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Sociology

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A Future Predicted

Sociology, by definition, is the study of humans and their interactions and relations with the environment around them. Over centuries there have been thousands of great sociologists and philosophers who have tried to decipher the code to human interactions and the future of mankind. As the years and humans involve the ideas have molded with them, as we look at Fligstein and Macadams and their ideals of meaningfulness, Durkheim and his ideology on collective consciousness and lastly Harari and his guide to the future of mankind through his novel 21 lessons for the 21st century. Though different, all these powerful minds assist the structure of mankind we call today. As most recently Harari set the tone with his popular novel we are able to see a realistic conscience that we may be facing. Through him we look closer into the differences and similarities that coincide with these other great thinkers.

Yuval Noah Harari is an Israeli historian, created the novel 21 lessons for the 21st century, Harari goes into depth into our world giving a look into the past, present and future of mankind. Harari breaks his book up into lessons, each describing how to grasp the future ahead and how the things that we know may just be a repetition of our ignorance and accessibility to new advancements. The first few lessons talk about technology, stating that it is one the world's biggest challenges. Harari expressed that technology is destroying the labor union, making jobs

unknown society, with fewer jobs they will be less wealthy and a different economy, completely changing the structure of the society we know of. Harari also goes into talking about the algorithms that now allow us to almost be vulnerable in a sense, with every click and search that we perform online we ourselves become part of an algorithm that in a larger sense can be used in anything, such as political and governmental matters. This is why Harari says that eventually we can become “hackable”.

When talking about Durkheim, a French sociologist whose ideologies were based on the idea of the collective conscience, the common beliefs and systematic way of a population. This was based on many factors such as religion, environment and society around a person. This theory also runs aside collective representation which is the representation of a group by one object or ideal, such as a flag for a country. Durkheim also believed that the truth of an individual's conscience lies within collective consciousness, based on common shared experiences. Social integration was also a key factor in his ideology, believing that the closer and more tight knit the social group is the stronger they are represented. When a society has no longer upheld its collective conscience this is what he called an anomie, a transition of normality. This is what enlisted his very mechanical social way, believing that things are done because of tradition and success, that improvement and evolution of tasks wasn't always necessary. Durkheim also believed that religion is fundamental in a growing prospering society and that religion is the backbone of mankind alone. Making religion a priority in a fundamental building of collective conscience within a society.

Harari views religion as not necessary in the building of a successful society, going as far as saying that it can even become almost a beacon of false hope. Not saying that we have to

into making poor social and governmental decisions. Though stating that we should still take away the god aspect of religion in order to stray away from stupidity and humility and to use it as a mode for kindness towards other people. Harari also says that religion is not the cure to our political problems as it can be easily manipulated which in the end could cause even more dispute. He also brings the point of the new 20th century inventions and how many major religious leaders do not know yet how to grasp these changes such as technology.

This leads me to believe that Harari would disagree with Durkheim's views on religion. As seen, Durkheim fully relies on the power and structure that religion brings into society. The reforms and the consciousness that bond them together, but this was at a time that is much different than it is today. Everyone is diverse and that is what Harari understands that in a way there is no longer collective consciousness in a large grand scheme, not that there ever really was but the thought of religion forming a society is obsolete. Harari believes that religion as a whole should be completely out of the question when formulating a large decision, which I feel Durkheim would almost make a priority based on his ethical views on mankind.

Harari understands the changes that our society has and will continue to make throughout the years. He continues to warn us to look back into history and to see that though we believe we are getting smarter and understand more since we have so much at our fingertips such as the internet, that in fact we are not. This is because if you asked the average human to do things such as hunt, make clothes and build shelter they would most likely not be able to, we are not as smart as those before us, the invention of the internet in a way has made us more disconnected from the world. Since we have all this knowledge accessible to us we don't feel the need to obtain it. This is the basis of why Harari urges us to never stop learning because with all the new modifications

need to continue to build a meaningful lifestyle and to understand oneself. Doing this will allow ourselves to see the world, we often get trapped by meaningless things that can distract us from the truth of the world and of life. Finding self identity and ideals is what helps build the structure of our community. In our age today we control what has meaning, like again the internet it is something that as a whole we all find valuable, but things such as type writers and more obsolete things don't hold as much meaning as they once did.

Neil Fligstein and Doug Macadams, two American sociologists who focus on social change and order. Credited for their double edged theories of meaningfulness in society, stating that as humans we can abstractly think about what is meaningful and what is meaningless. An ideal which allows us to broaden our view on the societal ideals and structure that we can sometimes find ourselves trapped in. They state that socially we each can contribute to meaning in each other's lives almost as a group effort. Fligstein and Macadams also created the idea of the existential function, which is being able to question the meaningfulness of one's own life. Doing this allows us to grasp a greater view on what we really are doing not only as a whole but as oneself.

I think personally that Harari would attest to Fligstein and Macadams theories of meaningfulness because of their greater understanding of the social aspect of the world. As sociologists in the same century it is easier to assume that both Harari and Fligstein/Macadams would have similar views on this topic. They both talk about meaningfulness in the greater aspect of being able to find meaning long term in order to be able to successfully understand society and oneself more. Though Harari never really speaks on questioning the abstract of life and its meaning, he still agrees that it is crucial to find meaning in everything that you do. Harari

the social change aspect both parties would agree on the idea that social change is needed by strategic actions by people. I also feel that Flingstein and Macadams would agree with Harari on the element of technology and the possibility of it endangering our social system, due to the fact Flingstein and Macadams talk about the strategic action field, which is where a community continues to maintain the “norm”.

In the end though there are a million different theories throughout the history of sociology and many great minds that back them up, looking back at these theories and how society is formed now allows us to grasp a deeper insight on the social concept of the times before us. Through Durkheim we look into the 19th century societies and the ideas of collective consciousness supported by religion and common ideals throughout the communities. Through Harari we contrast these ideas into his 20th century views on religion not being a factor of the building of society but more as a model for morality and compassion. We also look into Harari's view on present day technology and how that can potentially affect the society we know of today, and how humans are becoming more susceptible to the algorithms. Also urging us to continue to keep learning even though everything we may need to know is only a few clicks away. Through Flingstein and Macadams they open the lens for being able to ask yourself what the meaningfulness of life truly is by using the existential function. Supporting Harari's views on how meaningfulness is important in the society we have today and it is important to find meaning in oneself and the world around them. Overall Harari's 21 lessons for the 21st century applies to a lot of past sociologist ideals but in the same aspect also allows us to get insight into the future and how to be able to navigate it successfully.

