

Application of Sociological Concept

Name:
Institution:



Conflict is one of the numerous sociological concepts. Conflict is goal-oriented and seeks deliberately to harm one's antagonists. Conflict is enhanced by rules of competition that may be broken down as one of the conflicting parties seeks to win at any cost. The notion of establishing a continuum is useful in describing a conflict as it helps differentiate it from competition; this way, it becomes easier to identify pure competition and pure conflict.

Conflict tends can personal or impersonal, but it is mostly impersonal. It has a destructive potential. The destructiveness that accompanies conflicts rapidly accumulates, thereby leading to more destruction. The immediate results of conflict are likely to be horrible, but most people see it as a pathological process, rather than a normal and universal process of social interaction. Conflict is an abnormal form of social interaction and is not solely destructive or harmful; it is useful and socially integrative (Howard, 2000).

In February 2014, the Black Students Union at the University of Michigan organized a protest against racism and isolation among African American students. The students had strategically chosen Martin Luther King Jr. Day as the protest date. A new wave of activism is not limited to the University of Michigan alone; it has risen in other college campuses as well (Vega, 2014). The Michigan group led a popular social media campaign, thereby getting attention and admiration from other African American student groups nationwide.

The students had been intimidated by a party that had been planned for November 2013, and which had since been cancelled. The organizers of the party mostly Asian and white, and had made racial remarks, to the anger of African American students. The tension is compounded by evidence of a sharp decline in African American undergraduate

enrollment. The Black Students Union demanded that all campus administrators increase enrollment of African American students to 10 percent (Vega, 2014).

The issue of racism is often underplayed in the news media and popular culture, but interviews conducted by New York Times investigators revealed that racism exists, a claim that many students, professors and administrators admit. They are also admitting that racial tensions are playing out in many new ways among students and young adults. Additionally, the number of complaints filed against colleges and universities regarding ethnicity or racism has been on the rise (Vega, 2014). The experiences often described by witnesses of racism range from overt racism to more subtle forms of insensitivity.

The conflict between African American students and young adults and members of the white and Asian communities is a manifestation of competition for economic resources and other factors such as relevance in society. The recent debate over the huge number of immigrants taking jobs which were predominantly taken by whites may be one of the reasons increasing the tension in the white population. Police departments have been increased complaints against unlawful racial profiling operations while white students have been accused of having certain stereotypes to further their dislike for African American students, for example, African American students have been described as dirty, noisy and rude (Howard, 2000).

Racist behavior is common to the human race and it often affects attitudes towards people from other races (Feagin, 2014). The behavior is usually reinforced by the need for one group to be above the other, as in the case of whites and Asians, or to obtain equity, in the case of African Americans. Racist comments and attitudes towards African Americans

have been motivated by the need to make them feel weak and powerless, and not see the point of trying to continue (Feagin, 2014). African American students are often regarded as inferior and not intelligent. There is a general view that preadolescent test scores of African American and mixed-race children mostly rise when they are brought up in white rather than African American homes (The Black-White Test Score Gap, 1998). Amid all types of stereotypes and facts, African Americans have been more motivated to try even harder.

Employed African Americans are likely to cooperate more than whites or Asians at the workplace in order to be more competitive and be noticed (Howard, 2000). Such efforts may unconsciously erode the conscious and unconscious attempts to promote more Whites and Asians at the workplace. The in-group bias has been common in most workplaces, leading to low morale among African American workers. It seems, however, that they are refusing to conform to the norm. The conflict, just like many other types of conflict, has been enhanced by informational influence. For example, whites propagate racist comments and attitudes against blacks who in turn rely on media to seek support. Protest efforts often lead to a repeal of policies that increase equity, thereby affirming that conflict is a significant part social interaction.

References

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