

Functionalism and poverty

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Bethune cookman university | Poverty: From A Functionalist & A Conflict Perspective| Social Problems - SO 132| | John Arthur Jackson, III| 9/29/2012| This assignment will analyze two different forms of social analysis and how it relates to explaining the existence of poverty. | Functionalists Perspective & It's View Concerning Poverty As it concerns social analysis, the functionalists believe that society is a stable, and orderly system comprised of interrelated, and interdependent parts all working together to achieve homeostasis (equilibrium).

As far as the individual is concerned, they view them as being shaped by society, a relatively passive people molded by their experience and interactions with society. Any change that occurs in society is deemed disruptive and the system would seek to restore balance quickly. In addition, any part that is dysfunctional is correlated to the system as a whole, and there is not one thing that stands in isolation from the other. Concerning poverty, functionalists argue that poverty is not as apparent as the figures put it. There is a consensus that even though poverty is a social problem, it isn't as abundant as we think it is.

This consensus is come to after the functionalists take into consideration the antipoverty benefits that are available for those who experience and just like that poverty is much lower than popular belief. So in lament terms functionalists claim that if we take into account all of the available benefits that are for poor people then we would come to a conclusion that poverty is lower than estimation. As you can see, poverty from this perspective is just a way of life, and perhaps probably an incentive, encouraging everyone to

work that much harder to promote overall well-being and possible social mobility.

Possibly, there is an ultimate balance by the existence of poverty by depicting a clear division of power and wealth. There will always be the rich, and there will always be the poor and thus balance. Poverty, serves to remind those who aren't in that position to have a reason to attain or to achieve just to avoid having to conform to the problem of poverty. Also, the existence of poverty allows others to compare themselves to, just to make the contrast between the two provide certain thankfulness to their situation. As to say that, whatever they are going through couldn't get that much worse than someone who is already in poverty.

Conflict Perspective & It's View Concerning Poverty The idea that society is just a continuous power struggle between social classes over the availability and allocation of scarce resources would be the perspective of the Conflict Theorists. The premise of their argument is that there doesn't need to be a reason to place blame on people who find themselves in an impoverished socioeconomic condition. Logically, if we continue to place blame on the people who are living in poverty, we continue to shift the focus off of the problem and onto the individual which shouldn't be the case.

There should be a firm emphasis on the bigger societal problems that occur by the hands of the unstable capitalists and avaricious elitists who continue to perpetuate a falsified ideology for people to believe in. Conflict Theorists claim that poverty "... is rooted in past and present prejudice and discrimination that keeps people of color out of the economic mainstream..." (Kendall 2012). The subpar socioeconomically related living

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conditions that impoverished African Americans and other minorities find themselves in are just the fuel to the fire. ... Inadequate housing, substandard schools, and crime-ridden neighborhoods..." (Kendall 2012) causes the high poverty rate among the aforementioned racial groups. The lack of regulated social policies that concern the ever-present and ongoing problems of economic inequality continue to perpetuate the capitalistic ideology as well as subordinate the ethnic groups that face this alienation. The conflict theorists agree that the structural problems (substandard schools, inadequate housing etc. ;) are beyond the poor person's control.

So in order to rectify this situation, it would behoove the nation's political and business leadership to formulate a way to compensate people who are living in poverty in accordance to being able to afford the basic necessities of life. In addition, the wealthy must face a tax cut, so that the middle class can strengthen and the lower class can shrink. In other words, in order to significantly reduce the problem of poverty; conflict theorists believe that we must stop blaming the victim for being poor, but instead find a way that benefits and help the poor people become more affluent, not financially only but economically as well.