

Professor Elliot

SOC-105

March 24, 2021

Module 8 Essay Brief

Part One of Harari's *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* presents the technological challenge that we face in this new age. From AI to automation, our society is quickly changing as we invent more and more. A part in Chapter One stood out to me as relating to something that we've studied before. Harari talks about how Russia offers an alternative to the liberal democracy, but at the expense of an oligarchy of the wealthiest and most powerful making the decisions and using the media as a coverup. This feels an awful lot like what we discussed in Module 6, where we looked at how powerful wealth really makes you.

The Class Domination Theory of Power is a great representation of this. Those who have the money have the power, even if it doesn't seem like it. Domhoff speaks about the sort of power the "power elites" really have, but something that stood out to me was the idea of lobbyists and their role in elections. Essentially, any politician is at the mercy of the people who fund their campaigns, and can be sold to the highest bidder. The more money you have, the more you can persuade a congressman or senator to do what you would like them to. This directly goes back to Harari's example of Russia and how their oligarchy controls the government but uses the media as cover. Not only can they pay their way into persuading elections, they can also raise their kids to go into politics and get them into expensive colleges that look good on resumes. The media can manipulate us into thinking

with the most money.

The Social Upper class consists of about 0.5%-1% of the people in America and are considered the “old money” and actively seek social cohesion, and separating themselves from others. They marry each other, they participate in each other's non-profits, they usually live in close proximity, all of this to set them apart from others. Through this preserved reputation, they are able to work behind the scenes and manipulate the media into blaming other people for the failures of the government, further isolating other communities. This is just a very slight concept that Harari was describing, and he goes on to speak about the implications of the liberal story on the environment and technology. It was just interesting to see parallels between what he was describing in Russia and what is actively happening in America right now.