

Modernity and the rise of new class conflicts

The digital revolution is questioning the old Marxist theory about power belonging to those owning the means of production. Significant means are now immaterial, according to Bella Baraket on *ynetglobal.com* on July 14th 2025. Indeed societal changes disturb the traditional categories that Daniel Lavelle analyses in his testimony in *The Guardian* on April 2nd 2025. Moreover, class conflicts keep fascinating artists, as the opinion piece by Vanessa Thorpe in *The Guardian* on September 17th 2022 underlines. All those perceptions match a reality in which inequalities run deeper and deeper, as the charts published by the *Pew Research Center* in 2020 illustrate.

To what extent is the evolution of the reflection on class conflicts shedding light on modern societies?

Class conflicts still make for a relevant frame of reference. The *Pew Research Center* classifies people in the traditional higher, middle, and lower classes, while Lavelle recalls their perception keeps relying on stereotypical features like food or clothes. This analytical framework is rooted in famous classic theories, like Thomas More's 1516's *Utopia*, mentioned by Thorpe, or more recently by Marx whom Baraket summons in an attempt to update his thought on the power balance between the masses and the owners to the technologically advanced world. Lavelle had a harder time using a seemingly outdated Marx to try and overcome clichés about class, finally turning to a more contemporary analyst of systemic precarity, world-famous movie director Ken Loach.

Whatever framework is used, increasing tensions and inequalities are a constant. Ken Loach is not the only one exploring modern class conflicts, as Thorpe lists many artists using the cinema to denounce the increasing wealth gaps, presenting the ultra-rich as either dirty and awful as in *Triangle or Sadness*, or even as full-on bloodthirsty monsters in *The Invitation*. Even though in those movies a reversal of the power balance eventually sets the record straight, the reality depicted by the *Pew Center* shows a deepening wealth gap over the years, leaving the middle and lower classes behind while the higher class' income soars. Lavelle portrays this phenomenon through a train metaphor, in which the comfort of the fewer and fewer privileged rests on the discomfort of the growing masses at the back, whose compliance is ensured by technological devices which design contains the secret weapon of the new owners of the world's modern language like Elon Musk, as underlined by Baraket.

The future is therefore in question, as societies seem to mutate following technological revolutions. As Baraket sees new social hierarchies powered by algorithms and AI that will give an unfair advantage to those who can deeply understand them, the *Pew Research Center* sees a stronger and stronger perception of a too unequal society standing out among Americans, even though a majority doesn't see it as an actual pressing issue. Perception of one's place in society may also have become more uncertain, as Lavelle shows in his personal struggle to find out where he fits, as his atypical personal and professional journey doesn't match any precise categories, even inside updated tools like the *BBC* one. Ultimately, Baraket reminds that only sharing the code and the capacity to understand the language in which the modern world is being written will save humanity from capitalism and unfair privileges mimicking the ones of the past.

If mastering the tools becomes accessible to everybody, the playing field could be levelled.

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