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THE NATURE OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the significance and role of social conflict in the development of society. The article attempts to clarify the nature of social conflict, its causes and consequences, conditions of development, types and functions, directions and channels. Special attention was paid to the factors that reinforce social conflicts. The main stages of the development of the conflict are analyzed, and the main ways to resolve the conflict situation are indicated. The article concludes with recommendations based on the analysis of social conflict processes.

KEYWORDS

Social, society, functions conflict, conflictology, structure, compromise, consensus.

INTRODUCTION

Social heterogeneity in society, differences in income levels, power, prestige, etc. often leads to social conflicts. They are an integral part of social life and are always associated with the subjective consciousness of people, the contradictory nature of their interests of certain social groups. Exacerbations of contradictions give rise to open or closed conflicts only when they are deeply experienced by people and recognized as an incompatibility of goals and interests.

A conflict is a collision of opposing goals, opinions, interests, positions of opponents or subjects of interaction. Social conflict is a confrontation between individuals or groups pursuing socially significant goals. It occurs when one party seeks to realize its goals or

interests to the detriment of the other. Social conflict (from Latin - clash) is a collision of opposing goals, interests, positions, opinions or views of the subjects of interaction.

English sociologist Giddens gave the following definition of conflict: "by social conflict, I understand a real struggle between acting people or groups, regardless of the sources of this struggle, its methods and means mobilized by each side."

Conflict is a ubiquitous phenomenon. Every society, social group, and social community is susceptible to conflict to one degree or another. The origin of conflict is based on objectively existing contradictions between individuals, groups, and organizations. While creating a real basis for the emergence of conflicts, social contradictions do not at all coincide with them, and conflicts are not limited to contradictions. Conflict in a broad sense means a contradiction that turns into confrontation.

A conflict arises if: a) contradictions reflect mutually exclusive positions of subjects; b) the degree of contradiction is quite high; c) contradictions are understandable, i.e., individuals and groups are aware of these contradictions; d) contradictions arise instantly, unexpectedly, or accumulate for quite a long time before turning into a social conflict. In general, the difference between contradictions and conflicts is that if a contradiction exists objectively, regardless of the consciousness and will of people, then the conflict is subjective, its essence lies in the fact that it is recognized by the subject (an individual or a group of people involved in conflicting actions).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Conflict interactions can perform both positive and negative functions. Positive functions include: constructive - the process of unfolding confrontation helps to eliminate shortcomings in the actions of organizations; stimulating (innovative) - a conflict situation plays the role of a stimulator of changes in various spheres of public life, embodied in scientific discoveries, the emergence of a new style in art, etc.; informational - promotes the dissemination of previously closed information; socialization function - promotes the assimilation by individuals of social experience and knowledge that is inaccessible under normal conditions. Negative functions include: destructive - contributes to the destruction of the social structure within which the conflict arose: family, sports team, state, etc.; dysfunctional - manifests itself in the weakening of the activity of the social structure, diverting the attention of rival parties from performing their main functions: conflicts in a sports team lead to a decrease in results, etc.; disintegration - arises as a result of an acute confrontation between the parties and leads to the disintegration of a single team into parts.

Conflicts are also classified depending on the object and subject of conflict activity. Depending on the object, conflict actions are distinguished: in the fields of economics, labor, politics, family life, religion, etc. Sometimes these types of conflict are called forms. Depending on the subject, conflicts can be divided into intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup, ethnonational, and international.

According to the scale and prevalence in sociology, conflicts are distinguished: local, regional, country (within one country), intercountry, and global. By nature, all conflicts are divided into a) conflicts that are of contact, open nature. Examples of such conflicts are controversy, violence, war, and class struggle; b) conflicts that have a hidden, non-contact nature for the opposing side. These are, for example, intrigues, conspiracies, secret diplomacy, etc. By degree of rootedness in objective processes of social development, conflicts are divided into structural and non-structural. Structural conflicts represent an integral part of the normal process of development of social systems and communities, their periodically occurring changes and act as an invariable factor in the transformation of social objects, whether we are talking about historical eras of the development of society, social structures, their political design (oligarchy, totalitarianism, democracy, etc.) or various social communities (ethnicity, nation, social class, territorial, religious or subcultural community). This

type of social conflict is rooted in objective trends of social development. Non-structural conflicts are most often like random or subjectively determined events, not related to the patterns of functioning and development of the corresponding social structures.

DISCUSSION

The duration of conflicts can be very different - from several minutes or days to several years. Hence the division of conflicts into short-term, long-term, permanent (or chronic). The intensity of the conflict depends on the depth of social problems, the number of participants, their aggressiveness, or, conversely, tolerance. Here, different groups of conflicts are distinguished depending on the goals of the researcher. Based on the number of participants (volume), conflicts are divided into interpersonal, group conflicts, and conflicts between an individual and a group. They also talk about interstate, interfaith, and ideological conflicts. According to the methods and means of resolution, conflicts can be peaceful or armed. Finally, conflicts differ in their driving forces, which can be the needs of individuals and social groups, their interests or values, etc.

In science, there is a special branch of sociological knowledge that directly studies this social phenomenon - conflictology. One of the most important parameters for the study of conflicts is the analysis of the causes of conflicts in society. In

conflictology, the so-called conflictogens are considered, i.e. such actions of individuals that cause random conflicts. But in sociology, as a rule, random conflicts are not analyzed. It is customary to divide conflicts into psychological and social.

Psychological reasons come from the properties of human character, but at the same time affect the interests of many people, entire social groups. Psychological causes of conflicts usually manifest themselves as a) incompatibility, antipathy; b) the desire for leadership, for power over people, which can be covered with a socially positive shell and presented as a desire for order or, for example, for improving working conditions and increasing productivity; c) manifestation of aggressiveness; d) manifestation of selfishness (deception, shifting responsibility to another, withholding information), etc.

Social causes of conflicts can appear in the form of a) status collisions; b) the struggle to change values and ideas; c) contradictions between material interests, etc. Social conflicts can develop in different ways. Each has its reasons, nature, duration, intensity, number of participants, and driving forces. The main subjects of conflicts are social groups since their needs, claims, and goals can only be realized through the use of power. That is why political forces such as the state apparatus, political parties, parliamentary groups, factions, "influence groups," etc. take part in conflicts.

They are the spokesmen for the will of large social groups and the main bearers of social interests.

In conflictology, much attention is paid to the concept of the strength of participants in a social conflict. Strength is the opponent's ability to realize his goal against the will of the interaction partner. It includes some different components: a) physical force, including technical means used as an instrument of violence; b) an information-civilizational form of using social force, which requires the collection of facts, statistical data, analysis of documents, the study of examination materials to ensure complete knowledge about the essence of the conflict, about one's opponent to develop strategies and tactics of behavior, the use of materials discrediting the opponent, etc.; c) social status, expressed in publicly recognized indicators (income, level of power, prestige, etc.); d) other resources - money, territory, time limit, psychological resource, etc.

The stage of conflict behavior is characterized by the maximum use of force by the parties to the conflict, the use of all means at their disposal. The development of the conflict is significantly influenced by the surrounding social environment, which determines the conditions in which the social conflict occurs. It can act either as a source of external support for the parties to the conflict, or as a deterrent, or as a neutral factor.

Social conflict, as a rule, goes through main stages. In conflictology, it is customary to distinguish the following stages of conflict: 1) the hidden stage, at which the contradictions between the parties to the conflict are not yet recognized and manifest themselves only in explicit or implicit dissatisfaction with the situation; 2) the formation of a conflict - a clear awareness of claims, which, as a rule, are expressed to the opposite side in the form of demands; 3) incident - an event that moves the conflict into the stage of active actions; 4) active actions of the parties that contribute to reaching the highest point of the conflict, after which it subsides; 5) ending the conflict, and this is not always achieved by satisfying the claims of the parties.

It is also necessary to remember that at any of these stages, the conflict can end either independently, by agreement of the parties, or with the participation of a third party. Therefore, there is another option for the development of the conflict. The conflict in its development goes through certain stages or stages. Typically, in a social conflict, there are 4 stages of its development: pre-conflict, conflict, conflict resolution, and post-conflict. Pre-conflict - this is the stage of accumulation and aggravation of contradictions due to the divergence of interests and values of the subjects of interaction. At this stage, the conflict exists in a latent form. Conflict stage - characterized by conflict behavior, i.e. actions aimed at confronting the

intentions, goals, and interests of the opposite side. The stage of conflict behavior is characterized by the maximum use of the strength of the participants in the conflict and their use of all resources of struggle. However, at the conflict stage, a turning point may occur if a "revaluation of values" occurs, i.e. changing ideas about the opponent, his goals, and appearance. Then the "phase of revaluation of values" can become the "phase of choice" of a behavior program consisting of 3 alternatives: 1) achieving one's goals at the expense of another group - i.e. bringing the conflict to the limit; 2) reducing the level of tension through partial concessions, which will transfer the conflict into a latent form; 3) searching for ways to resolve the conflict completely. The third stage of the conflict - conflict resolution, is carried out by changing the objective situation that gave rise to the conflict, as well as changing the subjective image of the situation in the minds of the warring parties. Complete resolution of the conflict means its cessation at the objective and subjective level, a radical solution to the conflict situation. With a partial resolution of the conflict, only external conflict behavior changes, but motives remain, temporarily restrained by reasonable arguments or sanctions.

In modern conflictology, the following conditions for conflict resolution are formulated: 1) Timely and accurate diagnosis of the causes of the conflict. This involves identifying objective contradictions, interests,

and goals and delineating the "business zone" of a conflict situation. A model for exiting a conflict situation is created; 2) Mutual interest in overcoming contradictions based on mutual recognition of the interests of each party; 3) Joint search for a compromise, i.e. ways to overcome conflict, contradictions, conflicting interests, goals, attitudes, elimination of socio-psychological tension in society. Post-conflict syndrome, when relations worsen, maybe the beginning of repeated conflicts at a different level with other participants.

In modern sociological literature, there are many classifications of types of conflicts for various reasons. From the point of view of the subjects entering into conflict, four types of conflicts can be distinguished: 1) intrapersonal (can have the following forms: role - occurs when conflicting demands are placed on one person regarding what the result of his work should be; intrapersonal - can also arise as a result of the fact that production requirements are not consistent with personal needs or values); 2) interpersonal (can manifest itself as clashes of personalities with different character traits, views, values and is the most common); 3) between the individual and the group (occurs if the individual occupies a position different from the position of the group); 4) intergroup.

Conflicts can be classified according to spheres of life into political, socio-economic, national-ethnic, and others. Political are conflicts over the distribution of power, dominance, influence, and authority. They arise from the collision of various interests, rivalry, and struggle in the process of acquisition, redistribution, and implementation of political and state power. Political conflicts are associated with consciously formulated goals aimed at gaining leading positions in institutions in the structures of political power. The main political conflicts include 1) between branches of government; 2) inside parliament; 3) between political parties and movements; and 4) between various levels of the management apparatus.

Socio-economic are conflicts over livelihoods, wage levels, the use of professional and intellectual potential, the level of prices for goods and services, and access to the distribution of material and spiritual goods. National-ethnic conflicts that arise during the struggle for the rights and interests of ethnic and national groups. According to the classification of Katz, there are conflicts: 1) between indirectly competing subgroups; 2) between directly competing subgroups; 3) within the hierarchy and regarding remuneration.

Conflict researcher Boulding identifies the following types of conflicts: 1) real (existing objectively in a certain social subsystem; 2) random (depending on minor points concerning the fundamental contradictions that cause the conflict); 3) substitutive (being a visible manifestation of hidden conflicts); 4) based on poor knowledge (the result of inept management); 5) hidden, latent (participants for

various reasons cannot fight openly); 6) fake (creating only appearance). The current view is that some conflicts are not only possible but may even be desirable. Following this, two types of conflicts are distinguished: 1) conflict is considered functional if it leads to increased efficiency of the organization; 2) conflict can also be dysfunctional and lead to a decrease in personal satisfaction, group cooperation, and organizational effectiveness.

An external sign of conflict resolution can be the end of the incident. Resolving the incident is necessary, but it is not a sufficient condition for resolving the conflict. Complete resolution of a conflict situation is possible only when the conflict situation changes. This change can take many forms, but the most radical change is one that eliminates the causes of conflict. It is also possible to resolve a social conflict by changing the demands of one side: the opponent makes concessions and changes the goals of his behavior in the conflict.

There are ways to resolve conflicts, these include negotiations, compromises, consensus, going to court, searching for mutual or common interests of the warring parties, defeating the enemy, etc. However, each of the methods can contain both positive and negative features. Thus, a conflict within a group can be resolved by the disintegration of the group, or perhaps by the consolidation of the group. Every social conflict occurs under certain conditions. Nevertheless, certain ways out of conflicts can be identified: a)

restoration, that is, the return of society to the pre-conflict state; b) non-interference, that is, waiting, so that "everything will work itself out on its own"; c) update, this is an active way out of the conflict by abandoning the old and developing the new. To implement this path, you need to see the future, feel the new things that are being born, have the will and determination to change, and be able to plan and carry out what is planned. The general strategy for exiting social conflict should be to combine these three paths. Renewal is necessary, this is the key to resolving any conflict, but it is impossible to update everything due to the inertia of human consciousness. A natural process of rollback (reaction) to some old values and forms should be provided. In addition to the general strategy for resolving the conflict, goals and means should be outlined. Also, the implementation of any way to resolve a social conflict presupposes the existence of a plan or program that takes into account the goals and objectives of the means, as well as the planned set of measures to overcome the crisis.

Compromise is a method of resolving a conflict when the conflicting parties realize their interests and goals through either mutual concessions, or concessions to the weaker party, or to the party that was able to prove the validity of its demands to someone who voluntarily renounced part of its claims.

Consensus is the presence between two or more individuals of similar orientations in some respect, a

certain degree of agreement, and consistency in actions. It is not difficult to see that it is precisely at the stage of conflict resolution that such a situation is possible under certain conditions. M. Weber considers consensus as an integral characteristic of any human community, as long as it exists and does not fall apart. He contrasts consensus with solidarity, arguing that behavior based on consensus does not presuppose it as a condition. It must be remembered that consensus does not completely exclude the struggle of interests between the parties. Also, the consensus does not completely exclude the possibility of a new conflict flaring up. According to Weber, consensus is an objectively existing probability that, despite the absence of a preliminary agreement, participants in one or another form of interaction will regard each other's expectations as significant for themselves. Thus, consensus is not always associated with conflict behavior.

DISCUSSION

It is easy to see that Weber's interpretation considers this social phenomenon in a broad sense. From this, we can conclude that consensus is not always generated by conflict, just as conflict does not always end in consensus. With this understanding of consensus, behavior based on agreement is different from behavior based on agreement. In this case, consensus is the primary form - it arises in the minds of people. The agreement is secondary since it is a normative

consolidation of consensus. Achieving consensus in society presupposes achieving political consensus. It is usually understood as a state of agreement regarding a particular political course as a whole or its aspects. However, such an agreement is not identical to joint actions and does not necessarily imply cooperation in the implementation of relevant goals and objectives. The very degree of agreement in a consensus may vary, although it is understood that it must be supported, if not by an overwhelming majority, then at least by a significant majority.

Varying from issue to issue, the degree of consensus is usually higher in views on provisions of a more general, abstract nature. That is why, for more successful negotiations, the conflicting parties need to start them with precisely such topics, as this will give them a better chance of finding a consensus.

To maintain consensus in society, three circumstances must be taken into account. Firstly, the natural willingness of the majority to follow existing laws, regulations, and norms. Secondly, a positive perception of the institutions designed to implement these laws and regulations. Thirdly, a sense of belonging to a certain community contributes to a certain leveling of the role of differences.

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