

# The social conflict theory and divorce



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At the heart of social conflict is the view that conflict among members of society is inherent.

Without it, the process of development of society can not be undertaken. It is the driving force for social change. Conflict is determined by social structures, both economic and political (Werner-Wilson). In societies where the economic system is capitalist, conflict is evident between workers and the owners of factories. Social structures predetermine a class that is exploited and a privileged class that exploits, where the latter enjoys political power as a result of their economic power. Hence, conflict is also a manifestation of unequal power relations.

There have been very few attempts at applying the social conflict theory to the family because of a general view that family relations are in fact conciliatory and not conflicting (Werner-Wilson). The only theory based on the social conflict model that encompasses the family is feminist theory. Divorce, as a reality in most families today, is the dissolution of marriage ??? the institution that forms the core of the family as another social institution itself. It is the end result of marital relations where conflict has become paramount so that marriage breaks down and can not be repaired.

Conflict theory can be seen in some of the causes of why marriages fail and lead to divorce. Deriving on feminist theory, the family is a microcosm of society where the man represents the exploiter and women the exploited. Because women come to realize that her conditions can be changed but men refuse to forego their privilege, the resulting irreconcilable conflict leads to divorce. An example is when a man abuses his wife and the battered woman

decides that she?? s had enough but the man refuses to recognize the rights and dignity of the woman. Hence, the woman has no other recourse but to end her marriage. Referenceswww. public. iastate. edu/~hd\_fs. 511/lecture/Sourcebook15. ppt