

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory focuses on the conflict in society between rich and poor, management and labor, whites and minorities.

conflict theory

A theory that assumes that society is based primarily on conflict between competing interest groups and that criminal law and the criminal justice system are used to control subordinate groups. Crime is caused by relative powerlessness.

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According to conflict theory, criminal law and the criminal justice system are used by dominant groups to control subordinate ones.

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All behavior occurs because people act in ways consistent with their social positions. Subordinate groups appear in official criminal statistics more frequently because dominant groups have control over the definition of criminality.

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power differentials

The ability of some groups to dominate other groups in a society.

relative powerlessness

The inability to dominate other groups in society.

Conflict Theory

Policy implications of conflict theory are:

- To redistribute power and wealth through a more progressive tax system or limitation of political contributions.
- For dominant group members to become more effective rulers and subordinate group members better subjects.