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Film Critical Analysis Paper: Video 1 “The Rich in America”

This critical analysis film paper will attempt to discuss the points and ideas brought up in the first listed video in this week’s lesson tab. The video’s title, “ The Rich in America: Power, Control, Wealth and the Elite Upper Class in the United States,” does a great job summarizing the topics and suggestions that are made throughout its 100 minute play time. In regards to the structure, the producer had three white men talking to each other in a way similar to a kind of roundtable conversation or a podcast (which are more popular in now-a-days media outlets). These three men discuss what having money in the United States means, the ideology behind United States citizens wanting powerful businessmen in positions of political power and in leadership roles in the government, and the power structure in America and the way money influences it. Some smaller topics they touch on include: how people feel like they cannot argue with “academic experts” (which is called legitimation) and how history has shown civil unrest and inequality due to the effect of the economy on politics.

I think that the producer's posture is made implicitly because, for the most part, the three speakers try to stick only to facts, proven research, and historical data and refrain from interjecting their own views, beliefs, and biases in their conversation. However, their concern for how political and civil unrest has been and is being handled along with other problems in the society of the United States that have been affected by money. One of the main assumptions I noticed while watching was made by the producer, in regards to the American society, is that the

power structure can only ever be changed from the bottom up. In this sense, the only way to create change is to have enough unrest in the lower class that it forces the higher class to concede and compromise with the unhappy lower class. At the time stamp 1:10:05, the man on the far left says this quote: “The only way that progressive political change and reform can come into the united states is through political struggle from below in which the power structure is forced to make certain concessions and certain reforms to stop unrest from growing into outright rebellion or revolution.” I think that this quote does the perfect job of explaining this assumption that was made. Some other assumptions I caught onto were: politicians make promises that they don’t deliver and money equals power in the United States society and government. In my opinion, all of these assumptions made that I pointed out are accurate and true. As a whole the producer may assume this goes for the entire world not just the United States of America, and I would have to agree with that as well.

One of the topics that was covered in this video that I found very interesting was the response of the upper class to the civil unrest in the 60’s in the United States. The introduction and implication of the ABC (A Better Chance) Scholarship was the solution they came up with, and now, when this video was filmed, these students were in their 30’s and had been socialized into the upper class. Many of them felt as if they no longer belonged in their old communities and felt disconnected from the family, friends, and relationships they once had there.

This film relates back to our class, Contemporary American Society, and the conversations we had about the influence of money and power in our government and society. Those with the most money have the most power and the concept of money and power has influence over everyone, not just the rich and powerful but also the poor and unrepresented: are the conclusions that both the textbook and this film came to.

One concept I heard discussed in this film that relates to a contemporary United States political- economic situation was the citizens' desire to have a successful businessman as a leader in the government and in politics. The example made in the video was about General Motors CEO Iacocca, but this could easily translate to the current example of Donald Trump and his business empire. This ideology stems from the thought process that if they are smart enough, educated enough, and capable enough to run a successful corporation, then they must be able, competent, and qualified to be a successful leader or even president.