

Chapter 1 : The Marxist theory of social change | Redline

Karl Marx's theory of social change relates to the class struggle that defined the 19th century, namely that of the ruling classes (the bourgeoisie) suppressing the working classes (the proletariat), and as a result Marx's theory of social change stated that economic needs should be pursued purely on the basis of need while providing general.

In the first place, they at best examined only the ideological motives of the historical activity of human beings, without grasping the objective laws governing the development of the system of social relations. All constituent features of a society social classes, political pyramid, ideologies are assumed to stem from economic activity, an idea often portrayed with the metaphor of the base and superstructure. The base and superstructure metaphor describes the totality of social relations by which humans produce and re-produce their social existence. The base includes the material forces of production, that is the labour and material means of production and relations of production, i. Conflicts between the development of material productive forces and the relations of production provokes social revolutions and thus the resultant changes to the economic base will lead to the transformation of the superstructure. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes". Accordingly, Marx designated human history as encompassing four stages of development in relations of production: Criticism of capitalism Further information: Exploitation has been a socioeconomic feature of every class society and is one of the principal features distinguishing the social classes. The power of one social class to control the means of production enables its exploitation of the other classes. In capitalism, the labour theory of value is the operative concern; the value of a commodity equals the socially necessary labour time required to produce it. Under that condition, surplus value the difference between the value produced and the value received by a labourer is synonymous with the term "surplus labour", thus capitalist exploitation is realised as deriving surplus value from the worker. In pre-capitalist economies, exploitation of the worker was achieved via physical coercion. In the capitalist mode of production, that result is more subtly achieved and because workers do not own the means of production, they must voluntarily enter into an exploitive work relationship with a capitalist in order to earn the necessities of life. However, the worker must work or starve, thus exploitation is inevitable and the "voluntary" nature of a worker participating in a capitalist society is illusory. Alienation is the estrangement of people from their humanity German: Gattungswesen, "species-essence", "species-being", which is a systematic result of capitalism. Under capitalism, the fruits of production belong to the employers, who expropriate the surplus created by others and so generate alienated labourers. Social classes See also: Social class, Class conflict, Classless society, and Three-component theory of stratification Marx distinguishes social classes on the basis of two criteria: Following this criterion of class based on property relations, Marx identified the social stratification of the capitalist mode of production with the following social groups: They subdivide as bourgeoisie and the petite bourgeoisie. Petite bourgeoisie are those who work and can afford to buy little labour power i. Marxism predicts that the continual reinvention of the means of production eventually would destroy the petite bourgeoisie, degrading them from the middle class to the proletariat. Having no interest in international or national economics affairs, Marx claimed that this specific sub-division of the proletariat would play no part in the eventual social revolution. Class consciousness denotes the awareness of itself and the social world that a social class possesses and its capacity to rationally act in their best interests, hence class consciousness is required before they can effect a successful revolution and thus the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without defining ideology, [23] Marx used the term to describe the production of images of social reality. According to Engels, "ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remain unknown to him; otherwise it simply would not be an ideological process. Hence he imagines false or seeming motive forces". In The German Ideology, he says "[t]he ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i. In Marxism, political economy is the study of the means of production,

specifically of capital and how that manifests as economic activity. Marxism taught me what society was. Through working class revolution, the state which Marxists see as a weapon for the subjugation of one class by another is seized and used to suppress the hitherto ruling class of capitalists and by implementing a commonly-owned, democratically controlled workplace create the society of communism, which Marxists see as true democracy. An economy based on co-operation on human need and social betterment, rather than competition for profit of many independently acting profit seekers, would also be the end of class society, which Marx saw as the fundamental division of all hitherto existing history. Marx saw work, the effort by humans to transform the environment for their needs, as a fundamental feature of human kind. Additionally, the worker is compelled by various means some nicer than others to work harder, faster and for longer hours. While this is happening, the employer is constantly trying to save on labor costs: This allows the employer to extract the largest amount of work and therefore potential wealth from their workers. The fundamental nature of capitalist society is no different from that of slave society: Through common ownership of the means of production, the profit motive is eliminated and the motive of furthering human flourishing is introduced. Because the surplus produced by the workers is property of the society as whole, there are no classes of producers and appropriators. Additionally, the state, which has its origins in the bands of retainers hired by the first ruling classes to protect their economic privilege, will disappear as its conditions of existence have disappeared. According to orthodox Marxist theory, the overthrow of capitalism by a socialist revolution in contemporary society is inevitable. While the inevitability of an eventual socialist revolution is a controversial debate among many different Marxist schools of thought, all Marxists believe socialism is a necessity, if not inevitable. Marxists believe that a socialist society is far better for the majority of the populace than its capitalist counterpart. Prior to the Russian revolution of 1917, Lenin wrote: This conversion will directly result in an immense increase in productivity of labour, a reduction of working hours, and the replacement of the remnants, the ruins of small-scale, primitive, disunited production by collective and improved labour". Classical Marxism "Classical Marxism" denotes the collection of socio-economic-political theories expounded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The Great Misunderstanding argues that the source of such misrepresentations lies in ignoring the philosophy of Marxism, which is dialectical materialism. In large, this was due to the fact that *The German Ideology*, in which Marx and Engels developed this philosophy, did not find a publisher for almost one hundred years. Gordon Childe Marxism has been adopted by a large number of academics and other scholars working in various disciplines. The theoretical development of Marxist archaeology was first developed in the Soviet Union in 1929, when a young archaeologist named Vladislav I. Ravdonikas published a report entitled "For a Soviet history of material culture". Within this work, the very discipline of archaeology as it then stood was criticised as being inherently bourgeois, therefore anti-socialist and so, as a part of the academic reforms instituted in the Soviet Union under the administration of Premier Joseph Stalin, a great emphasis was placed on the adoption of Marxist archaeology throughout the country. Gordon Childe, who used Marxist theory in his understandings of the development of human society. During the 1920s, the Western Marxist school became accepted within Western academia, subsequently fracturing into several different perspectives such as the Frankfurt School or critical theory. Due to its former state-supported position, there has been a backlash against Marxist thought in post-communist states see sociology in Poland but it remains dominant in the sociological research sanctioned and supported by those communist states that remain see sociology in China. Marxian economics refers to a school of economic thought tracing its foundations to the critique of classical political economy first expounded upon by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Although the Marxian school is considered heterodox, ideas that have come out of Marxian economics have contributed to mainstream understanding of the global economy. Certain concepts of Marxian economics, especially those related to capital accumulation and the business cycle, such as creative destruction, have been fitted for use in capitalist systems. Marxist historiography is a school of historiography influenced by Marxism. The chief tenets of Marxist historiography are the centrality of social class and economic constraints in determining historical outcomes. Marxist historiography has made contributions to the history of the working class, oppressed nationalities, and the methodology of history from below. Marxist historiography suffered in the Soviet Union, as the government requested overdetermined

historical writing. While some members of the group most notably Christopher Hill and E. Kosambi are considered the founding fathers of Marxist historiography. Today, the senior-most scholars of Marxist historiography are R. Panikkar , most of whom are now over 75 years old. Marxist criticism views literary works as reflections of the social institutions from which they originate. According to Marxists, even literature itself is a social institution and has a specific ideological function, based on the background and ideology of the author. Marxist aesthetics is a theory of aesthetics based on, or derived from, the theories of Karl Marx. It involves a dialectical and materialist , or dialectical materialist , approach to the application of Marxism to the cultural sphere, specifically areas related to taste such as art, beauty, etc.

Chapter 2 : Marxian Approach to Social Development | Karl Marx

Essay on Marx's Theory of Social Change - Marx's theory of social change is much interlinked with his concept of social classes and class conflicts. Marx's focus on the process of social change is so central to his thinking that its shadow pervades all his writings. The motor force of.

Get Full Essay Get access to this section to get all help you need with your essay and educational issues. Human history is the process through which men change themselves even as they pit themselves against nature to dominate it. In the course of their history men increasingly transform nature to make it better serve their own purposes. And, in the process of transforming nature, they transform themselves. He fashions tools with which to transform his natural habitat. In producing their means of subsistence men indirectly produce their actual material life. This is what makes man a zoon politicon. The relations men establish with nature through their labor are reflected in their social relationships. By social is meant the cooperation of several individuals, no matter under what conditions, in what manner or to what end. As societies emerge from originally undifferentiated hordes, the division of labor leads to the emergence of stratification, of classes of men distinguished by their differential access to the means of production and their differential power. Given relative scarcity, whatever economic surplus has been accumulated will be preempted by those who have attained dominance through their expropriation of the means of production. Yet this dominance never remains unchallenged. Yet Marx, insisted on the principle of historical specificity, that is, he thought it essential to note that each particular class antagonism, rooted in particular productive conditions, must be analyzed in its own right. Each stage in history is conceived as a functional whole, with its own peculiar modes of production, which give rise to distinctive types of antagonisms between exploiting and exploited classes. Not all exploited classes have a chance to assert themselves in successful combat against their exploiters. The revolts of the slaves of antiquity or of the German peasantry at the time of the Reformation were doomed to failure because these classes did not represent a mode of production that would dominate in the future. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie in the last stages of feudalism and the proletariat in modern times were destined to be victorious since they represented a future mode of production and social organization. While Marx can be considered a historical evolutionist, it would be a mistake to think of him as a believer in unilinear evolution. He was acutely aware of periods of relative stagnation in human history—for example, in Oriental societies—and he knew of historical situations characterized by a stalemate, a temporary equilibrium, between social classes. Marx conceived of four major successive modes of production in the history of mankind after the initial stage of primitive communism: Each of these came into existence through contradictions and antagonisms that had developed in the previous order. When this happened, the new classes, which represented a novel productive principle, broke down the old order, and the new productive forces, which were developed in the matrix of the old order, created the material conditions for further advance. More essays like this:

Chapter 3 : Field Guide to Housing Theory: Marxist Theory / Theory of Social Change

This essay is a logical-philosophical critique of the Marxian system of sociology with special reference to the theory of social change. To every change in the natural order (taken in conjunction with the technological order) corresponds an appropriate change in the human order, that is, in the.

Marx stressed capitalism and class conflict and Weber stressed rationalisation and bureaucracy. Marx and Weber identified problems within modern society. Marx had a generally optimistic view about the future and believed his theory could improve human conditions. Weber on the other hand was more pessimistic. Weber argued that modern societies are characterised increasingly by a process of rationalisation meaning that the world is increasingly governed by rationality in which tradition and affective forms of action are replaced by predominantly rational forms. This leads to disenchantment being seen as secularisation, including the progressive disposal of non-rational elements from all spheres of life. Weber feared that this process of rationalisation would drive out the warmth and humanity of social life, the very things that give meaning to human existence. According to Marx however, modern societies are characterised by capitalism and who owns the means of production. Marx distinguished four types of production that have succeeded each other; these are primitive communism, ancient society, feudalism and capitalism. These types of production are characterised by a set of class relations. Those who own the means of production exploit the labour of those who do not own the means of production. In ancient society, masters exploited slaves. In feudal society, Lords exploited serfs who were tied to the land; and in capitalist society, the bourgeoisie exploit the labour power of the proletariat who are forced to work for the bourgeoisie in order to survive. In each case of production exploitation leads to class conflict and the eventual replacement of each mode of production. Marx and Weber had different views on bureaucracy. Weber believed that bureaucratic organisations were essential for the operation of the industrial society. He believed that the growth of bureaucracy was a result of the development of new forms of power in industrial society with some individuals exercising more power than others within society and getting others to comply with their wishes whether they agreed with them or not. This was because the organisation or person is seen as having a right to command obedience. Marx predicted there would be a proletarian revolution where administrators would be elected and truly responsible to the people. Bureaucracy would cease to exist in a classless society. Marx viewed the development of modern nation states that linked to the development of capitalism. The state acts to ensure that political decisions are taken that allow capitalists to continue accumulation wealth. Weber argued that the rise of bureaucratically organised states was part of the growing process of rationalisation, which accompanied the rise of capitalism. With view to religion, Marx believed that it was a conservative force in society whereas Weber used the ideas of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism to show that religion could bring about social change. Weber based these ideas on Christian Calvinists where the people had hard working lives, saving their money instead of spending it and ploughing it into their businesses. This meant that when the industrial revolution needed a large investment of capital, there was a group of people in society with good work ethics and money at their disposal. According to Weber the Protestant ethic did not cause capitalism but it provided the necessary moral and economic climate in which capitalism could happen. Industrial revolution and capitalism brought big changes so Weber used this to make a link between religious ideas and social change. Weber perceived changes occurring in society through the efforts of a charismatic leader who is able to distance himself to a cause. Because rationalisation brings with it bureaucratisation and because bureaucracy brings with it ossification, the process of rationalisation is not sufficient for a continuing process of social change. So therefore social change needs charismatic leadership. Neither Weber nor Marx conceives social changes as involving an ongoing process of reflection and self - change. Marx reduces conflict and the egotistical self-interest to capitalism or to that of a class society. In his views he does not see that conflict and repression are avoidable even in loving and caring communities. He does not see social relationships, community, or sociability as essential ends. Weber reduces social life to the motives and practices of self-interested people in society, all of who are engaged in powers for struggle. Weber and Marx have different opinions on class.

According to Marx there are only two classes in society. The bourgeoisie, those who own production and the proletariat those who do not own production and those who labour for the bourgeoisie. Marx sees communism as ending the alienation of the individual from community, he has a view that the proletariat will one day overthrow the bourgeoisie. Weber sees communism as stifling the individual and the individual spheres of life in the name of the community. I have illustrated how Marx sees change through capitalism and conflict and Weber through rationalisation and bureaucracy. They both have different views about social change and outcome. Weber theories are based much on his ideal types, not best types but types that are of the purest kind. Essay UK - <http://www.essayuk.com>: There are UK writers just like me on hand, waiting to help you. Each of us is qualified to a high level in our area of expertise, and we can write you a fully researched, fully referenced complete original answer to your essay question. Just complete our simple order form and you could have your customised Sociology work in your email box, in as little as 3 hours. About this resource This Sociology essay was submitted to us by a student in order to help you with your studies.

Chapter 4 : A. K. Saran, The Marxian theory of social change - PhilPapers

The following is based on a talk given at a Socialist Alternative meeting in Melbourne last month by Daniel Lopez Every argument or action aimed at changing the world implies a theory of social change.

Hire Writer According to Marx it is not the values or ideas of humans that lead to social change. Marx thought that change was driven by economic influences. He saw class conflict, between rich and poor, as the drive for historical change and development. Marx believed that capitalism created the oppression and exploitation of the lower classes. He was particularly interested in the analysis of societies as organised social classes. He cited many types of classes but thought that two were referred to as the dominant class who owned the means of production such as capital, land, raw materials, machinery and labour power. The later were the oppressed class who only owned their own labour power. Stones Marx maintained that economic production underlies and shapes the entire society. He suggested that both the forces and relations of production the economic base , determine the social elements like religion, education, family, ideas and values which make up the superstructure. Marx has seen class division to be a major negative result of modernisation. He argued that exploitation was a defining characteristic of capitalist production and that the extraction of surplus value from the collected labourers in the factory was the bases of profit and accumulation. According to Marx if a capitalist fails to make profit, they are simply driven out of the market. Marx thought that in his thinking he had uncovered the dynamics of capitalism. Marx felt that revolutionary change was the way to resolve the contradictions within society. He suggested that the working population are unaware of the true nature of exploitation and oppression. The ideology of the Bourgeoisie creates a false consciousness and a false picture of the relationship between the classes. This is where all members of a social class share the same relationship to the modes of production. Marx predicted that the working class would become a class for itself by realising the true nature of the relationship between the classes, and therefore the conflict of interest is no longer disguised. Resulting in class- consciousness. They would develop a common identity, recognise shared interests and take collective action to further those interests. This would result in the proletariat overthrowing the Bourgeoisie and seizing the mode of production which is the source of power. Property would become commonly owned and a classless society would emerge, as all members of society would then share the same relationship, this being the mode of production. This is true today as the exploitation of lower classes is still widespread. As well as providing the complex and relevant ideas on capitalism and thought on how contradiction in society can lead to change, Marx also highlighted labour being a commodity. A commodity is any product that can be bought or sold. Marx has helped in the advancement of labour movement, in helping to increase bargaining power of workers. This has meant an increase in pay. For example workers have more rights through schemes such as Trade Unions. This is an organised association of workers in a trade, group of trades, or a profession, formed to protect and further their rights and interests. When friction and disputes arise between individuals of the working class and departments of the working state, the trade unions aim to facilitate the fastest and smoothest settlement to the maximum advantage of the workers they represent, taking care not to prejudice anyone. The trade unions act as mediators with both sides. As the role of Trade Unions became more and more effective throughout the twentieth century the exploitation and oppression of the lower class was reduced. For the Bourgeoisie this meant less profit as wages and working hours had to be made more ethical. According to Marx Bourgeoisie are not fulfilled unless they are making maximum profits. This is once again true today. These are companies that operate in several countries. All of these companies sell and produce products in more than one country. Companies like GAP and Nike now have their product made in third world countries. Marx also suggested that any skill differentials within the proletariat would be removed. He predicted that the use of technology would reduce the labours role. The deskilling of the workforce would create a homogeneous working class. Some parts of the middle class become absorbed into the working class. Marx called this proletarianisation. Now the availability of clerical skills on offer is greater in comparison to the Marxist period. In there were only clerks, now there are over 14 million, working throughout the tertiary sector. Today some sociologists argue that the work carried out by this sector is similar to the traditional work

by proletarians. However for others such as Goldthorpe this group is now part of the intermediate class spoken of earlier. This together with many companies moving their production abroad means that there are fewer jobs for the unskilled, who then become poorer whilst the opposing class is gaining profits. This means that the gap between the rich and poor increases. However, new classes have emerged, the middle class. These are those who do not necessarily own land and modes of production, but those who work and earn a good wage. The lower class are those who have few skills and make up most of the unemployed workers. It was the discovery of America that allowed for the world market to arise. The Bourgeoisie developed it and increased its capital. His theory explains the development of multinational and transnational corporations. As discussed Marx spoke of lower classes being oppressed and the ruling class not being fulfilled unless they are making profit. These corporations enable this trend to continue. However, as we have seen Marx has also been the source of various criticisms. Marx tried to base all social theory on a single factor, economics, this was a major downfall as society involves many other factors, which are all interdependent of one another, and these need to be taken into account. We must also take into account that it could be argued that there are various interpretations of Marx and he may have been misinterpreted by others. How to cite this page Choose cite format:

Chapter 5 : Marxian class theory - Wikipedia

theory of social change Marx's focus on the process of social change is so central to this thinking that it informs all his writings. The motor force of history for Marx is not to be found in any extra-human agency, be it "providence" or the "objective spirit."

Marxian Explanation of Social Change Article shared by: In this article we will discuss about the Marxian explanation of social change. According to Marx, social change occurs as a sequel to class struggle. The seeds of class struggle which generate change are found in the economic infra-structure of society. At the dawn of human history, when man used to live, in the words of Marx, in a state of primitive communism, those contradictions or conflicts of interest among classes did not exist. Both the forces of production and the products of labour were communally owned. As such, class distinctions did not exist. With the emergence of the private ownership of the forces of production, however, the fundamental contradictions or class distinctions were created. In other words, the forces of production give rise to particular relations of production. Through its ownership of the forces of production, a minority is able to control command and enjoy the fruits of the labour of the majority. This dominant group also determines the superstructure in keeping with the interest of the group. Law, literature, philosophy, etc. In other words, the impact or influence of the dominant group is discernible in all areas of social life. The forces of production do not, however, remain unchanged. Whenever the forces of production undergo a change, there is a corresponding change in the relations of production also. A new class emerges as dominant and seeks to control command and enjoy the fruits of the labour of the majority. A conflict naturally ensues between the emerging dominant group on the one hand and the group which had hitherto enjoyed all the privileges. The emerging dominant group endeavors to determine the superstructure in terms of its own interest. The society, as a whole, thus undergoes a change. Marx seeks to explain all social changes in terms of the contradictions which are found in the economic infrastructure of society. In his view, class struggle will continue till class distinctions are completely obliterated and a classless society comes into being. Marxian theory of social change has been criticized from various points of view. To begin with, it has been argued that the forces of production do not uniquely determine the relations of production. Thus, the same mode of production may be applied in situations that differ radically from one another in terms of social and economic systems. The technological bases of the American and the Soviet economy are not as different as are the relations of production obtaining in these countries. Moreover, the influence of science and technology is very widespread and far-reaching, in so far as thinking, behaviour-pattern and value-systems are concerned. In this context, it is not unrealistic to assume that the people of two different societies may share similar thinking, behaviour-pattern and value-systems despite and fact that the economic systems in these countries are different. Another important factor should not also be overlooked. Both the systems are undergoing transformation in response to the demands of technology. The new economic experiment that is being tried in the Republic of China, Soviet Russia and socialist countries of Eastern Europe, dramatically illustrates this point. Marx recorded his observations at the dawn of industrial revolution. Secondly, the Marxist thesis that those who are economically dominant become, by virtue of their economic power, dominant in society is not fully supported by historical facts, thus, the organized religion, such as the Church in Europe, the Brahmin priesthood in India, etc. It is true that economic power helps one to gain other forms of power. But it is equality true that other forms of power help one to gain economic power. The conclusion of the Marxist doctrine that economic power is primary and that other forms of power are consequential cannot, therefore, be accepted. Thirdly, the Marxist thesis that politics and culture of a particular epoch are explained by the fact that they sub-serve the interest of the economically dominant class in that epoch is also open to several objections. All human actions cannot always be explained in terms of economic motivations. Religious pursuits, for example, cannot be explained in economic terms. The prayerful attitude of a true devotee has nothing to do with considerations of economic gain or loss. The motives which impel a poet to write a poem are, in most cases, non-economic. Again, the pursuits of eminent scientists are inspired by non-economic motives. It is also wrong to assume that

those who exercise political power are always influenced by economic motives. If we try to analyse closely the motives of some of the well-known figures of history, we shall find that sometimes purely non-economic motives, such as the desire for distinction or personal glory or a desire for doing good to people, deeply influenced their thoughts and actions. King Ashoka, for example, decided to give up warfare as a means of winning other kingdoms from motives that were decidedly non-economic. Hitler was probably more influenced by the lure of personal glory than by the balanced calculations of probable material gain. A consideration of the motives that inspire art, culture, music, painting, and sometimes even politics of a country will show that human nature is too complex to be explained simply in terms of economic motives. It is, of course, true that sometimes art and culture are made to sub-serve the interests of the economically dominant class in society. But such cultural products cannot permeate the whole of society because they lack the qualities, such as spontaneity of expression, strength and vitality, which characterize genuine works of art. Fourthly, all the aspects of social dynamics, barring economic forces, are ignored in Marxian analysis. For example, can disputes between two religions or racial groups be explained simply in economic terms? Economic reasons may or may not generate such conflicts. Even when economic reasons are responsible, there may be many other non-economic reasons which are no less responsible for fanning the fire of dispute. If we view the genesis of such disputes from this angle, it is apparent that emphasis on economic reasons, to the exclusion of all others, makes the study biased and partial. Fifthly, the assumption of Marxism that the establishment of classless society would bring to an end the exploitation of man by man is too simple to be accepted. As Maclver and Page have pointed out: In conclusion, we may say that it is undeniable that the economic factors exert a very important influence on politics and social philosophy of a given society. But to regard the economic system as the sole determinant of legal codes, political and cultural system, is evidently wrong. There are other aspects of human life, besides economic, which are equally significant. It should, however, be borne in mind that Marx was not a determinist. According to him, class struggle will not ensue automatically when the objective situation seems to be favourable for the same. Till the people become class-conscious and consciously work for the struggle, no revolution will take place, even if the objective situation may be ripe for the same. It may be said that Marx anticipated what Talcott Parsons developed much later as the voluntaristic theory of social action. The observations of Hoselitz, the noted economist, will be in order:

Chapter 6 : Top 5 Theories of Social Change – Explained

Karl Marx was both a philosopher and a political agitator. He thus often thought about questions relating to social change and revolution. However, Marx was not content to analyze each in.

He thus often thought about questions relating to social change and revolution. However, Marx was not content to analyze each in isolation as if it were a self-contained idea. Like every other idea he pondered, Marx examined social change and revolution in light of his all-encompassing theory which sought to explain how societies progress materially, economically, and socio-politically. To Marx, only economics mattered. Free will, shifting societal values and aspirations, population growth and dislocation, and many other possible causes of social change mattered little in the Marxian universe. Rather, Marx believed, how we produce and exchange the goods necessary for our survival shapes how we relate to each other. Moreover, he claimed that in order to take advantage of new knowledge and technology people always have organized themselves around said production differently at distinct times in history. However, he believed, society has often lagged behind these changes, creating friction and conflict until a new social order more conducive to the emerging economic order replaces the old social order Holton, At best, social change is an uneven process that continually pits emerging interests against entrenched ones. That is why Marx famously concluded in the Communist Manifesto "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Aristotle in fact wrote about class and conflict in the fourth century BCE, observing that in democracies the poor ruled, while in oligarchies the rich did. Further, he believed that politics reconciled the interests of the many with those of the few, sometimes equitably, sometimes not Arendt, A more contemporary writer on the subject, the early nineteenth century social theorist Henri de Saint-Simon, differentiated rich from poor as well. He went one important step further, though, by explicitly distinguishing "producers" or laborers, from mere consumers or property-owners Kim, n. Marx soon turned this purely descriptive distinction into a socioeconomic dynamo of the first order. Indeed, the impetus for all social change, he asserted, emanated from the class struggle between workers, or the proletariat, and owners, or the bourgeoisie. However, Marx believed that the ultimate source of this change lay elsewhere: Here, man is defined entirely by what he makes, by the labor this production requires, and by the interactions with others production necessitates. Broadly speaking, labor, technical expertise, and the organizational ingenuity needed to make efficient use of both make up the forces of production. Constantly in flux, the forces and relations of production are all but guaranteed to clash, with the more basic of the two, the forces of production, prevailing. Changes in the way things are made, in effect, require new forms of communication and cooperation, giving rise, over time, to new relations of production. Further Insights In very real and persistent ways, then, the economic base of a society periodically reinvents itself, prompting broader sociopolitical and cultural change. To perpetuate itself materially society must have order, so every economic system gives rise to a corresponding societal superstructure. Courts, government bureaucracies, social mores, family and religious values, and even culture itself all stem from the economic base they buttress. When this base falters, the social fabric woven around it inevitably unravels Wacquant, In effect, things would get far worse before they got better. It was and is a bleak vision. The capitalist system would have to self-destruct before a more equitable socialist system could take its place. It must, in other words, fail so many so miserably that the dictatorship of the proletariat following it would be welcomed with open arms. Then and only then would the real revolution occur as private property gave way to collective ownership, class distinctions morphed into a society of equals, and thinly veiled authoritarianism transformed into rule by consensus. In the meantime, increasing swathes of humanity not only would but had to live and die in the direst of conditions. Incremental reforms like reducing the length of the workday or banning child labor, he believed, were no more than temporary ploys owners, citing declining profits, would revoke the minute workers put their own parochial interests above those of their class as a whole. A hereditary caste was thus not a class in the Marxian sense, and neither are the upper, middle, and lower income bracketed classes sociologists study today. Of those he did identify, the largest and, from his point of view the most important by far, was the working class or proletariat. Technically speaking, anyone who drew a regular wage belonged

because, owning no private property or any means of production, these workers were reduced to selling their labor-power to survive. Sooner or later, though, they would find ways to boost earnings by increasing the tempo of production but keeping workers daily wages the same. Marx saw this purloining as inherently exploitive. Those who enjoyed wealth did not actually produce it, and those who did produce it lived in poverty. However, the latter had no "legitimate" means of righting this wrong because laws, governments, and religious and social institutions all existed in order to validate the existing forms of ownership and deflect any and all challenges to these forms. A keen social observer, Marx also acknowledged the transient existence of more marginal classes: Primarily artisans, shopkeepers, and small farmers, the petty bourgeoisie owned their means of production and, doing so, worked for themselves. Until, that is, a declining capitalism would no longer accommodate small businesses, at which point the petty bourgeoisie would enter the ranks of the disaffected proletariat. Its ranks were populated by those farthest removed from the means of production: Additionally, there were the peasantry, the tenant farmers Marx considered part of the proletariat. The entire section is 3, words.

Chapter 7 : Essay on Marx's Theory of Social Change

The Marxian theory rests on this fundamental assumption that changes in the economic 'infra-structure' of society are the prime movers of social change. For Marx, society consists of two structures—'infra-structure' and 'super-structure'.

Social Movements Models of Social Change In their search to explain social change, sociologists sometimes examine historical data to better understand current changes and movements. They also rely on three basic theories of social change: According to evolutionary theory, society moves in specific directions. Therefore, early social evolutionists saw society as progressing to higher and higher levels. As a result, they concluded that their own cultural attitudes and behaviors were more advanced than those of earlier societies. He saw human societies as progressing into using scientific methods. Likewise, Emile Durkheim, one of the founders of functionalism, saw societies as moving from simple to complex social structures. Herbert Spencer compared society to a living organism with interrelated parts moving toward a common end. In short, Comte, Durkheim, and Spencer proposed unilinear evolutionary theories, which maintain that all societies pass through the same sequence of stages of evolution to reach the same destiny. Contemporary social evolutionists like Gerhard Lenski, Jr. Multilinear evolutionary theory holds that change can occur in several ways and does not inevitably lead in the same direction. Multilinear theorists observe that human societies have evolved along differing lines. Functionalist theory Functionalist sociologists emphasize what maintains society, not what changes it. Although functionalists may at first appear to have little to say about social change, sociologist Talcott Parsons holds otherwise. Parsons , a leading functionalist, saw society in its natural state as being stable and balanced. That is, society naturally moves toward a state of homeostasis. To Parsons, significant social problems, such as union strikes, represent nothing but temporary rifts in the social order. According to his equilibrium theory, changes in one aspect of society require adjustments in other aspects. When these adjustments do not occur, equilibrium disappears, threatening social order. Although Karl Marx accepted the evolutionary argument that societies develop along a specific direction, he did not agree that each successive stage presents an improvement over the previous stage. Marx noted that history proceeds in stages in which the rich always exploit the poor and weak as a class of people. Slaves in ancient Rome and the working classes of today share the same basic exploitation. Only by socialist revolution led by the proletariat working class , explained Marx in his *Das Kapital*, will any society move into its final stage of development: Instead, it presents tools for individuals wishing to take control and regain their freedom. Unlike functionalism and its emphasis on stability, Marx holds that conflict is desirable and needed to initiate social change and rid society of inequality. Critics of Marx note that conflict theorists do not always realize that social upheaval does not inevitably lead to positive or expected outcomes.

Chapter 8 : Marxian Explanation of Social Change

According to "Karl Marx" men initiated to differentiate themselves from animal, as soon as they started to produce means of nourishment. He believed that, the fundamental reason behind social change is the development of productive forces.

This article provides information about the Marxian approach to development: Karl Marx was the most influential socialist thinker on development in the 19th and 20th centuries. Of late, against the backdrop of the collapse of the socialist economy, Marxian thought has been a subject of critical review. Around half of the world population followed his suggested path of restructuring the social and political organisation and economic development. His contribution to the theory of development is simply unparalleled and path-breaking. After his death on 14th March, , his life time collaborator and close friend, Friedrich Engels, wrote in his obituary: Just as Darwin discovered the law of development or organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history: The development of human society through various stages, development and change in the material condition, existence, development of capitalism, and the corresponding change in the class relationship and transformation in the mode of production were the major concerns of Karl Marx. Marx had a profound philosophical vision of the development of human society which may be understood in terms of the material condition of existence and the dialectic, i. Though he has not denied the significance of non-material forces in the process of development of human society through various stages, he emphasised that material forces and their contradiction provided the very basic and fundamental condition of development and change in human society. As a prolific writer, Karl Marx has touched upon all these issues in several of his writings, especially in the Communist Manifesto, in the Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy and The Capital. According to Karl Marx, all the legal relations, politics, forms of the states, etc. To him, in the process of development of human society human being has emerged to be a producing animal and thereby tied with several production relations. In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. He was very categorical to mention that with the change in the economic foundation the inter superstructure, that is the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophical, get transferred. In the process of such transformation individual consciousness is determined not by what he thinks but by the contradiction of material life that is the conflict between the social productive forces and relation of production. Consciousness is a part of development in human society. To him, it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but on the contrary their material condition of existence that determines this consciousness. As pointed out earlier antagonistic production relation is the key factor for change and development to Marx. To him the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and capitalist are the progressive epochs in the economic formation of society. The capitalist relation of production to him is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production. There have been specific forms of class struggles.

Chapter 9 : Karl marx-theory of social change | Essay Example

Evolutionary theory Sociologists in the 19th century applied Charles Darwin's () work in biological evolution to theories of social change.

Rentier, Capitalist, and Worker. Marx strengthened this with a discussion over verifiable class relationships. Marx sought to define class as embedded in productive relations rather than social status. His political and economic thought developed towards an interest in production as opposed to distribution, and this henceforth became a central theme in his concept of class. Class structure[edit] Marx distinguishes one class from another on the basis of two criteria: From this, Marx states "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other": Capitalists, or bourgeoisie, own the means of production and purchase the labor power of others II. Workers, or proletariat, do not own any means of production or the ability to purchase the labor power of others. Rather, they sell their own labor power. Class is thus determined by property relations, not by income or status. These factors are determined by distribution and consumption, which mirror the production and power relations of classes. A small, transitional class known as the petite bourgeoisie own sufficient means of production but do not purchase labor power. The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Class consciousness is an aspect of Marxist theory, referring to the self-awareness of social classes, the capacity to act in its own rational interests, or measuring the extent to which an individual is conscious of the historical tasks their class or class allegiance sets for them. Moreover, by definition, the objective interests of classes are fundamentally in opposition; consequently, these opposing interests and consciousnesses eventually lead to class conflict. Marx first saw the development of class conflict confined to individual factories and capitalists. However, given the maturation of capitalism, the life conditions of bourgeoisie and proletariat began to grow more disparate. This increased polarization and homogenization within classes fostered an environment for individual struggles to become more generalized. When increasing class conflict is manifested at the societal level, class consciousness and common interests are also increased. Consequently, when class consciousness is augmented, policies are organized to ensure the duration of such interest for the ruling class. Here begins the use of the struggle for political power and classes become political forces. Since the distribution of political power is determined by power over production, or power over capital, it is no surprise that the bourgeois class uses their wealth to legitimize and protect their property and consequent social relations. Thus the ruling class is those who hold the economic power and make the decisions Dahrendorf. Class structure of capitalism[edit] In Marxist theory , the capitalist stage of production consists of two main classes: This is the fundamental economic structure of work and property See also: Thus the proletariat, in itself, is forced into a subservient position by the power of capital, which has stripped the means of production from them. As the proletariat becomes conscious of its situation and power, organizes itself, and takes collective political action it becomes a class for itself which has the revolutionary potential to become the ruling class. Social class pertaining broadly to material wealth may be distinguished from status class based on honour, prestige, religious affiliation, and so on. The conditions of capitalism and its class system came together due to a variety of "elective affinities". In the Marxist view of capitalism , this is a conflict between capitalists bourgeoisie and wage-workers the proletariat. For Marxists, class antagonism is rooted in the situation that control over social production necessarily entails control over the class which produces goodsâ€”in capitalism this is the exploitation of workers by the bourgeoisie. In a society with democratic control and production for use , there would be no class, no state and no need for money. That is, all people in one class make their living in a common way in terms of ownership of the things that produce social goods. A class may own things, own land, own people, be owned, own nothing but their labor. A class will extract tax, produce agriculture, enslave and work others, be enslaved and work, or work for a wage.

Subjective factors The members will necessarily have some perception of their similarity and common interest. Marx termed this Class consciousness. Reproduction of class relations Class as a set of social relationships that is reproduced from one generation to the next. The first criterion divides a society into the owners and non-owners of means of production. In capitalism, these are capitalist bourgeoisie and proletariat. Finer divisions can be made, however: They include self-employed artisans , small shopkeepers, and many professionals. Jon Elster has found mention in Marx of 15 classes from various historical periods. Starting with agricultural and domestic textile laborers in England and Flanders, more and more occupations only provide a living through wages or salaries. Private manufacturing, leading to self-employment, is no longer as viable as it was before the industrial revolution, because automation made manufacturing very cheap. Many people who once controlled their own labor-time were converted into proletarians through industrialization. Today groups which in the past subsisted on stipends or private wealth—like doctors, academics or lawyers—are now increasingly working as wage laborers. Marxists call this process proletarianization , and point to it as the major factor in the proletariat being the largest class in current societies in the rich countries of the "first world. The physical, intellectual and moral perpetrator of this transformation is the proletariat. With the domination of the proletariat, the socialization of production cannot help but lead to the means of production to become the property of society. The direct consequences of this transformation are a drop in labor productivity, a shorter working day, and the replacement of small-scale unified production by collective and improved labor conditions. Capitalism breaks for all time the ties between producer and owner, once held by the bond of class conflict. Now a new union will be formed based on the conscious application of science and the concentration of collective labor. He also extended this redistribution to the structure of power in families. Objective and subjective factors in class in Marxism[edit] Marxism has a rather heavily defined dialectic between objective factors i. Thompson analyses the English working class as a group of people with shared material conditions coming to a positive self-consciousness of their social position. It is seen as the process of a "class in itself" moving in the direction of a "class for itself", a collective agent that changes history rather than simply being a victim of the historical process.