

Conflicts Packaged and Marketed: Conflict Management under Capitalism – The Role of Higher Academic Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Despite the gradual rise of capitalism from the sixteenth century onwards to create a hegemonic regime to subdue the world within its swath of sugarcoating conflicts into packaged products to be marketed and used as a functional weapon for the continuation of capitalism, academic institutions have many roles to play in ensuring that they are not being swept under the rug or packaged as products. Its institutions profoundly influence how well a society can think critically and care about problems beyond eliminating inequality and fostering uniformity. Instead of producing conventional thinkers who defend the status quo, these groups may aid in reclaiming some of society's critical thinking talents. The paper "Conflicts Packaged and Marketed: Conflict Management under Capitalism – The Role of Higher Academic Institutions" probes the role of colleges and universities in dealing with conflicts in today's capitalist world.

Key Words : Capitalism, Conflicts, Higher academic Institutions, Individualism, Protests

Even though there has been a long history of protests and revolutionary actions to oppose oppressive regimes, it is generally recognised that there has been a gradual drop in the number of individuals who attend public gatherings for a cause and to resolve disputes and even for conflict resolution. This is the case despite a lengthy history of protest and revolutionary actions to oppose repressive regimes. Putnam (1995) notes that there has been a gradual decline in the number of people participating in public life. Putnam (1995) makes the case that fewer people attended public meetings or school events, from 22% in 1973 to 13% in 1993 (Putnam, 1995, p. 68). The prevalent tendency for people to refrain from engaging in public debate is one of the major causes of increased disagreements being ignored or hushed up. People attend events; in fact, they recently turned out to support the Black Lives Matter movement, which denounced police brutality against African Americans. People supported the tyrannical regime worldwide, not only in the United States. However, there has been an egregious disregard for addressing and speaking out against economic inequities (Rothstein, 2018). This is because capitalism has created so many different ways to function that it has also managed to control the space for dissent against the atrocities.

According to Rothstein, capitalism has found a variety of methods to function. Economic

inequality is sustained by the upper-class people's exclusive possession of "cultural capital" (Ridgeway, 2013, p. 9), transcending racial, gender, and other hierarchies and conflicts. Even the political leaders never appear to point to this economic imbalance as the root of other problems outside the economic one in their election platforms and continue to govern the populace. As a result, many political parties would benefit from the ongoing debates because these parties appear to have the political leaders necessary to garner the public's interest and support. The phrase "trust trap" is used by Rothstein (2018) to characterise a society that has become so interconnected that the average person cannot identify the real issue and is constantly under pressure to think and act politically neutrally. Their lack of political interest or general apathy, however, is a political act in and of itself.

Since the dawn of human civilisation, there has always been competition for food, resources, and power over individuals and organisations. Humanity has always been characterised by conflict. On the other side, attempts to resolve disputes have occasionally been made. Even though conflict has always been a constant in our lives, it has changed with time. In feudal civilisations, the struggle was between the exploited landless labourers and the landlords. Landowners possessed considerable authority in these civilisations.

As capitalism gained popularity, its proponents devised new strategies to exploit industry employees, sparking conflict. The continuation of multiple conflicts that have been a feature of human civilisation for a very long time has also been influenced by economic struggle (class), gender, race, ethnicity, and other artificial exploitative and discriminatory regimes. People who were oppressed, marginalised and exploited made an effort to be heard in opposition to the systemic discriminatory and exploitative practices that the society's dominant and ruling classes continued in order to establish and hegemonise their power. The fight lasted longer as a result of this.

The foundation of sociology's functionalism thesis is that all facets of society, including institutions, roles, and norms, serve a purpose and are necessary for society's survival. The foundation of the theory is this premise (britannica.com). The method caught on in nineteenth-century sociology, especially with those who saw society as living entities. This was true for people who took an organismic view in particular. Émile Durkheim, a French sociologist, thought it was crucial to comprehend the "needs" of the social organism in order to comprehend how social phenomena are connected to it (britannica.com). Some people describe the function as the interactions between a system's parts, the adaptive component of a phenomenon, or the outcomes of a phenomenon that can be seen. These interpretations are all legitimate. Most people agree that a social system is functionally homogeneous if all of its parts cooperate in some way.

The functionalism theory also contends that all societal or cultural advancements are beneficial and inevitable. It is possible to distinguish between manifest functions—those whose repercussions are desired and acknowledged by system participants—and latent functions, whose consequences are neither planned nor acknowledged. Manifest functions are defined as those whose results are known and intended. From this vantage point, it would seem that capitalism is the power responsible for ensuring that the numerous conflicts are employed effectively to uphold capitalist tendencies and that they are converted into tradeable commodities. This claim is supported by capitalism has ensured the current state of affairs.

Marxists have attempted to claim that even though the class conflict is the most critical aspect of the base/superstructure model of the materialist interpretation of the world, the ruling class maintained its hegemony by controlling the confused middle class. However, from their point of view, class conflicts - such as those between the bourgeois and the proletariat - have been the basis

of all conflicts, and when the class vanishes, the conflicts will vanish by themselves. How they have attempted to understand the class dialectics under much discussion as the perpetuation of class difference continued led to the situation under capitalism where the materialistic perspective of human concerns produced more and more conflicts. However, the resolution needs to be visible. As days progressed, the conflicts took a larger shape because of the division of resources in an unequal way, and that further created the rift between individuals having the money and the ones not having the bare minimum.

However, from the perspective of the functionalists, the rise of the middle class and its dominance in the social structure made the class war that Marxists tried to create a thing of the past. This occurs due to the middle class taking control of the socioeconomic system. Classes-related issues have been sidelined in favour of other disputes, which, if any have occurred, have replaced them as the main topic of political debates and discussions. The other classes are forced to submit to the dominant regime of the society because the higher classes have exclusive ownership of the capital (Ridgeway, 2013). They are not allowed to question how the various institutions, norms, and policies are manipulated to make society function as a systematised functional unit.

There is a trust deficit today due to manipulating things to make them into commodities that can be traded and sold, including news reports. The consumerist culture, the atmosphere's expanding globalisation, and the atmosphere's growing globalisation are further contributing aspects. By withdrawing into the protection of their homes, people have cut themselves off from the outside world, unaware that the world's issues must be solved. The apathy of the general public is attempted to be viewed by Marxist sociologists as a result of the globalisation of capitalism. On the other hand, functionalist sociologists look for ways that capitalism's ideology and system have transformed all facets of society into valuable tools for advancing capitalism.

Academic institutions have many roles to play in ensuring that conflicts are not being swept under the rug or packaged as products, despite the gradual rise of capitalism from the sixteenth century onwards to create a hegemonic regime to subdue the world within its swath of sugar-coating conflicts into packaged products to be marketed and used as a functional weapon for the continuation of capitalism. Institutions tremendously impact society's ability to think critically and engage in issues beyond eradicating disparities and promoting uniformity. These organisations might help society reclaim some of its critical thinking abilities rather than generating conventional thinkers who uphold the current viewpoint.

Colleges have contributed to the overall story of seeming growth within the framework of the capitalist order in more ways than one. It has the potential to produce "organic intellectuals," as Gramsci referred to them, who might open the door to challenging the prevailing order and eagerly putting forward alternatives to the current system, which feeds people's apathy. A school needs to do more to address the academic concerns of its students. Despite this, it plays a more significant role in society, which it may do by encouraging its students to become politically aware and responsible citizens. These students will be prepared to provide people with correct information regarding the context of a conflict and strive to create solutions to improve the quality of life in the world.

Higher academic institutions aspire to produce more than just marketable labour and job-ready individuals. It might change its curriculum to emphasise assimilation techniques, critical thinking, and inclusivity in such a situation. In other words, colleges and universities can change their curricula, instruction, and evaluation methods to engage students with real-life conflictual problems they encounter in their daily lives, to develop their critical thinking skills in order to become "hands"

ASHOK KUMAR

(Gramsci), and to make them emotionally-intelligent citizens rather than producing “organic intellectuals” for industries and puppets and followers for obeying the orders of their bosses. Education should shape young minds into passionate and critical thinkers who question the obvious and never settle for mediocrity rather than creating rote learners indifferent to life and society. Put another way; education should result in more than rote learners.

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