Emile Durkheim And Karl Marx

According to the Cambridge dictionary “society a large group of people who live together in an organized way, making decisions about how to do things and sharing the work that needs to be done.” (Cambridge Dictionary). However, for many sociologist they believe that society is made up of different social structures, social groups and different societies. Each sociologist had there own beliefs and theory of how society is govern and understand base on rules and laws. With each different philosophy comes with different critiques and criticism. Consequently, as a result there has been several theory and views on how is society possible and what are the determinants that has help with the shaping of society. These theories include both a micro and macro perspectives to gain a better understanding of the formation of society and the revolutionary changes that has contributed to society has we know it today. The different views provided by the different sociologist offered an explanation of how society impacts people’s lives and how people influence society to determine the outcome of what could be considered normative then and normative now. To critically analyze the theory of each sociologist we must take into consideration their views and perspectives. Needless to say, we must also examine the contributing factor and persons that have contributed to this theory through thorough research and analysis. These persons included sociologist like Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, W.E.B Du Bois, and Max Weber.

Karl Marx formed a theory called the conflict theory where he believed that this was because there was a division in labor and society between the ruling class (bourgeois) and the working class (proletariat). In his analysis Karl Marx spoked on capitalism has being the main reason for inequality that is faced in society between the two social classes. “ Capitalism is an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market.” (Definition of CAPITALISM, 2018). Marx believe that people were being force into labor against their will as a mean to survive in capitalist society. This was because of the unequal distribution of labor within society with the ruling class capturing and maintaining more of the material means for production that ultimately means they own and controlled most of the materialistic sentiments. This enable them to exploit and rule over the working class. Marx also made mention of the economic driven factor that has a contributed to human beings being forced to act on the world in certain ways – to engage in material production. (Harman, C., 2012). The societies that Marx spoked about where exploitation was evident is the feudal society and the capitalist society. “ In a feudal system, a peasant or worker known as a vassal received a piece of land in return for serving a lord or king, especially during times of war.” (“feudal system - Dictionary Definition,” 2019). In that time workers were exploited by the lords or kings and were offered lands and protection if they work and fought for them. With that being said, society has been shape and form on the basis that person are to work for the means of survival, to meet their needs in a world solely owned and controlled by the ruling class (bourgeois). This has created the evolutionary theory called false consciousness; where workers (proletariat) are convince that working in society under exploitative conditions are normal. This has clouded their minds, preventing them from seeing the real reason for them working. Their inability to recognize this exploitation has created a greater opportunity for the ruling class to take advantage of their own views and beliefs. For Marx, however, the continuous exploitation has caused alienation

amongst workers in a capitalist society fueling a more degenerate contemporary society that was evident then and now. However, this exploitation it has only been beneficial to the ruling class and not the working class creating a more unequal society and marginalization between the two classes.

Marx further went on to explain the base (forces of production and relation of production) and superstructure (religion, culture family etc.) in the development of society. Base refers to the production forces, or the materials and resources, that generate the goods society needs and the superstructure describes all other aspects of society. (https://www.facebook.com/thoughtcodotcom, 2014). Marx philosophy on the base and superstructure derive from how the economic and material means of production forms the our political, religious and cultural views in society. This means that without the base in society all other things would have been unrealistic and unimaginative as the base is a determinant of how things were formed and created base on a materialistic culture. Additionally, Marx saw materialism as a foundation of how society is governed and ruled due to the dependency for material things for both classes to exist and survive. Nonetheless, for social revolution, as stated by Marx it is not until the working class become aware of the exploitation from the ruling class through class consciousness before any changes can be made that will eventually lead to social equality amongst themselves and the ruling class.

Notably, in Durkheim's work from a functionalists perspective his views on how society works and functions to maintain balance and equilibrium is somewhat different for Marx's views. To simply put, Durkheim looks specially on what holds society together rather than a materialistic perspectives compared to Marx. Durkheim point of view focuses on social solidarity and its interdependence between people and society to work simultaneously with each other to maintain social order respectively. Durkheim's argument is that there are two types of social solidarity – how society holds together and what ties the individual to the society. ("Sociology 250 - Notes on Durkheim," 2019a). Durkheim view on mechanical solidarity or a traditional society is that, it was held together base on the dependence of one another within social groups that eventually result in the formation of bonds and strong relationships amongst themselves and others. This was expressed by Durkheim as the "collective conscience". Collective consciousness refers to the condition of the subject within the whole of society, and how any given individual comes to view herself as a part of any given group. ("collective consciousness," 2019). Hence, reality is created when individuals interact with one another. This is evident in the family and other close knitted social groups who shared common beliefs and values. In this traditional society social integration was of utmost importance as it was what held individuals together rather than the division of labor.

On the other hand, the organic solidarity or modern society is defined as social integration that arises out of the need of individuals for one another's services. (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2010a). In this society emphasis is placed on the division

of labor and as a consequence individuals begin to differ from one other and commonality amongst groups begin to reduce; hence a reduction in the collective conscience. Due to this interdependence by individual it has change the way we function and operate in the modern society and as a result there has been an increase in individuality. What hold this society together is the dependency that individual have on each other to perform task. This increase individualism and division of labor in society result in the survival mode in humans to increase to satisfy their material needs as mention by Marx.

However, Durkheim also made mention of social integration and system integration and how they both keep social solidarity together. Additionally providing social facts Durkheim insist that this is what control our behavior upon interactions and historical evolution. Durkheim argue that social facts is the bases of how social order in maintained as it regards to how persons go about their lives and the constraints placed on the behavior of individuals. In his analysis he believed that social facts could explain our actions and in his attempt to prove this his study of suicide showed how too much or too little integration and regulation can result in this horrendous act.

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