Describe and explain Conflict Theory

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Introduction to Conflict Theory

- ‘Conflict theory claims society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources’ (Investopedia, No Date).
- Social order is preserved by dictatorship and power, instead of consensus and conformity
- Conflict theories key theorist is Karl Marx

(Investopedia, No Date)

Karl Marx

- Karl Marx was born in 1818 and passed away in 1883
- Karl Marx is a German philosopher and revolutionary socialist
- At university he studied sociopolitical theories
- In 1841 Marx published 'The Communist Manifesto'
- Marx moved to London where he lived the rest of his life.

(Unknown, 2017)

Conflict Theory

Many social phenomena are explained by conflict theory including

- Wealth and poverty
- Discrimination and domestic violence
- Wars and revolutions

The theory is focused on social inequality in the separation of resources and prioritizes the conflicts that are present between classes.

(Investopedia, No Date)

Conflict Theory

- Conflict theory aims to disprove the functionalist approach
- There are radical basic and moderate assumptions.
- All crucial social structures , laws and traditions are intended to assist those who have traditionally been in power, or the groups that are seen as better according to this theory.
- This theory is opposed to functionalism in which both groups play a particular role in society.
- In conflict theory the two groups are in rivalry to each other, as their aim is to improve their masters.

(New World Encyclopedia, 2013)

Conflict Theory

- Conflict Theory concentrates on society as a competition for limited resources.
- Karl Marx saw society as individuals within different social classes
- Many criticized conflict theory due to it focusing on conflict to the exclusion of recognizing stability.

(Lumen Sociology, No Date)

Ideology

- Ideology is the way an individual sees the world
- It forms each individuals thoughts and actions
- It is a key concept of sociology and is an influential role in forming social life and how society is arranged

(Cole, 2017)

Social Class

- The 'division of a society based on social and economic status' (English Oxford Living Dictionary, No Date)

Class Conflict

- Economic organization is the cause of class conflict in many societies
- Karl Marx believed class conflict and struggle were unavoidable
- The result of capitalists becoming wealthy is conflict and struggle (Crossman, A, 2017)
- Conflict between two classes – Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat
- Marx proposed that wealthier individuals would use their power to persecute the working class
- The unfair dispersion of the conflict theory was anticipated to be managed through ideological pressure. (Investopedia, No Date)

Level of Analysis

- There are three levels which are Micro, Meso, Macro
- This perspective is a macro level approach
- Macrosociology acknowledges sociological approaches.

(Cole, N, 2018)

Social Stratification

- 'Social stratification is the allocation of individuals and groups according to various social hierarchies of differing power, status, or prestige' (Anderson, 2014)
- Communities have a structure that shows what is appreciated by that society.
- 'Social differentiation is a naturally occurring phenomenon, whereby individuals have unique qualities, abilities or social roles that allow for distinctions between persons to arise' (Johnson. L. 2013)

Conclusion

- Ideology holds a greater power in society compared to the theory Karl Marx discusses
- Class separation would be non-existent and equality would prevail
- Ideology proves that separation by power, prestige or status is the preferred way for many societies

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