of just social action
- Basic common denominators

Salt of the Earth

- "the curse of the working man"
- Defining work (women's vs. men's)
- Conflict of interests (either/or)
- Ethnic differences in social goods

Salt of the Earth

- Inter-relationship between work and family
- Issues of social justice (Anglo workers have indoor plumbing and hot water)
- Breaking the union

Salt of the Earth

- Women looking beyond ... raising awareness and creating agency
- Tipping points
- Concerted action ... power in the group

Salt of the Earth

- Finding voice
- Political groups within the larger group
- Centers of power (unofficial power)

Salt of the Earth

- Strike goes on for seven months
- Use of the “rules”
- Finding new allies

Salt of the Earth

- Coalition building
- Effects of patriarchy
- Intimidation and resolve
- Understanding political realities
- Finding strength and resistance

Salt of the Earth

- Role reversal
- Finding her voice, standing up for what she wants/needs

Salt of the Earth

- Use of informants
- Attacking leadership
- Solidarity forever And the ranks get filled in

Salt of the Earth

- Point of view - perspective transformation
- The women's question

Salt of the Earth

- Despair sets in
- The company tries to break the will of the workers by evicting the leaders from their company owned housing
- Concerted action by the miners and the community

A bit of Chicago Labor and Working Class history

- Haymarket Tragedy
- Pullman Strike
- Memorial Day Massacre
- Founding Convention of the IWW
- The Labor Trail
- <http://www.labortrail.org/>
- Also see LAWCHA <http://www.lawcha.org/>

BACK OF THE YARDS

During the century between the Civil War and the 1960s, the Union Stock Yards (USY) was one of the most important employers in the city, with over 40,000 workers at their peak. The larger Stock Yard district includes the neighborhoods of Bridgeport, Canaryville, and McKinley Park. The working class neighborhood just to the west and south of the yards attracted German, Irish, Lithuanian, Polish, African-American, and Mexican immigrants. In 1908, Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle*, his famous muckraking novel about this area. From 1919 to 1921, the Stockyard Labor Council (SLC) led a series of strikes for the right to organize. Although these strikes failed, during the Depression the CIO's Packinghouse Workers Organizing Committee largely succeeded. The area was also a center of Progressive Era reform, exemplified by Mary McDowell and the University of Chicago Settlement House. In addition, *Saul Alinsky's Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council* was a forerunner to later community organizing efforts throughout the U.S.



- 44th Street and Berntage, Davis Square Park (1904). Early community recreation center provided first public baths, lunchroom, and dining room; class community. Site of rally for the Stockyard Labor Council, and on December 8, 1921, of a riot between the police and striking packinghouse workers.
- Near 43rd and Locust, BO Packing Co.; former Swift Company packing plant, one of the few remaining in the Stock Yards.
- Exchange Avenue and Pacific Street, Chicago Stockyards Gate; designed by famous Chicago architects Daniel Burnham and George Bono.
- 44th Street and McDowell Ave. (formerly Gross Ave.), Chicago Commons Administration's New City Child Care Center; formerly the Guardian Angel Home for Women. Constructed in the 1930s, the Home was the city's first health clinic for women and also offered daycare services.
- 45th Street and Berntage, St. Joseph Catholic Church (1887); first Irish parish in the Back of the Yards.
- 48th Street and Paulina, Columbia Hall; Town and community center, meeting place for the Stockyard Labor Council (SLC), formed in 1917 as an interracial union of lower skilled packinghouse workers.
- 4750 S. Marshfield, Salora's Hall; housed the Packinghouse Workers' Organizing Committee (PWOC) office, important site for labor organizing.
- 2144 W. 44th St., St. Rose of Lima Church (1881); first Irish parish in the Back of the Yards closed in 1990. For a remaining Irish church, see St. Gabriel at 43rd and Low in nearby Canaryville, but known for working in 1880 by laborist priest, Maurice J. Downey, "The King of the Yards."
- Under the bridge at 49th Street and Marshfield, mural pointing to number of community identity, note the image of nearby Cesar Chavez School.
- 5000 block of S. Leflin, St. Augustine Catholic Church; 1624 W. 51st St., St. Martin Luther Church; first German churches in the Back of the Yards.
- 12nd Street and Irving Avenue, St. John of God Church (1907); includes monument for members of the parish who died in war. Led during the World War II era by famously pro-labor priest, Lewis Grelinski.

POLONIA TRIANGLE

Centered at the corner of Division and Milwaukee, this four traces the development of the old Polish Downtown. Located near this commercial triangle were once all the major institutions of the Polish-American, a majority of Chicago's turn-of-the-century blue-collar community. The fountain within the Triangle holds an inscription: "For the Masses Who Do the City's Labor Also Keep the City's Hours." As industrial workers, Poles, like the Germans who preceded them, clustered around the Northwest Side's large-scale industries, including leather and tanning, iron and steel, furniture and machine tools. In the early years of the 20th century, Milwaukee Ave. was known as "Immigrant pull avenue" for the number of laborers trading to and from work. Only a trace of the city's northern manufacturing district, which initially lined the North Branch of the Chicago River and subsequently spread along the Clybourn and Elston Street corridors) remains. Yet, even as more upscale residences continue to transform today's Bucktown-Wicker Park district, the immigrants' creation of what they once called "Stansions" is evident in earnest churches, home construction — from tenements to two-flats to bungalows — public bathhouses, and park grounds.



- Webster and Desnick St., Gutmann Tannery; One of two such establishments left in Chicago. From the Webster Street Bridge near Gustavus, view remains of Chicago's extensive riverfront industry.
- 2011 N. Southport Ave., A. Finkl & Sons; World leader in forging the steel.
- 1414-1416 N. Greenview (1800s), "Milwaukee two-flats"; Neat linen looms created by tening co-ops-occupiers to distinguish residences from each other.
- 1444 Greenview, Kosciuszko Public Bath.
- Southwest corner Blackhawk and Division; Immigrant tenement housing; For more examples, see 1822 Noble (1905) and 1810 Noble (1885).
- Corner of Blackhawk and Noble Sts., Palaski Park and Fieldhouse.
- 1351 W. Evergreen; Facing Pulaski Park, St. Stanislaus Koska (built 1876-1881), is the first Polish-Catholic Church built in Chicago and near 1500 people.
- 1309 N. Ashland, Polish Women's Alliance; See symbolic design in courtyard.
- 1291 N. Milwaukee; Today's hardware store, a large white stone building on the northeast corner of the intersection, initially housed a Polish bank and later the Polish newspaper *Głosnik Związkowy*.
- 1520 W. Division, Former home of the Polish National Alliance; Glass fraternal order and social-entertainment to the Polish Roman Catholic Union, holds its first national convention in Chicago in 1880.
- 1120 N. Noble St., Holy Trinity Church; Neighborhood and community parish, built in high-Renaissance style (1893).
- 1400 W. Augusta Blvd (at Noble), Northwestern University Settlement House; Designed by architect Irving K. Pevs and initially directed by sociologist Charles Zlotkin. Founded two years after Hull House in 1891, served arriving Polish immigrants.
- 1000 N. Milwaukee (at Augusta), National headquarters of the Polish Roman Catholic Union; Formed in 1873, this fraternal organization also houses the Polish Museum of America, including archives and exhibits.

