

Karl marx and max weber' views on sociological theory essay



Marx and Weber developed quite different theories concerning the dynamics of social change and the human society's evolution. Marx believed that the conflict of interests and the fight for resources were the basic driving forces contributing to the society's evolution and social change (Sanderson 131). Weber believed that the social changes was a result of the interaction of cultural values and the material base (Harper and Leicht 23). Thus, the two thinkers understood that ideas and material basis were instrumental in initiating the social change. However, the theorists had different views on the driving forces of the change as Marx saw it as the conflict between different groups while Weber focused on rationalism or charismatic leadership.

For Marx, the distribution of wealth was the major stimulus for the social change. Different social classes were in conflict for resources, which resulted in the social change (Weinstein 122). Weber did not pay as much attention to conflict as Marx did. Weber believed that rationalization was the major force that drove the changes in the society. The conflict could be between the rational (institutions, law) and non-rational (religion), and the societies tend to choose rationality (Michie 1543). According to Durkheim, the major conflict in the society was the crime. The individual's action is in conflict with the norms that often change (Gunderson 150).

The three theorists saw the aspects that united individuals within the society differently. Marx believed that ideology was the glue that kept the society together (Andersen, Taylor and Logio 335). The theorist also thought that the class ideology was the most important glue that united classes and encouraged them to struggle for wealth and resources. Weber saw

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rationalization as the most important aspect that held societies together. According to the thinker, the society was based on the strive for an order based on particular traditions and values (Michie 1543). Durkheim stressed that the collective conscience was the glue that united people within societies. The collective consciousness is the set of values, traditions, beliefs accumulated in the course of the society's development (Gunderson 150).

As regards Marx's perspective, the idea of the struggle for resources is the most valuable. This struggle can be seen as one of the most influential driving forces of any changes. Thus, individuals start experiencing their creativity when they want to access some resources. Being more assertive, hardworking, creative and so on can be regarded as the result of people's struggle for resources (salary, societal status and so on).

Weber's perspective is interesting in the thinker's idea on the rationality. Institutions play a significant role in people's life. Moreover, people manage to create more and more institutions that address some issues. At present, individuals are united, and their efforts create the value in terms of various institutions created. For instance, education is the institution that prepares younger generations to operate. Parents do not have to transfer all their skills to their children as schools, universities and so on do it in a more effective way. Of course, parents may focus on the spiritual or a very specific aspect.

Durkheim's concept of the collective consciousness is the most relevant. A set of traditions, beliefs and values unites people without setting strict rules

or boundaries. People feel connected and empowered when they understand that there is the set of values other people share.

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