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## Poverty

A couple of theories have been advanced to explain poverty. The theories are the social conflict analysis, the functional theory, the feminist theory, and symbolic interactionism theory. The Marxist theory falling under the social conflict analysis argues that poverty is a result of the capitalistic system. The capitalistic system produces winners who are the rich and losers who are the poor. Consequently, it is only through a radical change to the capitalistic system that poverty can be addressed.

### **Social Conflict Analysis: Marxist Theory**

The Marxist theory posited by Karl Marx can be used to explain poverty. The theory attributes poverty to the establishment of the capitalistic system (Macionis n.pg). In a capitalistic system, the society can be broadly categorized in to two groups based on owners of the means of production – the ruling class and the working class. The ruling class own and control the means of production, such as land, capital, and resources while the working class only own labor that they lend to the ruling class (Macionis n.pg). The ruling class makes up only a small fraction of the society while the working class makes up the majority of the people. In a capitalistic system, the ruling class is driven by profit maximization to increase their wealth and power. Consequently, the ruling class leverages industry to maximize profits where they hire the working class and not only pay them dismal wages, but they also invest very little in improving the working conditions. The ruling class ends up making

astronomical wealth while the working class languish in poverty stemming from the dismal wages they are paid. Karl Marx advocated for radical change that would see the status quo challenged so that the ruling class stops exploiting the working class (Macionis n.pg).

### **Solution to Poverty**

In light of the Marxist theory, poverty can be alleviated through reconsidering the capitalistic system. Poverty can be viewed as a repercussion of the capitalistic system (Macionis n.pg). The winners in the capitalistic system are the ruling class while the working class are the losers. The capitalistic system can be reconsidered so that the gains are distributed in a fair manner than what the current capitalistic system does. For instance, the wage gap between the average worker and the management should be narrowed. This would see the average worker earn more in salaries and wages than they currently earn. Also, the amount of money that is distributed to the management and the owners of capital in the form of bonuses should be addressed so that the annual profits are distributed in a fair manner. Also, the government may consider raising corporation tax so that corporations remit a bigger share of their annual profits to the government than they do today. The forementioned radical changes to the current capitalistic system would distribute income and wealth across society in an equitable manner and thus addressing poverty.

In conclusion, poverty can be looked at as a negative consequence of the capitalistic system, which Karl Marx popularizes through the Marxist theory. Society can be broadly categorized into two groups: the ruling class and the working class. While the ruling class owns the means of production, the working class owns labor. The ruling class aims to grow their wealth which solidifies their power and control over the working class. They achieve this through renting labor from the working class who are the majority and paying them dismal wages. This imprisons the working class to a perpetual impoverished state. It is only

through radical change of the capitalistic system that poverty can be addressed through stopping the ruling class from exploiting the working class.

Work Cited

Macionis, John J. *Social Problems*. Prentice Hall, 2015. Print.