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by their relation to the



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According to Marx, economic factors are responsible for the emergence of different social strata or social classes. Therefore, social classes are defined by their relation to the means of production (i. e., by their ownership or non-ownership). Thus, there are, in every society two mutually conflicting classes - the class of the capitalists and the class of the workers or the rich and the poor.

Since these two classes have mutually opposite interests, conflicts between the two are inevitable - Marx maintained. Gumpowicz and Oppenheimer and others have argued that the origin of social stratification is to be found in the conquest of one group by another. The conquering group normally dominates the conquered. The conquered group is forced to accept the lower status and lower class life. C.

C. North also has expressed - more or less the same opinion. (ii) Functionalist Theory: Kingsley Davis, P. A. Sorokin, Maclver and others have rejected the conflict theory of Marx. Sorokin maintained that conflict may facilitate stratification but has never originated it.

He attributed social stratification mainly to inherited individual differences in environmental conditions. Kingsley Davis has stated that the stratification system is universal. According to him, it has come into being due to the functional necessity of the social system.

The main functional necessity is " the requirement faced by any society of placing and motivating individuals in the social structure..." Social stratification is an unconsciously evolved device by which societies ensure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most

qualified persons. The Conflict Theory of Marx emphasises conflict between large and stable groups, with strong community sentiments, while the Functional Theory emphasises the integrating function of social stratification based upon individual merit and reward. Both have their own merits and demerits.