ICEST 2021

II International Conference on Economic and Social Trends for Sustainability of Modern Society

CONFLICT AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

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Abstract

This article discusses one of the most urgent problems in society - social conflict. This type of conflict develops both at the level of interaction of two subjects, and large or small groups. Social conflicts may exist due to cultural and individual differences of social groups, social, natural, economic, political, historical, ethnic and confessional factors. The tasks of scientific research are to identify key reasons of social conflicts; to consider the factors of their occurrence. The methodological procedure of the research are the works of domestic and foreign authors who consider conflict as a social phenomenon that covers and influences all spheres of modern society. Social conflict is a conflict caused by divergence of interests; as a result clashes and struggles arise. Social conflicts are provoked by the following reasons: different lifestyle of people belonging to other social groups; socio-economic reasons; unfair access to resources and certain activities; different understanding among individuals of the rules of behavior; contradictions between society and government structures. General scientific methods are used - analysis, synthesis, comparison, and generalization in the course of the research process.

1. Introduction

Conflicts will always accompany humanity, as people and social groups constantly interact with each other, and many disputes are not solved peaceably. Therefore, to prevent and resolve conflict situations, it is necessary to study conflictogenic factors, causes, and conflict management methods.

Despite numerous studies of social conflict, many local and interethnic conflicts continue, although many attempts have been made put a conflict to rest. The study of social conflict must, first of all, begin by clarifying the content of this category. To do this, several definitions of social conflict could be considered.

Conflict is a social rift between social objects; the main sign of a conflict is indignation arising on one or both sides, as a result of violation of imperative norms (Proshanov, 2007).

Social conflict is a struggle of social communities with opposing interests for dominant social statuses in a social system built on a hierarchical principle (Zdravomyslov, 1995).

Social conflict is a process of strong opposition of social subjects, which is aimed at conflict resolution in their interests and goals. The main consideration in the analysis of social conflicts is its inevitability in social relations in society. The main components of a social conflict are: the presence of two or more parties, antagonism of the parties, and the assessment of opposition by an external observer (Nagaytsev, 2010).

Social conflict is a social contradiction at the stage of its real resolution by the actors involved in it (Osipov, 2014).

The main features of social conflict are that it is characteristic of all social groups. Social conflict is caused by the status-role position of individuals and groups in the system of political, economic and socio-cultural relations in society. Social conflict is the result of the behavior, communication and activities of the social interaction of an individual and social groups, as well as social structures and organizations (Solomatina, 2011; Sorokin, 2006).

After analyzing these definitions, we can draw the following conclusions.

At present various definitions of social conflict have been proposed, which proves that there is no consensus on this issue in the academic community. The following interpretation can be taken as the basis of the study - social conflict is a struggle for one's ideas and interests, the result of which is the conflict resolution by peaceful or violent means.

2. Problem Statement

The theory of conflict studied foreign researchers Coser (2000), Dahrendorf (1994), Huntigton (2007), Ritzer (2002), Zimmel (1994). They have paid great attention to the development of the sociology of conflict.

Proshanov (2007) divided the history of the sociology of conflict into four stages in Russia. The first (early) stage is associated with the names of Yudelevsky, Sorokin and Zvonitskaya.

They created the theoretical foundations of social conflicts. For the first time the social nature of conflict interaction was substantiated, the basic principles of the sociology of conflict were developed, the features, signs and characteristics of social conflicts were considered in Russian sociology.

The second stage of the Russian sociology of conflict was characterized by the fact that the constitutive conflict theory was the theory of the class struggle of K. Marx. In these years a negative attitude towards the scientific pre-revolutionary heritage, intolerance of dissent, and expulsion of intellectuals from the country to emigration, led to the forgetting of many achievements in the field of social conflicts, and research on social conflict was forbidden.

In 1961 and in the early 90s of the twentieth century the foundations of the science of the conflict interaction of social agents were developed. Researchers have scientifically substantiated and offered their recommendations for the prevention and resolution of various conflicts: industrial (labour) and interpersonal conflicts.

The fourth stage of conflict began in the formation of the domestic sociology in the early 90s of the twentieth century. At that time the deep reforms were undertaken in the country, so there was an urgent need to study the conflict and the possibilities of managing it.

Currently the sociology of political and economic conflict, the sociology of pedagogical conflict, the sociology of interethnic conflicts and others were actively developing. The main task of industry sociology of conflict is to develop recommendations that will help resolve conflicts and manage them (Proshanov, 2007).

Nagaytsev (2010), Osipov (2014), Sheinov (2014), Zaitsev (2001), Zerkin (1998), Zinchin (2008) et al. made a great contribution to the study of social conflict. They investigated the types and functions of conflicts, the causes of conflicts, and proposed methods for diagnosing and managing conflicts.

Having studied the work of foreign researchers on this topic, the following present-day scientific trends could be distinguished: interethnic and ethno-confessional conflicts, diagnosis and management of social conflicts in various industries, intergroup conflicts and conflict resolution strategies. A narrative approach was proposed for solving interethnic conflicts in the work of Gadirova (Garagozov & Gadirova, 2019). It involved a set of actions that might reduce negative emotions and harmonize hostile parties.

The aim of the research of Smagulov et al. (as cited in Otpenov et al., 2019) was to analyse the characteristics of ethno-confessional conflicts in the Republic of Kazakhstan. According to the results of the study, the authors came to the conclusion that religion and ethnicity were social phenomena and they were in troubled relationships with each other. Their nature of the relationship depended on specific historical conditions. These relations could be both a factor of integration and the disintegration of an ethnic group, and religion united the ethnic process. Since religions could manifest themselves only in ethnic forms that corresponded to ethnic identity.

Methods for de-escalating conflicts are being developed by scientists around the world. For example, Saenz (2019) offered his techniques and methods for diagnosing social conflicts in the mining industry in Peru. Saenz (2019) noted that, unfortunately, there was no standard method combining all types of social conflicts and best practices for overcoming them.

Intergroup conflict research was carried out by Halevy and Cohen (2019). They mentioned the prevalence of intergroup conflicts. Scientists were confident that that type of conflict could be resolved by answering the following questions. What were the reasons for the hostility of people during public demonstrations? What formed moral motives and individual behaviour in an intergroup conflict? The destructive and antisocial behaviour of Israeli and Palestinian youth was analysed by Gusmann et al. (as

cited in Dubow et al., 2019). Researchers found that physical aggression, participation in youth demonstrations were closely related to the constant impact of ethnic and political violence in the past.

Having done a review on the problem of social conflicts of domestic and foreign authors, the following conclusions can be drawn. Social conflict is a contradiction that arises between two or more interacting actors which can be resolved. Unfortunately, it needs to be recognized that there is no single way to settle social conflicts, and even those, that are proposed and used, are not always effective. It is possible that there is no universal method for solving conflicts, since different types of social conflicts require special approaches. All this predetermines the urgency of the study of the theoretical aspects of social conflict.

Having regard to the above, the author has set the following tasks: to identify key reasons of social conflicts; to consider the factors of their occurrence

3. Research Questions

- In what way are social conflict analysed?
- What are the key reasons of social conflict?
- Are there any methods for solving social conflicts?

4. Purpose of the Study

- To analyze and synthesize the definition and interpretation of social conflict.
- To identify key reasons of social conflicts.
- To consider some methods for solving social conflicts.

5. Research Methods

Authors used the universal scientific research methods - analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalization.

6. Findings

One of the largest representatives of the domestic sociology of the conflict of the early period was Zvonitskaya (1897–1942). She made a significant contribution to the development of the basic concepts and categories of social conflict. Zvonitskaya argued that social conflicts have always accompanied humanity, and all areas of social life could be a subject to social upheaval. She identified various types of social conflicts: intrapersonal, between two individuals, between a person and a society, between two groups, intra-group. She insisted that the main cause of inter-individual conflicts were individual differences between two social personalities. These differences could be escalated by the specific conditions in which the personality had developed. They influenced the behavior of an individual, behaving below common standards, accepted in his environment. This behavior could excite indignation which could lead to conflict (Proshanov, 2007).

According to Zerkin (1998), in order to analyze social conflict, it was necessary to consider the interests of large social groups in accessing material and cultural wealth and making decisions related to them. The subjects of social conflict might be large social communities - classes, nations and nationalities, communities. They had different socio-demographic and professional characteristics Zerkin (1998) believed that a conflict would be social, if large social groups participated in the struggle for social and significant goals. The scale of the problem was dependent on the type of social community. Therefore, conflicts between states could be considered as global, between large social groups within a country as macro conflicts. They were divided into interclass, regional and national ones. Conflicts between separate groups of local societies were called local. Conflicts between local government institutions and, for example, pensioners, large families, were classified as local conflicts.

Social conflicts are diagnosed. The process of conflict diagnosis, according to Nagaytsev (2010), includes the following research operations: determining the composition of the parties to the conflict and their roles; determination of the conflict zone; identification of the subject of conflict; searching of conflict resources and their balance of power; definition of the type of conflict; showing of the cause of the conflict; the study of the interests and goals of the parties to the conflict; analysis of conflict actions and behaviors of parties to the conflict; description of the psychological background of the conflict; clarification of the parties' attitudes to the result of the conflict; assess of the stage of development, dynamics and duration of the conflict; choosing the most acceptable way to bring the conflict to a close. Therefore, the diagnosis of social conflict involves the analysis of a specific conflict for a range of parameters. Answers to these questions, during the diagnostic procedure, will help to determine a problem and find ways to resolve it.

One of the most famous researchers of conflict was Zdravomyslov (1995). He gave consideration of four points of view on the causes of social conflicts proposed by K. Marx, A. Giddens, P. Sorokin, R. Darendorf in his monograph "Sociology of Conflict".

Zdravomyslov indicated that the concept of conflict came most often under a wider category of contradiction. However, in his opinion, there was a connection between conflict and contradiction. He wrote that Giddens considered that the conflict was the struggle between existing people or groups, regardless of the origin of the struggle, methods and means that were used by the parties.

Social contradictions arose due to different way of living because people belonged to different social groups, and had different chances for their development and achievement of goals. But not all contradictions could lead to conflicts. A conflict could begin when the conflicting parties had to be aware of opposing interests, and had high motivation to eliminate these contradictions. The second reason was the aim inhibition by a large part of the population and the impossibility of satisfying them. This approach was presented by Sorokin (2006).

He referred to the basic instincts the digestive reflex, the instinct of self-preservation, the possessive instinct of the masses, the need for housing and clothing, interest in creative work, and the need for freedom. Thus, the dissatisfaction of basic instincts offered a means to analyze the cause of social conflicts. Sorokin argued that dissatisfaction with needs and interests was the main source of revolution in society. To prevent it, it was necessary to implement reforms. It was important to control the degree of satisfaction of the needs of various social groups and look for means to meet these needs.

Discussing the behavior of people, Sorokin believed that such factors as punishment and rewards had a great influence on them. A person committed any actions in accordance with his ideas about profit or disadvantage, understanding all the subsequent consequences of the acts performed. If some act advantaged, then this affected the human psyche and made him commit this act. On the contrary, the undesirable consequences of an act made people give up performing certain actions. Punishment and rewards were a magical power that affected the human psyche, change morals, behavior, habits and life.

The theory of Sorokin about the main forms of social behavior and morality, allows us to understand interpersonal and intergroup interactions, and it proves that people can influence this process. Sorokin believed that the more cultured a person was, the more important purposeful motivation played in his behavior. He had the opportunity to look into the future and think about the consequences of certain actions. The cause of social conflicts is the social claims of people, which are determined by comparing themselves with others. The most important are needs in themselves, and the means to satisfy them, and access to certain activities.

The experience of Soviet society showed that the desire for universal equality led to parity and did not cause incentives for further development, both creatively and professionally. Zdravomyslov (1995) found it possible that inequality might also have positive aspects, since it was a source of competitiveness and developed a person's vital energy. But, if we consider inequality as a social conflict, then it leads to the mobilization of forces for social changes in society, therefore, the nature of social conflicts includes resources that are means to achieve goals.

Resources are concentrated in authority hands that control them. Thus, a conflict arises between those social groups that have them and those that have no access to them. The fourth approach, which considers the cause of social conflicts, is a normative-value approach. His supporters Durkheim and Parsons defined the conflict as a nonoccurrence of the goals and interests of people and social groups. Chrisberg wrote that social conflict existed if two or more parties were convinced that their goals were antithetical (Zinchin, 2008).

Having studied the main causes of social conflicts, Zdravomyslov (1995) came to the conclusion the interest and the way realized by subjects was at the heart of all theories. Therefore, when analyzing a conflict, it was important to take into account interests as the drivers of social actions. A different point of view on the causes of conflicts was presented in the theory of Academician Osipov (2014).

Osipov (2014) considered that conflicts were inherent in human society and they contributed to its development. But society could not develop only on the basis of conflicts. The researcher strongly believed that all conflicts were the result of people's actions, therefore, to prevent conflicts, one needs to study the motives, goals and value-based orientations, as well as the social attitudes of those groups that created conflict situations.

It is necessary to take into account the fact that situations should develop in the interests of man and society. Osipov (2014) held the view that all conflicts and conflict situations did not exist as something given to society from above, but as a result of human activities, power structures that made socially major decisions.

7. Conclusion

Having studied the problem of conflict, the author of this paper has come to the conclusion.

Social conflict is a conflict caused by divergence of interests; as a result clashes and struggles arise. Social conflicts are provoked by the following reasons: different lifestyle of people belonging to other social groups; socio-economic reasons; unfair access to resources and certain activities; different understanding among individuals of the rules of behaviour; contradictions between society and government structures.

Conflicts are the result of the actions of people who create this or that situation not only in the country, but also in the world. It is possible to change the current situation as a result of the activity of people who rely on scientific knowledge. To do this, it is necessary to study the causes and tendencies of conflicts to change social reality.

Serious social, national and interethnic conflicts are characterized a modern social reality that has developed in our country and in the world. As a result of these conflicts, it is important to change the management of society and social processes to eliminate conflicts. Otherwise, they can destroy not only the national society, but also the entire modern civilization.

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