

## Part 2: Conflict and Power

- Conflict and power theory
  - While functionalists see conflict as temporary and change are more conflict/power theorists see conflict as ongoing and change is common.
  - Conflict is a central feature of human societies.
  - Conflict is the engine of change.
  - Inequalities in the distribution of power in society condition all human interactions.
  - Societies are divided into difference groups with difference interests and different amounts of power.
  - Those with power use it to consolidate their positions, accumulate more prestige, privileges and power to fend off amounts of power.
  - Groups with fundamental differences between engage them engage in conflict
  - Dominant groups often secure the voluntary compliance of subordinate groups
    - Marx;s “false consciousness”. Weber’s “authority”
- Two strands of conflict/power theory
  - Insights by Karl Marx
  - Teachings of Max Weber
- Maxian conflict theory
  - Societies are called “primitive communist” a.k.a hunter gatherer
  - Society without private property, social class or any structures from of inequality.
  - All societies since then have private property, members divided into social class, with different access to society’s resources of privilege, power and prestige and so with different interests as a class.
- Dominant and Subordinate Classes
  - Two classes whose relationship is key to understanding the nature of conflict in society
    - Dominant Class
      - Small elite who own most of wealth and economic resources
      - Most power and prestige
      - Profits most from existing economic and social arrangement
    - Subordinate class
      - Bulk of population who performs most of the labor which creates wealth
      - Owns nothing except ability to work
      - Profits little from existing economic and social arrangement and has a built in motivation to challenge them
- Class Conflict

- o D&S classes have class interests that are fundamentally opposed to each other. (i.e slaves and slave owners)
- o This leads to class conflict
- o History – D vs. S classes
  - Slave owners and slaves
  - Land owners and serfs
  - Capitalists and workers
- Conflict and Change
  - o Marx class conflict; drives social change and revolutions
  - o Old arrangements replaced by new ones.
  - o Workers under capitalism will realize exploitation and overthrow capitalist's arrangements and found socialist. Communist's society-ending exploitation of those who labor by those who don't.
- Dominance and Cultural Power
  - o Why haven't workers overthrown capitalism
    - b/c "false consciousness"
  - o Dominant ideas and values of a society are from the dominant society
  - o We are all socialized to believe the ideas and values serving the Dominant class (i.e capitalism, good for workers and capitalists)