

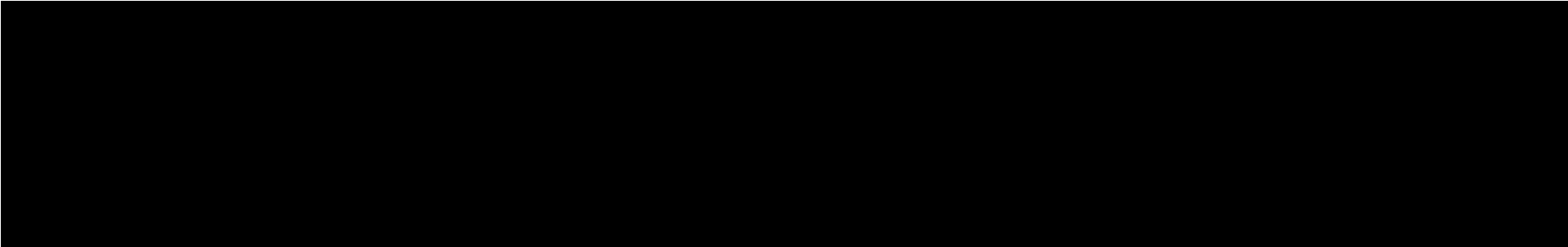
CONFLICT THEORY
(KARL MARX)

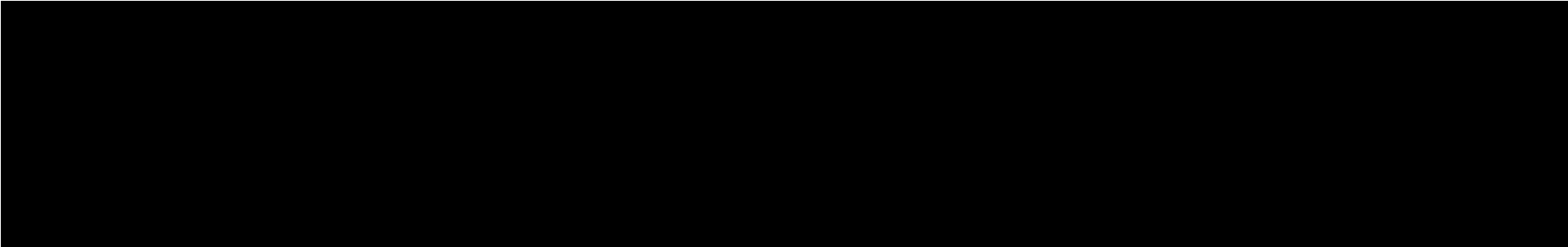
SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

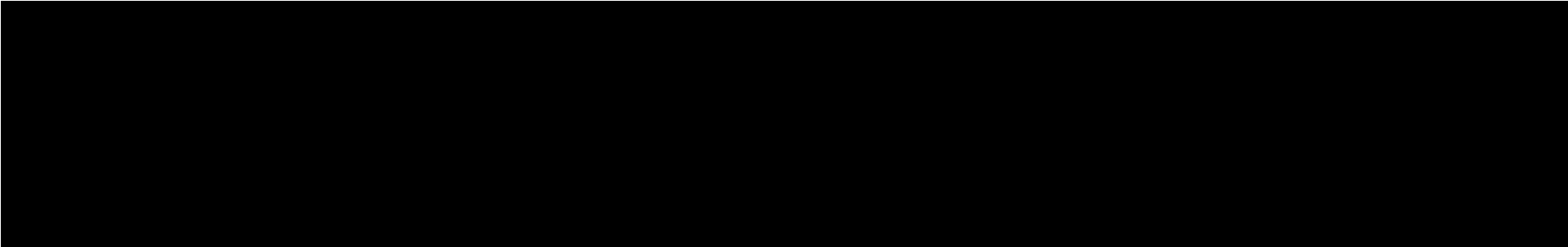
INTRODUCTION

Marx never gave theory of stratification, he gave a theory of social class on the basis of which we derive stratification or inequality in society.

Marxian perspective provide a radical alternative to functionalist view of the nature of social stratification.

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- According to Marxian perspective, systems of stratification derive from the relationships of the social groups to the forces of production.
 - In all the stratified societies, there are two major social groups: a ruling class and a subject class.

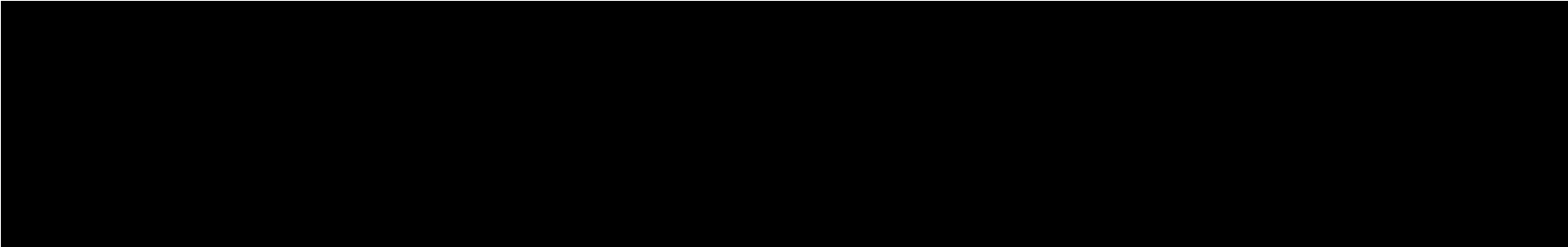
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- The power of the ruling class derives from its ownership and control of the forces of production.
 - The ruling class exploits and oppresses the subject class. As a result there is a basic conflict of interest between the two classes.

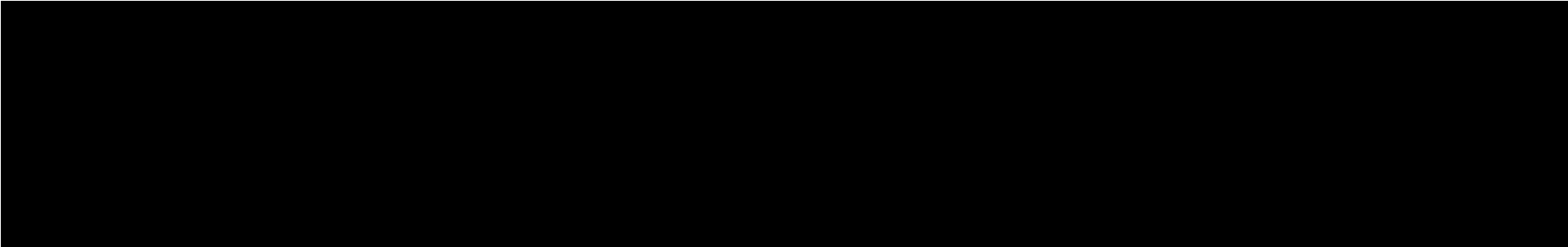
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- Marx focus on social strata rather than social inequality in general
 - Marx used the term “class” to refer to the main stratas in all stratification system.
 - A class is a social group whose members share the same relationship to the forces of production.

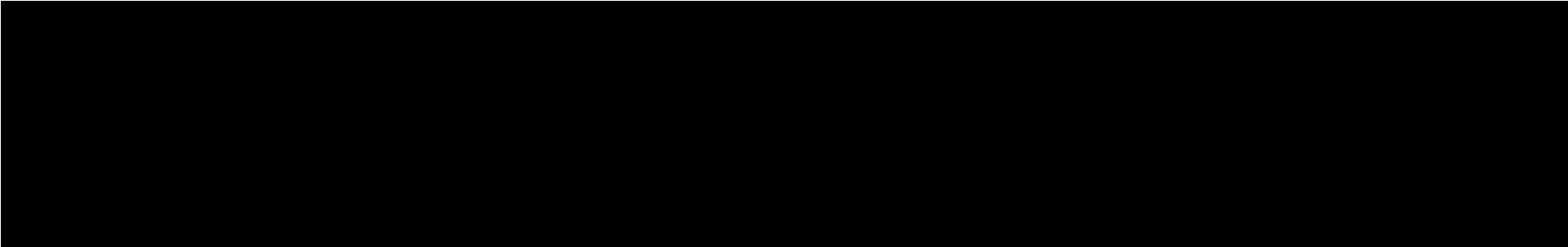


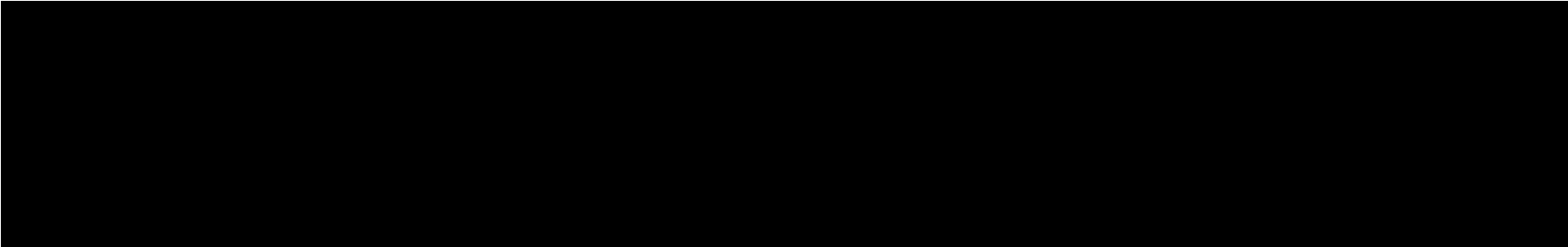
MARX BELIEVED THAT WESTERN SOCIETIES HAD DEVELOPED THROUGH FOLLOWING MAIN EPOCHS:

- 1) Primitive communism
- 2) Ancient society
- 3) Feudal society
- 4) Capitalist society

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- During each epoch labour power required for production was supplied by the subject class i.e. slaves, serfs, proletariat.
 - The subject class is made up of the majority of the population whereas, the ruling class forms a minority.
 - The relationship between the major social classes is one of mutual dependence and conflict.

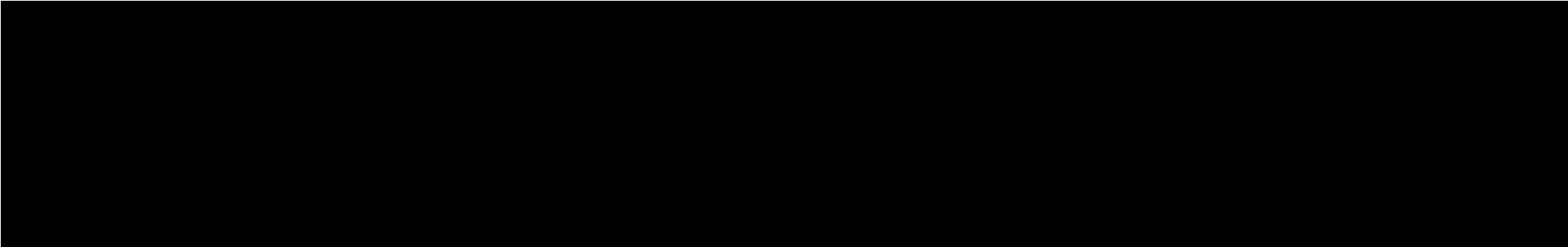
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- However, the mutual dependency of the two classes is not a relationship of equal or symmetrical reciprocity. instead it is a relationship of exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed.

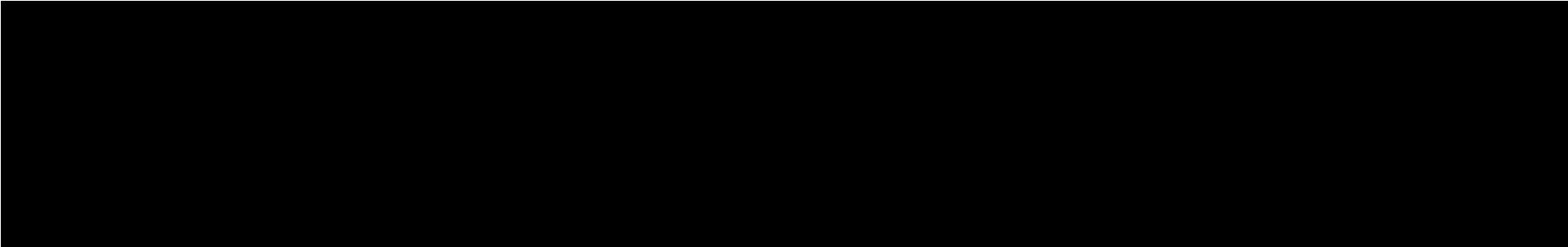
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- Marx argues that capital, as such produces nothing, only labour produces wealth.
 - Classes emerge when the productive capacity of society expands beyond the level required for subsistence.

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- Marx specified a number of variables to explain how different classes develop conflict among themselves.
 - 1) conflict over economic rewards between the classes.
 - 2) physical concentration of masses of people.
 - 3) easy communication among the people in the same class position.
 - 4) development of solidarity. (class consciousness)
 - 5) political organization
 - 6) Revolution

conclusion

- Acc to Marx, social stratification divides society into two classes and the unequal distribution of wealth leads to discontent and ultimately to revolution in the society.
- Marx presented a dichotomous model of class, he opined that with the development in capitalist system , the middle class will disappear.

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- When despite hard work and labour they would not be able to attain their objectives ,they will join hands with subordinate class (proletariats) and thus over-throw the ruling class (bourgeoisie).

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- Many thinkers explain inequality in the society, Marx was the only one who gave the ray of hope that this inequality will be demolished in the post- capitalist society.

Criticism of marx's theory

- 1) societies are not simply reflections of economic systems.
- 2) there are interest groups in societies that are unrelated to social classes.
- 3) those who possess power in capitalist society are not always those with the highest income or the owners of the most property.
- 4) conflict in a large modern society is rarely bipolarized.
- 5) social conflict does not always lead to structural social change.