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THE DUALITY OF SOCIAL LIFE: ORDER AND CONFLICT 2

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter presents two analytical models that dominate the field of sociology: order (functionalism) and conflict. These perspectives focus on entirely divergent views of the structure of society and influence what sociologists look for, what they see, and how they explain the phenomena that occur in society. The order model attributes to society the characteristics of cohesion, consensus, cooperation, reciprocity, stability, and persistence. On the other hand, the conflict model posits conflict as a normal feature of social life, influencing the distribution of power and the direction and magnitude of social change.

Although the two models represent divergent perspectives and apparently contradictory assumptions about the nature of social reality, taken together, they give a realistic view of the nature of society and represent the "duality of social life." Although the authors favor the conflict model, they attempt "to strike a balance between the order and conflict perspectives." They suggest that a synthesis that combines the best of each model is the best perspective. The chapter is organized into five parts: an introduction presenting an experiment that illustrates the dynamics of social organization, a discussion of the order and conflict models of social systems, descriptions of the most significant integrative forces in society, an analysis of the deepening divides within American society, and an explanation that highlights the necessity of utilizing both models when analyzing social problems.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

2.1 Compare and contrast the order and conflict models of social systems.
2.2 Provide examples to demonstrate the integrative forces in society that maintain order.
2.3 Provide examples to demonstrate the divides in society that lead to conflict.
2.4 Analyze a social problem from the order and conflict perspectives.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Introduction

A. The authors discuss the Sherifs' classic summer camp experiment to illustrate the dynamics of social organization. When the boys enrolled in the camp were divided into two groups, each group developed
    1. divisions of labor,
    2. a hierarchical structure of ranks,
    3. rules that governed behavior,
    4. punishments for violations of the rules,
    5. a specialized language (argot) with nicknames and group symbols, and
    6. member cooperation to achieve goals.
B. Sherifs' experiment makes evident the process of social organization that simultaneously gives us social meaning and constrains our individuality.
C. This chapter explains two models of society (two perspectives within sociology): order and conflict.

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2.1. Social Systems: Order and Conflict – Compare and contrast the order and conflict models of social systems.

A. The analysis of society begins with a mental image or model of its structure.
   1. The analytical model (or mental picture one has of the structure of society) influences what scientists look for, what they see, and how they explain the phenomena that occur in society.
   2. One characteristic of society is the existence of segmentation.
      a. Every society is composed of parts.
      b. Segmentation is the basis for the two prevailing models of society.
      c. Segmentation may result from differences in age, race, sex, physical prowess, wisdom, or any other characteristic considered important by its members.
      d. The important question is "What is the basic relationship among the parts of society?"
      e. The contradictory answers to that question provide the rationale for two models of society – order and conflict.

B. The **Order Model**
   1. Also referred to as **functionalism** or **structured functionalism**
   2. The order model attributes to society
      a. the essential characteristics of cohesion, consensus, cooperation, reciprocity, stability, and persistence;
      b. the various parts of the system are basically in harmony with each other;
      c. a high degree of cooperation (and societal integration) arises because there is a high degree of consensus on societal goals and cultural values; and
      d. the different parts of the system are assumed to need each other because of complementary interests.
   3. Central questions for order theorists
      a. What is the nature of the social bond?
      b. What produces social cohesion?
   4. Emile Durkheim provided the classic discussion of the order model in the early 1900s.
      a. For Durkheim, there were two types of societies.
         i. In smaller, less complex societies
            aa. solidarity among members occurs through the collective beliefs, and
            bb. social integration occurs because the members are alike.
         ii. In modern, complex societies
            aa. social integration is achieved through differentiation, and
            bb. society is based on a division of labor in which members involved in specialized tasks are united by their dependence on each other.
      b. Durkheim focused on integration by determining the manifest and latent consequences of social structures, norms and social activities.
         i. **Manifest consequence** refers to the intended consequence of a particular function in society. For instance, the manifest consequence of the punishment of crime is punishing and deterring the criminal.
         ii. **Latent consequence** refers to the unintended consequence of a societal function. For instance, the latent consequence of the punishment of crime is the societal reaffirmation of what is to be considered moral.
      c. By focusing on the functions and consequences of social structures and activities—intended and unintended—we can better understand disparate social arrangements and activities.

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C. The **Conflict Model**
   1. Offers a different view of society, which posits that
      a. conflict is a normal feature of social life;
      b. conflict influences the distribution of power;
      c. conflict influences the direction and magnitude of social change;
      d. because the individuals and groups of society compete for advantage, the degree of social integration is minimal and tenuous;
      e. social change results from the conflict among competing groups; therefore, change tends to be drastic and revolutionary;
      f. conflict results from the dissimilar goals and interests of social groups; and
      g. conflict is the result of social organization itself.
   2. Historically, the most important conflict theorist has been Karl Marx.
      a. Marx theorized that there exists in every society a dynamic tension between two groups who were the sources of division and exploitation. The two groups are
         i. owners of the means of production and
         ii. workers who work for them.
      b. Marx focused on inequality between the oppressors and the oppressed, the dominant and the dominated, the powerful and the powerless.
         i. The powerful protect their privileges by supporting the status quo.
         ii. The laws, religion, education, and mass media all work to the benefit of the advantaged.
         iii. The powerful use and abuse the powerless, thereby sowing the seeds of their own destruction.
         iv. The destruction of the elite is accomplished when the dominated people unite and overthrow the dominants.
   3. Conflict theorists emphasize that any unity present in society is superficial and results from coercion, not consensus, and that the powerful use force and fraud to keep society running smoothly.

D. The Duality of Social Life
   1. An overview of order and conflict theories reveals that
      a. each focuses on reality, but only *part* of that social reality.
      b. Scientists have tended to accept one or the other of these models, thereby focusing on only part of the social reality for two reasons:
         i. one model or the other was in vogue at the time, or
         ii. one model or the other made more sense for the analysis of the particular problems of interest.
   2. The analysis of sport illustrates the difference in how sociologists are influenced by the order and conflict models.

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a. From the order perspective, it is argued that sport contributes to the stability of society. It preserves the existing order by
   i. symbolizing the American way of life (e.g., competition, individualism, achievement, fair play);
   ii. socializing youth to adopt desirable character traits, to accept authority, and to strive for excellence;
   iii. promoting the unity of society's members through patriotism; and
   iv. inspiring feelings of unity of purpose and loyalty by the fans.

b. From the conflict perspective, it is argued that sport
   i. reflects the interests and goals of the powerful,
   ii. is organized to exploit athletes, and,
   iii. inhibits the potential for protest and revolution by society's have-nots by
      aa. validating the prevailing myths of capitalism—that anyone can succeed if he/she works hard – that if one fails, it's his/her fault, etc.;
      bb. diverting attention away from harsh realities like poverty, unemployment, and dismal life chances; and
      cc. giving false hope of upward mobility to racial minorities, male athletes, and other oppressed members of society.

A Closer Look: Should College Athletes Unionize? A Conflict Perspective of Sports
The authors describe a vote which took place in 2014 among Northwestern University football players on whether to become part of the first union in college sports. Arguments for unionization are clearly aligned with the conflict perspective of sports.

c. Both the order and conflict theorists agree that sport socializes youth and maintains the status quo; this is interpreted positively by order theorists but negatively by conflict theorists.

E. Synthesis of the Order and Conflict Models
   1. Five assumptions of a synthesis approach
      a. The first assumption is that *the processes of stability and change are properties of all societies.*
         i. There is an essential paradox to all human societies; they are always ordered, yet they are always changing.
            aa) There are forces within society acting as the impetus for change.
            bb) There are forces insisting on rooted permanence.
         ii. These processes constitute the **dialectic**, or opposing forces, of society which generate tension because the instrumental forces are always pressing society's institutions to change when it is not their nature to do so.
      b. The second assumption of the synthesis approach is that *societies are organized, but the process of organization generates conflict.*
         i. Organization implies the differential allocation of power.
         ii. Inequalities are manifested in at least two ways:
            aa) differentials in decision making, and
            bb) inequalities in the system of social stratification.
      c. The third assumption is that *society is a social system.*
         i. There are three important implications of social systems:
            aa) action within the unit is predictable;

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bb) boundaries exist that may be in terms of geographical space or membership; and
cc) there are parts that are interdependent—thus conveying the reality of differentiation and unity.

ii. A society is comprised of subsystems (e.g. groups, organizations, and communities).
aa) Some subsystems are strongly linked, but others have only a remote linkage.
bb) Events and decisions in one sector influence the entire system.
cc) Part of the system may have complementary interests with other parts but may also have exclusive, incompatible interests and goals.
dd) There is generally a degree of cooperation and harmony because of consensus over common goals and similar interests.
ee) Competition and dissent are also present because of incompatible interests, scarcity of resources, and unequal rewards.
ff) Therefore, societies are imperfect social systems.

d. The fourth assumption of the synthesis approach is that *societies are held together by complementary interests, by consensus on cultural values, and also by coercion.*
i. There are forces that bind diverse groups into a single entity.
ii. The emphasis of both order and conflict models provide twin bases for the integration of consensus and coercion.

e. The fifth and final assumption is that *social change is a ubiquitous phenomenon in all societies.* It may be gradual or abrupt, reforming or revolutionary.
i. Order theorists tend to view change as gradual, occurring either because of innovation or because of differentiation.
ii. Change can be abrupt, because of social movements, or it can result from forces outside the society.

F. A synthesis of the order and conflict models views society as having "two faces of equal reality—one is stability, harmony, and consensus; the other is change, conflict, and constraint."

2.2. The Integrative Forces in Society – Provide examples to demonstrate the integrative forces in society that maintain order.

A. Order theorists recognize that conflict, disharmony and division occur within societies, but stress the opposite characteristics.

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B. Functional Integration
   1. Probably the most important unifying factor is **functional integration** (the unity among divergent elements of society resulting from a specialized division of labor, noted by Durkheim).
   2. Written and unwritten rules emerge to govern relationships between groups, usually leading to cooperation rather than either isolation or conflict and to linkages between groups.

A Closer Look: Twinkies, Pencils, and Integration
Order theorists view the complicated procedure of producing and manufacturing consumed products from various sources as a number of parts fitting together in a system (differentiation produces unity). The authors present the production of Twinkies and pencils as examples of such cooperation.

C. Consensus on Societal Values
   1. Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers, two contemporary sociologists, argue that most people in U.S. society affirm the following values:
      a. Freedom from coercive restrictions imposed by others.
      b. Prosperity - the economy should generate a good standard of living for most people.
      c. Efficiency - the economy should generate rational outcomes.
      d. Fairness - people should be treated justly and have equal opportunity to succeed.
      e. Democracy - public policy decisions should reflect the wish of the public.
   2. Many symbols epitomize the consensus of people with respect to basic values (the national flag, national documents).

D. The Social Order
   1. A third unifying factor is that all people in the United States are subject to similar influence and rules.
   2. The order in society is evidenced in the way society members take for granted practices like obeying traffic lights, the use of credit, and the acceptance of checks in lieu of money.

E. Group Membership
   1. Another source of unity is group memberships.
      a. Exclusive organizations create tension if people are excluded because exclusiveness generally implies feelings of superiority.
      b. Groups with members of varying backgrounds (political parties, religious denominations or churches, and veterans' organizations) allow members the chance to interact with people unlike them and to join together in a common cause.
   2. Belonging to multiple groups tends to cancel out potential cleavages along social class, race, or other lines. Members will probably feel some cross pressures (pulls in opposite directions), thereby preventing polarization.
   3. Most people belong to at least one organization with norms that support those of the total society.

F. International Competition and Conflict
   1. International competition, like the Olympics, provides unity.
   2. An external threat to the society's existence also provides unity.

G. The Mass Media
   1. Universal exposure to television
      a. blamed for rising juvenile delinquency, declining test scores, general moral deterioration, and suppressed creativity
      b. also seen as providing integrative functions (shaping public actions, reinforcing values and norms of society)

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H. Planned Integration
   1. Charismatic leaders unite segmented parts of the system.
   2. Public officials at various levels in the government use their power to integrate the parts of society in three ways:
      a. by passing laws that eliminate barriers between groups,
      b. by working to solve the problems that segment society, and
      c. by providing mediators to help negotiate settlements between feuding groups.
   3. High officials use various means to accomplish the task:
      a. **co-optation** – appointing a member of a dissident group to a policy-making body to appease the dissenting group,
      b. use of executive powers to enforce and interpret the laws in such as way as to unite society, and
      c. use of the media to persuade diverse groups to unite.

I. **False Consciousness**
   Defined as the beliefs held by oppressed people that are damaging to their own interests, false consciousness is created by most Americans believing that they either are part of the haves or that they or their children have the potential to be.

2.3. Fragmentation of Social Life: Deepening Divides in U.S. Society – Provide examples to demonstrate the divides in society that lead to conflict.
Factors that promote disunity and conflict in the United States:

A. Increasing Polarization
   1. Public voices, whether in the legislature or in the media have become more demanding of ideological purity, and, consequently, more dividing than uniting. Possibilities of consensus, compromise and civility are shrinking and there is a philosophical divide between the two major political parties.
   2. In the past, Republicans and Democrats in Congress debated issues and often reached consensus. Now, Democrats believe in the financial powers of the government while Republicans believe government is the problem, not the solution.
   3. With the advent of cable television, talk radio, political blogs, chat rooms, political magazines and specialized websites, consumers can choose messages that reinforce their beliefs. This behavior hardens views, making them more dogmatic, and is known as **group polarization**.

B. Declining Trust in Social Institutions
   1. An important ingredient in the glue that holds society together is trust in society's institutions.
   2. The actions in the business world, religion, and politics increase the cynicism in citizens and thereby diminish the trust required to make markets and society cohesive.

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C. The Widening Inequality Gap
   1. Compared to other developed nations, the chasm between the rich and the poor in the United States is the widest, and steadily increasing.
   2. The data on inequality show clearly that the United States is moving toward a two-tiered society. This has at least three implications for society.
      a. It divides people into the "deserving" and the "undeserving."
      b. It justifies not providing a generous safety net.
      c. The larger the gap, the more destabilized society becomes with increased crime and violence.

D. Increasing Diversity
   1. Perhaps more than any other society, the United States is populated by a multitude of ethnic groups, racial groups, and religious groups. However, these groups have not blended into a homogeneous mass but continue to remain separate - often with pride that makes assimilation unlikely and conflict inevitable.
      a. Currently, the racial composition in the United States is 72.4% White. In 2050, it is predicted that Whites will be a numerical minority at 47%, something many Whites fear.
      b. Along with increasing racial and ethnic diversity there is religious diversity with millions of Jews, Muslims, and other non-Christians, including Buddhists and Hindus, as well as atheists.
      c. Sexual orientation: Same-sex marriage remains a divisive issue and some Americans feel threatened by the increasing visibility of sexual orientation.
   2. Our ever-increasing diversity is a fact of life in U.S. society. The challenge is to shift from building walls to building bridges.

A Closer Look: Violence and Division in India

The authors highlight the multitude of varied religious, caste, political, linguistic, ethnic and economic groups within India and the violence that results from so many divisions.

2.4. Order, Conflict, and Social Problems – Analyze a social problem from the order and conflict perspectives.

A. Both models must be included in a realistic analysis of societal problems.
   1. The order model is important because there is integration, order, and stability; because the parts are more or less interdependent; and because most social change is gradual.
   2. The conflict model is important because society is not always a harmonious unit. Much of social life is based on competition and societal integration, based on subtle or blatant coercion, is fragile.

B. **Social problems** are societally induced conditions that harm any segment of the population, or acts or conditions that violate the norms and values of society (ex. race and gender inequality, poverty and homelessness, and discrimination).
   1. Order theorists focus on deviants as the source of social problems. Deviants are people who
      a. somehow do not conform to the standards of the dominant group,
      b. are assumed to be out of phase with conventional behavior; the focus is on the deviants themselves, and

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   c. have not internalized the norms and values of society either because of the environment in which they were brought up or the influence of a deviant subculture.
2. Order theorists see the remedy to deviance is to rehabilitate the deviants so that they conform to societal norms.
3. Conflict theorists understand deviance as the result of laws, customs, the distribution of resources, and accepted institutional practices. They
   a. criticize order theorists for blaming the victim,
   b. argue that to focus on the individual deviant locates the symptom, not the disease,
   c. believe that deviants represent society's failure to meet the needs of its individual members, and
   d. consider the system as the primary cause of the problem, which implies the system, and not the individual, must be changed.
4. The authors favor the conflict model while trying to strike a balance between the order and conflict perspectives. They also note that the recurrent theme of the book is that social problems are societal in origin and not the exclusive function of individual pathologies.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Divide the class into groups and assign each group a current social problem to analyze, e.g., police violence against racial minorities. Ask each group to discuss and explain the following points:
   a. how the problem is usually presented in the media,
   b. how politicians have responded to the problem, and
   c. how their contemporaries (i.e., members of their reference groups) have reacted to problem related issues.

   Also ask each group to identify which model (order or conflict) they believe provides the better insight into the nature of the problem.
2. A historical analysis of when violence was used in America to promote social and political causes is useful. Ask the students to discuss when, if ever, they would approve of violence to change what they see as a wrong. For example, is it okay for Operation Rescue to use violent tactics to block abortion clinics? How about Greenpeace's militant tactics to end whaling? Or anti-NAFTA groups in their demonstrations against the globalization of the economy as was more recently evidenced in Seattle and Washington, D.C.?

SUGGESTED FILMS

1. *Karl Marx: The Spectre of Marxism* (Media Guild, 1985, 47 min.) offers an excellent overview of the key concepts of the Marxist perspective and a critical analysis of efforts to establish societies based on those principles, particularly the "deformed model of Marxism" that Stalin created.

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2. Assign students to watch *Hoop Dreams* (Kartemquin Educational Films, originally produced by PBS, 1994, 157 min.), which follows two African-American youths through a five-year odyssey motivated by their desire to increase their access to various life chances by playing basketball in high school, college, and the NBA. It offers a surprising look at the actual forces that affected their life choices and courses. Discuss whether high schools, colleges, and corporate franchise owners exploit these youth and their situations.
3. *Blaming the Victim* (Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 1993, 30 min.) demonstrates the hypothesis advanced by conflict theorists that blaming individuals for societal problems is misguided. This film focuses on the problem of rape and the blaming of women for having been raped. Discuss whether the film demonstrates the concept sufficiently and whether it explains the students' own observations.
4. The image makers, "Walk through the 20th Century with Bill Moyer" (PBS Video, 1983, 58 min.) documents use of public relations firms by the rich and powerful to engineer consent for various policies and to manipulate public opinion. Discuss the role of propaganda within the framework of a democratic society. How can individuals fight back against the manipulation of the rich and powerful? Why do we not fight back more often?

SUGGESTED READINGS

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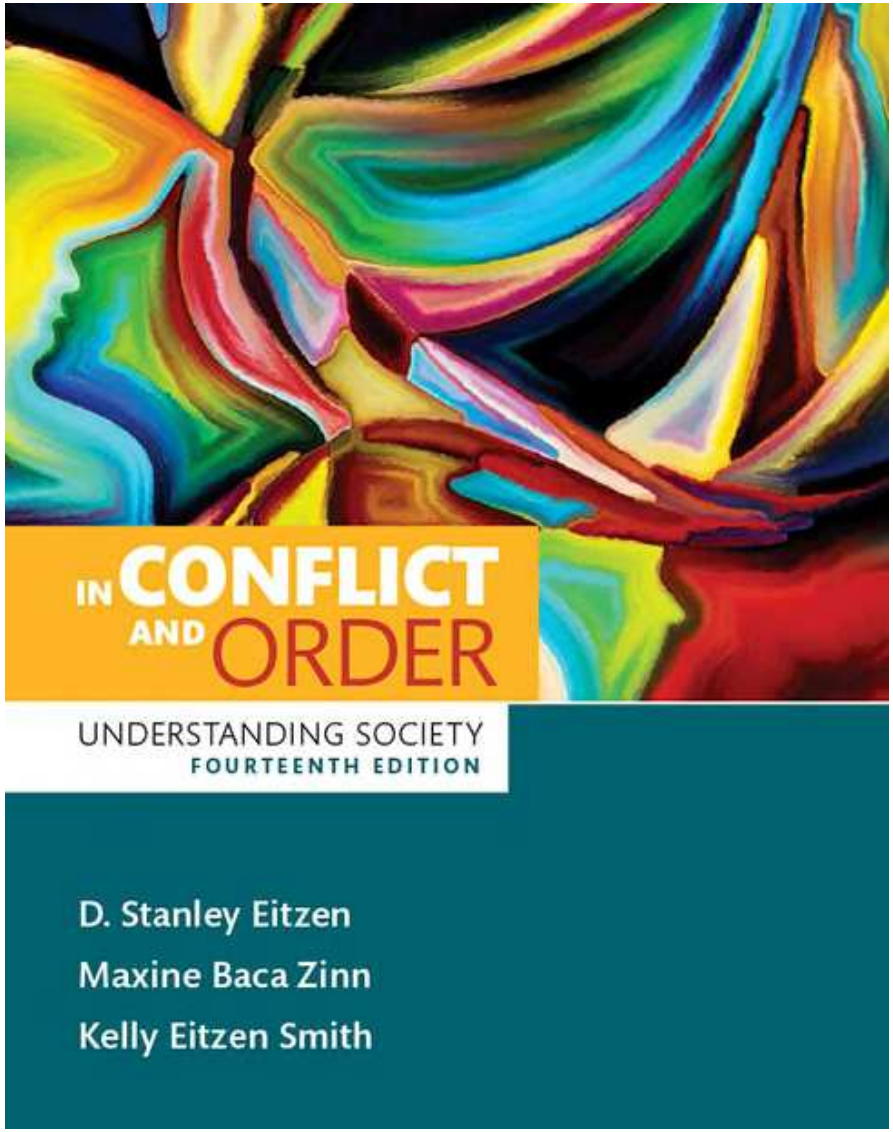
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Chapter 2



The Duality of Social Life:

Order and Conflict

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Learning Objectives

2.1 Compare and contrast the order and conflict models of social systems

2.2 Provide examples to demonstrate the integrative forces in society that maintain order.

2.3 Provide examples to demonstrate the divides in society that lead to conflict.

2.4 Analyze a social problem from the order and conflict perspectives.

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Module 2.1

Social Systems: Order and Conflict

Compare and contrast the order and conflict models of social systems

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Social Systems: Order and Conflict

- Sociologists have a mental image (model) of how society:
  - is structured
  - changes
  - is held together
- Two prevailing models of order and conflict provide contradictory images of society.

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The Order Model

- sometimes called functionalism or structured functionalism
- attributes of cohesion, consensus, cooperation, reciprocity, stability and persistence
- centrally concerned with the nature of the social bond

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The Order Model

- Durkheim believed that societies bond in two ways.
  - In smaller, less complex societies solidarity comes through the collective holding of beliefs.
  - Modern, complex societies achieve social integration through differentiation.

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The Order Model

- Functionalists believe that social structures, norms, and behavior have two types of consequences:
  - Manifest (intended) consequences
  - Latent (unintended) consequences

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The Conflict Model

- The view of society that posits conflict as a normal feature of social life that influences:
  - the distribution of power and
  - the direction and magnitude of social change.

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The Conflict Model

- Karl Marx
  - Most famous conflict theorist
  - Theorized that there exists in every society a dynamic tension between two groups
    - Those with the means of production
    - Those who work for the owners
  - Focused on inequality between oppressors and the oppressed.

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The Duality of Social Life

What is the fundamental relationship among the parts of society?

	Order Model	Conflict Model
Answer	Harmony and cooperation	Competition, conflict, domination, subordination
Why?	The parts have complementary interests. Basic consensus on societal norms and values	The things people want are always in short supply. Basic dissent on societal norms and values
Degree of integration	Highly integrated	Loosely integrated. Whatever integration is achieved is the result of force and fraud.
Type of social change	Gradual, adjustive, and reforming	Abrupt and revolutionary
Degree of stability	Stable	Unstable

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The Duality of Social Life

- Sport from the Order Perspective
  - Preserves the existing social order by symbolizing the American way of life
  - Supports the status quo by promoting the unity of society's members through patriotism
  - Socializes youths into proper channels

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The Duality of Social Life

- Sport from the Conflict Perspective
  - Organized to exploit athletes and meet the goals of the powerful
  - Inhibits the potential for revolution by society's have-nots

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Synthesis of the Order and Conflict Models

- Assumptions of a synthesis approach:
  - The processes of stability and change are properties of all societies.
  - Societies are organized, but the process of organization generates conflict.
  - Society is a social system.

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Synthesis of the Order and Conflict Models

- Assumptions of a synthesis approach (cont'd):
  - Societies are held together by:
    - complementary interests
    - consensus on cultural values
    - coercion
  - Social change is a ubiquitous phenomenon in all societies.
    - It may be gradual or abrupt, reforming or revolutionary.

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Module 2.2

The Integrative Forces in Society

Provide examples to demonstrate the integrative forces in society that maintain order.

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The Integrative Forces in Society

- Functional Integration
- Consensus on Societal Values
  - Freedom, prosperity, efficiency, fairness, democracy
- The Social Order
- Group Membership
- International Competition and Conflict
- The Mass Media
- Planned Integration
- False Consciousness

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Module 2.3

The Fragmentation of Social Life: Deepening Divides in U.S. Society

Provide examples to demonstrate the divides in society that lead to conflict.

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The Fragmentation of Social Life: Deepening Divides in U.S. Society

- Increasing polarization
- Declining trust in societal institutions
- The widening inequality gap
- Increasing diversity

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Module 2.4

Order, Conflict, and Social Problems

Analyze a social problem from the order and conflict perspectives.

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Order, Conflict, and Social Problems

- Social problems are societally induced conditions that harm any segment of the population or acts or conditions that violated the norm and values of society.

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Order, Conflict, and Social Problems

- The Order Perspective
  - focuses on deviants as the source of social problems
    - seen as a failure of conformity due to inadequate socialization
- The Conflict Perspective
  - The behavior of deviant individuals is a manifestation of society's failure to meet the needs of individuals.
  - focuses on the social basis of social problems

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