

Karl Marx and Ralf Dahrendorf: A Comparative Perspective on Class Formation and Conflict

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Karl Marx ve Ralf Dahrendorf: Sınıf Oluşumu ve Çatışma Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Bakış Açısı

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Özet

Bu çalışma, klasik sosyal kuramcı Karl Marx ve çağdaş sosyal kuramcı Ralf Dahrendorf tarafından tanımlanan sınıf oluşumu ve çatışmayı ele almaktadır. Bu çalışmada, bu iki sosyal teorisyenin sınıf oluşumu ve çatışma kuramlarındaki benzerlikler ve farklılıklar incelenmektedir. Bilindiği üzere, her iki kuramcı da aynı sosyolojik gelenek olan "çatışma" kuramının öncülerindedir. Marx'ın tartışmasız olarak, çatışma teorisinin kurucusu olduğunu söylemek pek yanlış olmaz. Ayrıca, hiç şüphe yoktur ki, Marx'ın çalışmalarının hemen hemen her alanda, çatışma kuramcısı olan Dahrendorf'u etkilediği ve çalışmalarının köşe taşı olduğu aşikardır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmada aynı zamanda, Karl Marx'ın, Ralf Dahrendorf'un sınıf oluşumu ve çatışma teorisi üzerindeki etkisi tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sınıf Oluşumu, Çatışma, Marx, Dahrendorf.

Abstract

This study addresses the concepts of class formation and conflict as defined by the classical social theorist, Karl Marx and the contemporary social theorist, Ralf Dahrendorf. Both social theorists are pioneering members of the same sociological tradition called the "conflict" perspective. It is rather appropriate to indicate that Marx is the founding father of Conflict Theory and that his work had a strong influence on that of Dahrendorf in almost every respect, providing Dahrendorf with the stepping-stones from which to build new theoretical ideas. Within this context, this study first outlines the concepts of both social theorists. Then it deals with what the two perspectives share in common and compares the differences between them. Finally, it discusses how Marx's theories influenced Dahrendorf.

Keywords: Class Formation, Conflict, Marx, Dahrendorf.

1. Introduction

Both Marx and Dahrendorf show how social phenomenon is complicated, multi-dimensional and open to many different interpretations. This essay will address the positions these two theorists have on class formation and conflict. Then, it will address what the two perspectives on class formation and conflict share and how they differ. This study is based on thoughts on the importance of having different views.

The link between class formation and conflict has long been one of the most focused on themes in social research (Dahrendorf, 1958: 170). In this respect, Marx and Dahrendorf stand out. European sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf applied Karl Marx's viewpoints to his studies perhaps more than any other contemporary sociologists in terms of analyzing society (Bartek and Mullin, 1995: 68).

Marx's work was influential on Dahrendorf. Marx lived and died before Dahrendorf was born; therefore, any comparison of ideas can only be addressed from this stand point. However, Dahrendorf had the luxury to straddle the shoulders of two giants, Marx and Weber. The drastic contrast between Marx's radical optimism and Weber's pessimistic conservatism greatly influenced the contemporary sociologist, Dahrendorf who, to some extent, makes a synthesis of their studies. He especially tries to combine and synthesize Marx's idea about class and conflict (Weingart, 1969: 151). Dahrendorf also has a great influence on contemporary conflict sociologists. He wishes to talk about conflict groups rather than class struggle, management and workers rather than capital and labor, and dominant groups rather than a ruling class.

2. Conceptual Framework of Conflict and Class

There are two key terms in this study: conflict and class. Before getting into a specific discussion of the issue, we need to define these two terms since they are the basis of the study. Conflict as an element of society has existed from the moment there were two or more humans to interact with each other. Most sociologists from the conflict tradition considered conflict as an unavoidable part for human association (Dahrendorf, 1959a; Coser, 1956; Sprey, 1969). In sociology, conflict can be viewed from many theoretical perspectives. Conflict can be the catalyst for revolution or the basis for a meeting of the minds. Among the many definitions of conflict (all with negative connotations), Webster's dictionary defines it as a battle, a fight or a war. Collin's Sociological Dictionary defines conflict as any overt act of aggression between individuals or nations. For Karl Marx, conflict resulting from a fight over resources inevitably leads to revolution. For Dahrendorf, conflict is "the inequality of power and authority which inevitably accompanies social organizations" (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 64). In addition, Dahrendorf considered 'conflict' as a 'conflict of interest' or of 'one's interests' (Straus, 1979: 76).

The next term is *class*. According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, class is defined as "a very general term for a group including all individuals with a common characteristic"; the term *class* appears in Marx's works often, although he never systematically identified its exact meaning. Marx usually implied the meaning of class as a group of people who have in common specific relations to the means of production (Ashley and Orenstein, 1998). However, this is incomplete because Marx saw class as also having the potential for conflict.

The concept of class stems from Marx's theory of exploitation, that is, "the structural inequalities in society produce classes" (Aspers, 2010: 155). Marx and Engels defined the term of class as "a collective position vis-à-vis the means of production and the production process" (Harris and Robinson, 2000: 7). Weber explains class as a group of people sharing similar interests in terms of economic status regarding income and under the representation of the commodity or labor markets. Weber believed that the classification of people is best described by their consumption patterns rather than to their place in the market or the production process. He also focuses on the separation between class and status groups.

Marx considered a group a class when a mass of people united and organized for their common interests against their oppressors. Class does not refer to a mass of people sharing a common position without also having a common class-consciousness and a common struggle. For instance, the class of the bourgeoisie (the class that owned the means of production under capitalism) gained class-consciousness during the struggle within the feudal system. In the same way, the proletariat (whose goals and ambitions were in direct opposition to those without the means of production) gained their class-consciousness through the local capitalists exploiting them during the development of industrial society.

On the other hand, for Dahrendorf, class is a real phenomenon with effective forces in social conflict. He argued that "class[es], understood as conflict groups arising out of the authority structure of imperatively coordinated associations, are in conflict" (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 207). Today, it is a fact that new classes are emerging and old ones are disappearing all over the world (Girdner, 2006: 227). It is where there are existing contradictions that there is fertile soil for the formation of new classes.

3. Marx and Dahrendorf's Perspectives on Class Formation and Conflict

For Marx, human history is defined by class struggle. His main perception was that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 198). Marx and Engels (1848: 8) further explains that the histories of all societies are based on class struggles between those who are exploited and those who are exploiting them. Wright (2002: 5) also indicates that Marx concep-

tually defined class as growing out of the structure of a society and having a tendency to develop “organized forms of struggle...”. It is the conflict between the dominating class and those they dominate, superiors and subordinates, oppressors and oppressed, bourgeoisie and proletariat, etc. For instance, in modern society, Marx considered three types of classes: Capitalists, workers, and petite bourgeoisie (Robinson and Kelley, 1979: 39).

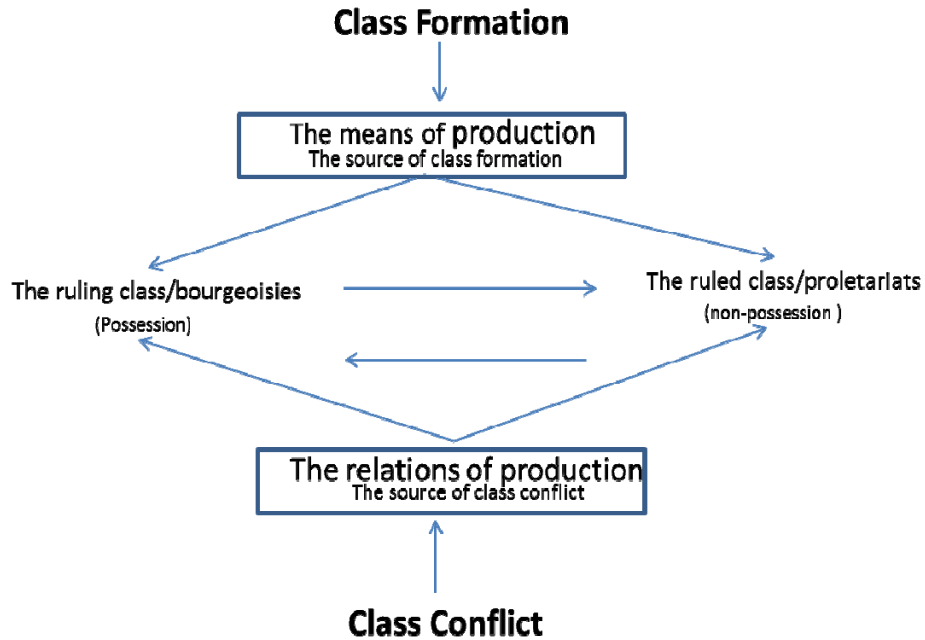
Marx believed that at his time or sometime in the near future, the proletariat could free itself from the bourgeoisie. The proletariat will overthrow the bourgeoisie and gain political control sooner or later (Marx, 1850: 3). Actually, Marx and Engels highlighted the importance of the existence of a proletariat class in terms of class formation. They pointed out in the Communist Manifesto that only the proletariat, as a revolutionary class, can remain standing against the bourgeoisie in the concept of modern Industry; other classes are going to fail (Marx and Engels, 1848: 23). Thus, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are the main pillars in the formation of the classes (see Table 1). The struggle of those classes forms the concept of class phenomenon.

In other words, the ruler (oppressor) and the ruled (oppressed) have been in a constant struggle with each other over the surplus value and this struggle can result either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society or in the common ruin of both sides. In this respect, according to Marx, throughout history there has always been one side in the position of owning land or factories, setting them apart from those who had no means of production. From this point, in his well-known work, the German Ideology, Marx and Engels (1845) dissects the historical phases of society to show that history is simply the succession of exploitive generations.

History is nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations, and thus on the one hand, continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modified the old circumstances with a completely changed activity (Marx and Engels, 1845: 57).

Marx believed that there are two classes: the rulers, those controlling the means of production, and the ruled working with the means of production; every society needs both. The struggle between them causes the termination of the existing societal order so it can be replaced by a new one. Marx’s concept of class formation and class conflict can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Marx's Class Formation and Conflict model



Regarding creation of conflict, Marx took an economic approach. For example, exploitation is the main source capitalists use for increasing profits and profits are essential for investment and capital accumulation. For example, oil and gas were important factors in class formation and conflict in Gulf-region according to Marx's concept of commodity fetishism (Hanieh, 2010: 38). Exploitation is the central issue for Marx when explaining the particular characteristic of conflict between workers and capitalists. Exploitation constitutes a social relation in terms of workers and rulers. In this sense, the disadvantaged group, the worker, challenges the interests of the exploiters, the owners (Tucker, 1978: 480). Conflict and capital are keys Marx used to explain both the class structure in a capitalist society and the development of that society. These factors lead to the expansion of homogenization and polarization within society between the working class and the ruling class.

Dahrendorf claimed that the formation of class refers to the organization of common interests. Like political groups, class is also groups of people united by common interests. In his book, Dahrendorf describes the situation as follows: "parallel with political organization of classes there grows up a theoretical class-consciousness, an awareness on the individual's part of the interest of his class generally" (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 17). According to Marx, this "class-consciousness" is very important for class formation. All proletariats need to get class conscious

(Foster, 2010: 245) and the failure of the British working class was a good example of a lack of class consciousness. Marx argues that the working class would ultimately gain class-consciousness under capitalism owing to the heavy oppression that comes with it. Capitalism is the main factor in the formation of class and that's why Marx believed that capitalism brought about class struggle and, in turn, and that struggle will bring about the end of capitalism.

The proletariat, who realize that they are in a struggle against the ruling class, will become a *class for themselves*. On the other hand, when the members of the proletariat realize the conflict relationship they have with the ruling class—whether or not anyone sees the ruling class as a class—the proletariat will become part of what Marx called a *class in itself*. Contemporary Marxists have considered the creation of a '*class in itself*' as class formation (Wright, 2002: 11). Dahrendorf quotes this situation from Marx as follows:

As long as the proletariat has not sufficiently developed to organize itself as a class, as long as, therefore, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie as yet has no political character, these theoreticians are merely utopians who invent systems in order to satisfy the needs of the oppressed classes (qtd. in Dahrendorf, 1959a: 17)

Thus, class consciousness is not only important for class formations, but also ultimately important for proletariat revolutions. Additionally, the struggle of classes will continue strengthening class consciousness. The ruled class becomes increasingly displeased since they are exploited by the upper class, which leads to a struggle. History shows that society is dialectical and not static will eventually bring about a revolution that will cause the collapse of society, and capitalism is no different.

According to Marx and Engels (1845: 54), "every class which is struggling for mastery, even when its domination, as is the case with the proletariat, postulates the abolition of the old form of society in its entirety and of domination itself, must first conquer for itself political power in order to represent its interest in turn as the general interest, which in the first moment it is forced to do". Class interest cannot stem from individual interest. Marx and Engels (1845: 48) further explained it in the German Ideology such that "the separate individuals form a class only in so far as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise, they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors". The domination of one class over another brings it victory. The omnipresence of class domination is also the result of class consciousness.

Marx outlined the types of society, and, in turn, the types of class systems. He identified four successive modes of production that underwent dramatic changes in the history of mankind after the initial stage of primitive communism; Asiatic

society, ancient society, feudal society, capitalist society, and communism through socialism. Asiatic societies are the earliest kind of class society and have powerful, despotic leaders. Under despotism, men are arbitrarily coerced by the ruling despot. The next stage is ancient society where land becomes private property, and a slave population comes into existence to create wealth for a few. In this society there is also a large gap between the rich and the poor. In the feudal age, a class of serfs works the land for a small aristocracy. Under feudalism, the serf is given some land, but either the entirety or a portion of the proceeds are taken by coercion by the land owner. According to Marx and Engels (1845: 190), feudalism is “a political form of the medieval relations of production and intercourse”. Marx indicated that class conflict also gave rise to the bourgeoisie and finally to capitalism at the time of feudal relations (Lachmann, 2002: 83). In the capitalist stage, there are two distinct classes: Those who own property (bourgeoisie), and those who work for the property owners (proletariat). While bourgeoisies own the means of production, proletariats have nothing except their labor power. The working class is in a numerical majority.

Marx predicted the next stage would be the socialism stage, a transition stage to the perfect stage of communism. For Marx, socialism is the first phase of communism and communism is a result of a long revolutionary process (Marx, 1875; Marx, 1989) and spoken of in *The Critique of the Gotha Programme*. Marx (1875) divided communist society into two stages: first phase or early phase, called ‘socialism’; and a higher phase called ‘the classless society’. In this first stage, income will be allocated based on work done rather than based on need. Marx explained that situation as “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs” (Marx, 1875; Marx 1989). In the higher stage of communist society, the owner of the means of production will be changed and property will belong to the whole of society (Marx, 1875; Marx, 1989). This will happen through the constant struggle of a long revolutionary process and, therefore, class formation is based on the existence of antagonistic classes.

To make a concrete example regarding class struggle, Marx (1852) tried to apply his theory of historical determinism to the coup d’état of Louis Bonaparte in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. For Marx, the coup was an example of class struggle and he argued that class struggle would finally culminate in a communistic revolution resulting in the abolishment of private ownership of the means of production and of class distinctions.

For Marx, “each of these stages came into existence through conflicts and antagonisms that had developed in the previous order” (Coser, 1977: 57). With each stage, Marx shows how two classes emerged as a direct result of conflict over perceived limited resources: the bourgeois, the owners the means of production, and the proletariat, who owned only their labor.

Basing his concepts on history, Marx takes a material view of conflict and explains it in terms of materialism as follows:

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure (Marx, 1859: 11).

Marx's "dialectical materialism" explains his view of how societies progressed throughout history. This theory is based on Hegel's argument that history occurs through a dialectic. Hegel claimed that the dialectic is the driving force in the history of ideas, the debate between an assertion and its opposite. Marx accepted this notion of the dialectic, but rejected Hegel's idealism since he thought that the real dialectic was not the battle between ideas, but the struggle between economic classes (Marx and Engels, 1848: 49). For example, regarding economic importance, Marx (1894) focused on the economic character of the future communist society in *Das Capital*. He argued that freedom in the economic sphere could cover; "...in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature" (Marx, 1894).

Marx pulled out two important elements from two philosophers – Hegel's dialectic and Feuerbach's materialism. He blended them into his own theoretical structure, *dialectical materialism*. In contrast to Hegel, Marx believed that rather than ideas, history is driven by material circumstances and economic relations. In brief, Marx strongly believed in dialectical materialism that everything is material and change takes place through the struggle between classes. Therefore, his materialistic view constitutes the engine of class formation and conflict. Marx takes a material view of conflict and explains it in terms of materialism.

In the German Ideology, Marx describes the role of power and decisions. Here the people are faced with the internal conflict of selfish desires versus the good of the

collective. According to Marx and Engels (1845: 53) "... [T]he division of labor implies a contradiction between the interest of the separate individual or the individual family and the communal interest of all the individuals who have intercourse with one another". Therefore, with the ability to create our own history and consciousness comes the power of conflict, carrying with it the ability to alienate the individual and society.

Marx makes some very progressive observations regarding the division of labor and the unequal distribution of goods. Based on those, the ruling class makes the rules that govern society. He explained:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time the ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it (Marx and Engels, 1845: 64).

Therefore, with the unequal ability to manipulate the rules of society Marx notes that conflict is inevitable and increase in intensity over time.

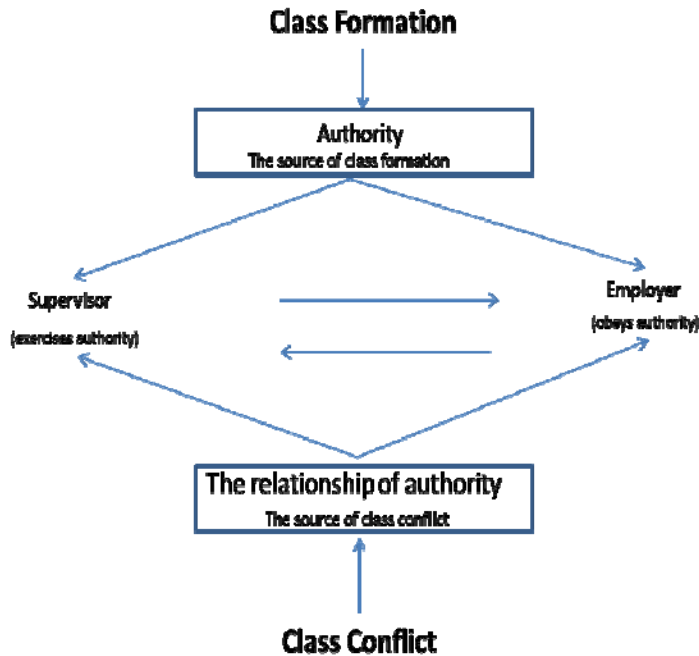
Marx's analysis of history is based on his distinction between productive forces and the social relations of production. The productive forces subdivide into three subsets: labor power – which refers to the mental and physical capabilities of the human being; the means of production – machines, water power, and tools; and raw materials of production such as iron and coal. The social relations of production are the relationships among individuals regarding the possession of property. Therefore, the mode of production is made up of the social relations of production and productive forces. For Marx, the mode of production changes within any given society. For example, European societies progressed from a feudal mode of production to a capitalist mode of production (Marx and Engels, 1848: 15). In other words, human beings create their own social organization according to modes of production. The mode of production changes since it does not meet the needs of the present social organization. Therefore, a new class and so a new form of society emerges. The mode of production is essential for class formation. According to Marx, class antagonisms specific to each particular mode of production brought about the emergence of classes whose interests could no longer be asserted within the framework of the old order.

Dahrendorf used a holistic approach. He focused on social facts and larger social structures. Accordingly, society is composed of several positions that have different amounts of authority. Actually, even though Weber didn't make a clear differentiation between authority and any form of control or domination, Dahrendorf took the definition of authority from him. Weber highlighted the factors of autho-

authority as “types” of authority as being rational, traditional, and charismatic (Hazelrigg, 1972: 482). Weber refers to authority as legitimate power that is used with the consent of those ruled by it and that conflict is created by distribution of authority and power. The simple rule is that people who have power want to keep it and those who don’t have it want to seek it.

Dahrendorf claims that “the important difference between power and authority consists in the fact that whereas power is essentially tied to the personality of individuals, authority is always associated with social positions or roles” (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 166). Authority doesn’t attach to individuals, but to position; this is the key element in Dahrendorf’s analysis. Dahrendorf’s concepts regarding class formation and class conflict is to some extent different from Marx’s. Table 2 shows this distinction.

Table 2. Class Formation and Conflict model of Dahrendorf



Regarding authority, Dahrendorf further explains that “where there are authority relations, the superordinate element is socially expected to control by orders and commands, warnings and prohibitions, the behavior of the subordinate element” (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 166). People in a position of authority are expected to control subordination. Dahrendorf was concerned with the positions, not the psychological or behavioral characteristics of the people in those positions because expectations reside in positions. He underlined the importance of this idea as

“such expectations attach to relatively permanent social positions rather than to the character of individuals; they are in this sense legitimate” (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 167).

According to Dahrendorf, “authority is a legitimate relation of domination and subjection. In this sense, authority can be described as legitimate power” (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 166). Sanctions can be put into effect against people who do not obey and/or fail to comply with authority commands, resulting in fines and punishments (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 167). In addition, authority is not stable since the superordinate position in one setting can be or can become a subordinate position in another setting. From this point, Dahrendorf’s argues that society comprises of various units that are called *imperatively coordinated associations*.

Dahrendorf introduced the concept of imperatively coordinated associations as follows: “as a structural determinant of conflict groups, the category of authority as exercised in imperatively coordinated associations” (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 172). Social conflict’s key concept is conflict between dominating and subject groups in imperatively coordinated associations. Dahrendorf defines the social organization as associations that produce conflicts of interest and that lead to conflict groups. Authority within any given association is dichotomous; that is, within any association, there are only two conflict groups that can be formed. “The distribution of authority in associations is the ultimate ‘cause’ of the formation of conflict groups, and, being dichotomous, it is, in any given association, the cause of the formation of two, and only two, conflict groups” (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 173). The situation for each group is defined by their common interests.

Dahrendorf talks about wars and conflicts between political parties as two different kinds of struggle. The endogenous conflict subdivides into two subsets. First, conflict emerges from within countries and historical conditions. For example, “slaves versus freemen in Rome, Negroes versus whites in the United States, Protestants versus Catholics in the Netherlands, Flemings versus Walloons in Belgium, ... All these are opposing groups in well-known conflicts” (Dahrendorf, 1958: 171). Second, many conflicts can be perceived as expressions of a society’s general structural features or as existing in the same stage of development (Dahrendorf, 1958: 172). Examples include Conservatives versus Laborites in England or unions versus employers’ associations in the USA. As noticed above, the opposing forces caused conflict. However, they cannot be categorized under a unique and single type of social conflict; they vary. There is no doubt that the importance of the conflict between workers and employers cannot be disregarded. The issue of social conflict is as complex as the issue of social integration.

4. Marx and Dahrendorf on Class Formation and Conflict: Central Differences

For Marx, class formation is based on the ownership of private property and that of production. In contrast, Dahrendorf (1959a: 166) stated that “authority relations are always relations of super-and subordination”. In other words, class formulation is based on authority. In *Power Division as the Basis of Class Conflict*, Dahrendorf (1959b) defines authority as a characteristic of social organizations and a common element of social structures.

As mentioned before, Marx saw class stratification coming from the ownership of private property and the means of production and possession/non-possession of private property is the central point in class formation. While the ruling class enjoys the ownership of private property, the ruled class has no means of production of their own; they are dependent on the ruling class (see Table 1). For Dahrendorf, authority is the key point in class formation (see Table 2). Authority does not necessarily arise from wealth but may accompany wealth. In contrast to Marx, Dahrendorf groups all those who exert authority over others together into a new ruling class. He states that it is not important if all members of this new ruling class own the means of production or not. This class includes not only capitalist owners, but also all levels of managers and supervisors.

There is another difference between Marx and Dahrendorf regarding the structure of societies. In contrast to Marx, Dahrendorf believed society has two faces: consensus and conflict, static and change, order and dissension, cohesion and the role of power, integration and conflict, consensus and constraint; all are equally the double aspects of society. Using this point, Dahrendorf claimed that society could not exist without both conflict and consensus; without conflict, there is no previous consensus. While consensus leads to conflict, conflict also leads to consensus. The relationship of the USA and Japan is a good illustration of Dahrendorf’s approach. The two countries improved their rapport after the Second World War but that deteriorated some during the eighties when Japan’s technology competed with that of the US. This is another of how Dahrendorf was heavily influenced by structural functionalism.

5. Marx and Dahrendorf on Class Formation and Conflict: Some Convergences

For both Marx and Dahrendorf, conflict centered on only two sides. Marx assumed the dominance of one particular set of people to be the cause of conflict in any given situation and Marxian conflict theory underlines this two-class model. In *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* Dahrendorf (1959a: 126) also saw only two sides:

There are but two contending parties – this is implied in the very concept of conflict. There may be coalitions, and of course, as there may be conflicts internal to either of the contenders, and there may be groups that are not drawn into a given dispute; but from the point of view of a given clash of interests, there are never more than two positions that struggle for domination.

According to Dahrendorf, conflict between the different sets of people existed in all periods of human history.

Besides the different definitions of class, Dahrendorf and Marx have similar views on latent interests. Marx defined classes in relation to property ownership. The concept of class is described by 'relation'. The term relation here is a household word pointing to ownership of the means of production (Wright, 2002: 10). Therefore, this relation defines different life situations and opposing latent interests. Indeed, members of opposing classes might interact as though no opposing interests existed.

Dahrendorf described three broad types of groups: quasi groups, interest groups, and conflict groups. The concepts of manifest and latent interests for those groups are fundamental for an explanation of social conflicts. The factors intervening in this process are; social conditions, political conditions, and technical conditions. Recruitment into a quasi group was another important condition for Dahrendorf. The recruitment of people based on chance or random choice has no potential to create conflict groups. For example, in contrast to Marx, the lumpenproletariat would not form a conflict group since people are recruited into it by chance. On the other hand, when recruitment is structurally determined, this group would be an appropriate recruiting base for conflict groups. As the degree of individual social mobility increases, then the presence of effective mechanisms for regulating social conflicts, the class structuration, weakens. For Dahrendorf, class mobility in society, both upward and downward, is more likely to lead to conflict (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 178). Both Marx and Dahrendorf agree that conflict brings about change and development:

Marx succeeded in tracing conflicts that effect change back to patterns of social structure. For him, social conflicts were not random occurrences which forbid explanations and therefore prediction. Rather, he believed these conflicts to be necessary outgrowths of the structure of any given society and, in particular, of capitalist society (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 125).

Dahrendorf cited Marx saying classes were inevitably antagonistic toward each other (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 133). Unlike Marx, he pointed out that class inequality and conflict exist within a class through levels of authority and is a general phenomenon. Therefore, conflict is inherent throughout society. Dahrendorf explains, "In every conflict, one party attacks and another defends. The defending party

wants to retain and secure its position, while the attacking party has to fight it in order to improve its own condition (Dahrendorf, 1959a: 126). In other words, while the upper class has a tendency to keep their privilege, the lower class wants to change it for the sake of their interests.

6. Conclusion

Without a doubt, Karl Marx and Ralph Dahrendorf gave depth and understanding to class formation and conflict, social phenomenon that often have a strong presence in society. For Marx, class formation comes from the ownership of private property and the means of production. Marx took a material view of conflict and explained it in terms of materialism. But, for Dahrendorf, this formulation of classes based on possession/non-possession of means of production is reductionist because classes constructed purely on the basis of ownership are confined to the economic sphere. Dahrendorf argued that classes are social phenomena rather than economic and authority was the source of class stratification.

The concept of “non-antagonistic classes” is meaningless for Dahrendorf. Similar to Marx, class antagonisms specific to each particular mode of production played a part in the emergence of classes. Dahrendorf pointed out that class inequality and conflict always exist since authority is a universal phenomenon. The groups with power pursue their interests, and those without power pursue theirs. There is always an inevitable conflict between these two classes and this conflict is the great creative force of human history. The major class-dividing line is between power groups, between superordination and subordination. In addition, the key concept of social conflict is conflict between dominant and subject groups in imperatively coordinated associations.

Dahrendorf claimed that the formation of class refers to the organization of common interests. For both Marx and Dahrendorf, conflict involves only two sides and has similar views of latent interests. On the other hand, Dahrendorf disagreed with Marx’s argument that people’s class positions determine their entire social life and behavior. Dahrendorf saw another difference from Marx regarding the structure of societies : consensus and conflict. Finally, in contrast to Marx, Dahrendorf believed the lumpenproletariat would not form a conflict group since people are recruited into this group by random chance. Marx and Dahrendorf agreed on this common dynamic: social structure is shaped by conflict; social interaction is filled with conflict; and conflict leads to social change and development.

The concept of conflict is a key word for many sociological approaches, especially for Marx and Weber; social order and social change are based on ‘conflict’. Class conflict in industrial society is a main dynamic to social change. According to Marx’s prediction, along with increased industrialization in capitalist society, class solidarity and conflict would also increase. However, Dahrendorf argues development

would be in the opposite direction and current developments have proved Dahrendorf right. With continued technological development, the working class is increasingly diverse and divided. While, mechanization becomes more complex, the need of skilled designers, builders, maintenance, and repair staff has increased. This increased along with specialized, working class wages, due to variations in status and skills uniting and dividing, and is undergoing a huge differentiation. In contrast to the formation of class consciousness and empowerment divisions and separations have occurred instead.

Dahrendorf benefited from the Marxist theory of class struggle when constructing his own class theory and functionalist can also be seen in his ideas. For Dahrendorf, class centers on having more authority, not ownership of the means of production. However, in every aspect of society Dahrendorf's theory is far from being comprehensive. Because of man's moral, economic, and the like, the psychological dimensions of human beings were ignored; only human just as a social asset arises from the reduction and analysis. As in functionalism, conflict theory sociologists also adopt the macro level approach and many contemporary theorists have accepted Marx's assumptions regarding social conflict. However, Marx's views should be combined with Dahrendorf's ideas and that could provide a better synthesis of both approaches for understanding class formation and conflict.

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