
Dahrendorf, Lenin, And Zedong: Different Perspectives On Social Stratification

Social Stratification for Schaefer and Lamm (1995:209) means a structured ranking of entire groups of people that perpetuates unequal economic rewards and power in a society. In other words, stratification is an existing pattern of inequality in which a status of an individual is classified based on his access to scarce resources. Renowned people like Karl Marx, Max Weber, and other theorists had given meaning to this concept. Their concept and theories paved the way for new ideas and definition on Social Stratification. In this paper, we will tackle the perspectives of Ralf Dahrendorf, Vladimir Lenin, and Mao Zedong in regard to Social Stratification, class, and conflict.

Ralf Dahrendorf is one of the most influential theorists in the contemporary society. He criticized Karl Marx's works and use it to develop his analytical theory about class conflict in a post-capitalist society. Dahrendorf believed that authority is the central point in the formation of classes. This class does not entirely revolve around capitalist but also managers and supervisors. Society can be divided into two, the command class (supervisors) and obey class (employers). The supervisors are expected to control subordination and exercise authority while the people who obeys the authority are called employers. Those who disobey authority are subject to sanctions (fines and punishment). Class inequality and conflict exist because of authority. In a conflict, there is a defending and attacking party. The defending party aims to protect their position, while the attacking party is fighting so that they can improve their current situation. "Dahrendorf believed society has two faces: consensus and conflict, static and change, order and dissension, cohesion and the role of power, integration and conflict, consensus and constraint." (Okulu 2014). Conflict and Consensus gives existence to society. The two are correlated, meaning, the one cannot exist without the other. For Dahrendorf, conflict and class inequality will continue to exist as long as authority remains to be a universal phenomenon

A Russian communist revolutionary named Vladimir Lenin was the head of the Bolshevik Party. A group that is renowned during the Russian Revolution of 1917. Lenin's view on classes was greatly influenced by Karl Marx and in the twentieth century, he was the most influential Marxist Theorist. He developed Marx's views and concept. Marx's believed that the working class would rule other laboring class (petty bourgeoisie and peasants) to form socialism. But for Lenin, this idea is only applicable to Western Europe because in Russia, the prominent class is the peasants that consist of 80% population while the proletariat's population was small. Lenin perceived the peasants to be an integral part of socialist government in Russia since their number is greater, and they support socialism. His idea of Revolution is evident, believing that this action will overthrow capitalism. Despite being influenced by Marx, Lenin did not believe that the proletariat will develop class consciousness for the reason that they failed to see that their rival was the capitalist system. They were seeking improvements (better pay, short working hours, etc.) of their situation within capitalism rather than to totally get rid of the system. The Leninism principle practiced unrestricted quest for the socialist society, this concept then latter, give rise to the creation of totalitarian state in the Soviet Union.

Mao Tse Tsung (Mao Zedong) was the chairman of The Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Marxism-Leninism, the principle of ongoing class struggle under socialism was the idea that supported the Cultural Revolution. His nationalistic view, aggressiveness, and interest in Marxism-Leninism became the groundwork of Maoism. He saw potential energy from peasants that he latter used as basis of his revolution in China. He instilled to the peasants the proletarian consciousness to make them vie for revolution. Mao also believed that mobilizing the people would lead to permanent revolution in order to prevent ruling groups to become bourgeois. Maoism embodies a peasant type of Marxism. It revolts against the warlords and bureaucrats who occupied the history of China.