

Cultural differences in the light of marx's class theory

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Sociology and culture In modern world cultural differences are becoming more and more apparent, so it is impossible to apply social sciences successfully without studying specifications of each culture.

To look into the problem given it is necessary to define briefly the Marx's class theory and to mention the main features of Western and Eastern mentality.

Karl Marx viewed class differentiation as the crucial determinant of social, economic, and political inequality. Marx concentrated on the two classes that began to conflict as the estate system declined, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The proletariat is the working class (in ancient Rome people, who had no other wealth except their children, were called 'proletarians'), while the bourgeoisie, or capitalist class, owns the means of production and private property,. " According to Marx, exploitation of the proletariat will inevitably lead to the destruction of the capitalist system. Ultimately, the proletariat will overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie and the government (which Marx saw as representing the interests of capitalists)" 1.

Thus, there is a large social inequality in each society. " Social inequality" means a condition in which members of a society have different amounts of wealth, prestige, or power. But the impact of social inequality may vary in different cultures - according to the main values of certain society. In particular, in Western countries social values are following:

- 1) (top value) pragmatism
- 2) rationalism and individualism
- 3) Integrity, self-assertion and leadership.

Eastern values often refer to collectivism, religiousness, politeness, patience

and respect to executives.

Also either Western or Eastern society has a stable model of management, which is common and familiar for all its members. Thus, it is wrong to compare them on the main criteria " better- worse" or " fair - unfair". For instance, in the United States the problem of large gap between executives' and workers' salaries really exists, but there are many options of career growth, so that one is able to change jobs and to make a rapid career in several companies. On the other hand, in Eastern countries, admission to the company means admission to a family or a community - for almost the whole life long. In such 'family' everyone is to participate in company problems solving and is to share corporative responsibility.

Western world is dynamic, and it is not considered embarrassing to leave a job for another place with more suitable salary and conditions, while according to the Eastern moral values, leaving the 'family' means betraying it. Personal growth of an employee is quite slow, as the differential between managers' and workers' salaries is not so large.

In my opinion, the disparity of incomes in the U. S. A. will not transfer into a sharp class conflict, as there are no bourgeoisie and proletariat any longer. Nowadays government supports those, who live under the poverty line, and the level of life has significantly increased since the end of the 19th century. In addition, private property is no more concentrated in the hands of the " top of hierarchy" or the 'top class'. Anyway, with the increase of education availability, " class struggle" has almost disappeared, as everyone has the same rights and opportunities, which means that everyone is free to decide and to choose the life path.

Marx created his theory more than hundred years ago, so it wouldn't be exactly correct to judge modern society from his position.

Sources

1) http://husky1.stmarys.ca/evanderveen/wvdv/Introduction_to_Sociology/study_guide_for_final_exam.htm

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2) <http://elt.britcoun.org.pl/forum/culmodels.htm>