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SOCL1209 – Contemporary Social Issues

Social Issue: Prostitution

Aspects	Functional Theory Perspective	Conflict Theory Perspective
Causes of the Social Issue	Prostitution exists to fulfill societal functions, such as managing desires and providing a controlled outlet for those unable to find traditional relationships, thus maintaining social stability.	Prostitution reflects social inequalities related to gender, class, and power. It arises from socioeconomic disparities and exploitation often marginalizing vulnerable groups.
Effects on Society	Seen as a response to unmet social needs offering economic opportunities and maintaining societal order by providing a regulated outlet for potentially disruptive behavior.	Viewed as reinforcing social and economic inequalities, prostitution often exacerbates the exploitation of marginalized individuals, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and abuse.
Potential Solutions	Legalizing and monitoring prostitution to ensure the safety of workers and reduce associated risks.	Providing economic support, education, and empowerment programs to reduce exploitation and provide alternatives to prostitution.
Strengths of the Theory	Highlights the practical role prostitution plays in addressing social needs offering insights into its persistence in society despite its controversial nature.	Provides a critical view of the power dynamics and exploitation involved, emphasizing the need for societal reform and protection of vulnerable individuals.
Limitations of the Theory	May downplay the exploitation and emotional toll on individuals involved often neglecting the complexities and personal struggles faced by those in prostitution.	Can overlook personal agency, failing to fully acknowledge why some individuals may choose to engage in prostitution willingly for personal or economic reasons.
How has this comparison influenced your overall understanding of the social issue?	From this comparison, I've realized that prostitution is not merely an individual choice but it is deeply influenced by broader social and systemic forces.	

References

- Barkan, Steven E.(2020), Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems.
- Weitzer, R. (2009), Sociology of sex work. Annual Review of Sociology, 221.
- Vanwesenbeeck, I. (2017). Sex work criminalization is barking up the wrong tree. Archives of Sexual Behavior.