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SOC 347

Why is social equality so difficult to establish and maintain?

Social equality is one of those that societies all around the world should strive for. However, when it is brought up in conversation, it is usually met with doubt. There are those who believe that social equality is never to happen no matter what. How can something that is beneficial for everyone impossible to accomplish? Even if it was accomplished, would we be able to make it last or would our society just revert back to the way of inequality.

So why is social equality so difficult to accomplish? Well to figure that out we must look at why social inequality exists in the first place. Let's start at what Charon calls the division of labor (pg69). Within a job there is usually levels of management. Those levels of management are the beginning of inequality. Those at the bottom of this ladder, are in need for these jobs. That means those at the top of the ladder are able to dictate the pay and hours an employee can work. Those employees at the bottom are reliant on their bosses to provide proper pay for them to have a decent standard of living. Sadly, not all bosses provide the best pay for their employees. Instead the bosses, get more and more money while the employees get less and less. Slowly the inequality begins to grow. Position on this ladder play a part in social inequality as well. Take two different individuals. Each of them have the same education and experience. One becomes a high level manager, while the other is working the entry level position. Sadly, regardless of their background, the one in the high level position would be

thought more highly of than the entry level individual. In this world, our titles and position play a role in how we are perceived by society. If we are unable to look past someone's position and title and look at them as a person there will continue to be inequality throughout.

We have taken a look at how position and pay create social inequality. Now let us take a look at the results of social conflicts and how inequality is brought through that. There is a saying that goes as such, "History is written by the victors." In the same manner, winners of social conflict determine how society runs. Typically when you win, you expect a reward that benefits you in some way. Well the winners of social conflict are able to create a society that favors them. If they keep on winning they will keep on gaining power that allows them to have a society that is beneficial for. What this mean is those who lost will have to live in a society that is not in their favor. An example of this can be seen in American politics. For years, American politics have revolved on this idea of gaining control of the presidency and Congress. The party in control creates laws and regulations that go along with the party's ideals and moral. The other party must live under these rules until they are able to regain control again. This cycle continues on and on resulting in constant switches in inequality. The only way to break a cycle, is if both groups agree to create rules that benefit everyone equally. Sadly, due to opinions and biases, such resolutions are never agreed upon.

We have looked into some of the reasons as to why social inequality has come about. It is time to look into how this inequality has stayed for so long. I think it can be summarized into one word and that is power. When an individual gains power, they usually do not want to give it up. If someone is on top of the social ladder, they are more

inclined to try to remain there. Their social status and position are all that matter to them. They will step on anyone and everyone who try to take the power away from them. Take a look at slavery in the 1860's during the time of Lincoln. White slave owners, ruled over African Americans. When that power was threatened to be taken, a literal war broke out. Nowadays while some in power try to keep their status through violence, others have learned that they can use their money to guarantee that their position will be safe. If there is any hope for social equality, everyone must be held liable for their actions. The rich should not have different rules and laws than those who are less fortunate than them.

As I mentioned above, opinions and biases play a role in our decision making and thought process. Those same thoughts are what leads to a lack of social equality today. For those that want social equality, there is also those who are alright with the way things are. I am not talking about the ones in power either. Instead I am talking about those who may not be at the very top but who are not at the bottom. Since they are comfortable in their own lives, they do not have any reason to care for those who are less fortunate. There are those who believe that your social status is based on how hard you work. For them, it is simple working a little bit harder and you will be able to achieve where you want to go. The reality is sometimes you can work your but off and still not be able to get to where you want to be.

Social inequality is an issue in this country. As we see above there are many reasons that prevents any growth towards equality. For that equality to be a reality it requires massive changes in our society that have been around forever. If all are eager

and ready, it may be possible to live in a society where no one is at a disadvantage or struggling in their day to day life.