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REVIEW ARTICLE

Social Change in Conflict Theory: A Descriptive

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Abstract: Conflict theory is one theory that is widely used to explain various phenomena of social change that occur in society. In its dynamics, various postulates in conflict theory are constantly evolving, such as the things behind the occurrence of conflict. This article aims to describe the phenomenon of social change in the postulates of conflict theory descriptively. The writing method in this article uses a qualitative descriptive method based on the data search method in the form of library research. From the results of the discussion, it is known that conflict itself is a necessity that will occur in people's lives to be able to change the socio-cultural conditions of the community. Conflict is a normal phenomenon and at a certain point is considered important to achieve a change.

Keywords: *Conflict, Social Change, Sociology*

1. Introduction

In the current development of human life, both in various fields of life, existing social theories can be used to examine various phenomena/social/cultural realities that occur in society. In addition, various socio-cultural theories were created by experts/scientists to explain and understand social problems in people's lives, as well as to distinguish between theoretical thoughts and social reality or facts that appear in everyday life. Social scientists also see that social change (society) is unavoidable. The existence of various phenomena such as differences of opinion about values and norms, the existence of gaps, and other things is a sign of social phenomena that can easily be identified. Referring to social experts, the definition related to social change also becomes very broad (Tamburaka, 1999: 79).¹

Social change is a "concept" that is currently accepted in academic and scientific circles. The phenomenon of social change is the "most interesting" object of study in the various social sciences and humanities that have been studied in the last four decades (Saefudin, 2005: 76). To study it can be used a variety of glasses (approach). Is a conflict approach that can also be used to explain various social changes that occur in society. This paper tries to provide an overview of the use of conflict theory in explaining the phenomenon of socio-cultural change in society.²

¹ In simple terms, social change is a significant change in social structure and behavior and cultural patterns over a certain period of time. These changes can lead to positive changes (progress) or negative changes (regression) (Saefudin, 2005: 75). As an introduction to various studies of sociology, you can read, (Nain & Yusoff, 2003).

² Conflict comes from the Latin verb *confingere* which means to hit each other. Sociologically, conflict is defined as a social process between two or more people (it can also be a group) where one party tries to get rid of the other party by destroying it or making it powerless. Conflict is basically something that is inevitable in our lives. Conflict is a part of dissociative social interaction. If this conflict is allowed to drag on and is prolonged and not immediately addressed, it will lead to the social disintegration of a nation. A situation that has a great opportunity



2. Research Method

The writing of this article uses a descriptive qualitative method with based on data mining through library research/literature studies from several literature sources (written) (Prayogi, 2022). Qualitative research is used as an exploration for the humanities, social, and religion. And in library research, the resulting information comes from drawing conclusions that come from: citing references and abstracted as research findings. Writing is done through a process extracting data from various reference sources that discuss various articles/writings related to various literatures on Persian civilization. These various sources published in public media, so that it can be accessed through various places (library) and internet media openly. This article can be elaboration of various related articles and writings. Likewise, articles this is more of a synthesis of the writings that ever existed, to then be seen in relation to what can be done in the current context.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Conflict Theory: An Understanding

The conflict theory³ that emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries can be understood as a response to the birth of a dual revolution, namely democratization and industrialization, so that the emergence of modern conflict sociology, in America in particular, is a follow-up to, or a result of, the reality of conflict in American society. In addition, the theory of the sociology of conflict is an alternative to dissatisfaction with the structural functionalism analysis of Talcot Parsons and Robert K. Merton, which assesses society with its consensus and integralistic understanding. The perspective of conflict in seeing society can be traced to classical figures such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, and George Simmel (Puspitawati, 2009: 1). Conflict theorists believe that the phenomenon of conflict is a normal social phenomenon and that humans even need to change.⁴ A change sometimes has to be forced to happen rather than waiting for an agreement in society. Therefore, the existence of conflict becomes important to trigger dynamics in people's lives (Saefudin, 2005: 76).

Conflict theory is a theory that views that social change does not occur through a process of adjusting values that bring about change, but occurs as a result of conflicts that result in compromises that are different from the original conditions. Conflict theory was born as an antithesis of structural functional theory which views the importance of order in society. Conflict is a social phenomenon and it is a reality for the people involved in it. This means that people are aware and feel that conflicts arise in the everyday world. Conflict is also a social process, a process of change from the old social order to a different social order. Conflict between communities in society is defined as a normal condition but when it involves violence, the normality of conflict becomes no longer. Conflict is inherent in people's awareness so that there is always a real picture of the phenomenon. Even people store the experience of conflict as their knowledge and social reality.⁵

for conflict to arise is difference. The difference in question is a difference of interest. Regarding the meaning and approach to conflict in the social sciences (Harskamp, 2005: 1).

³ Conflict theory has basically developed so widely. The conflict theories that have been born to date are the great works of experts as expressed by Jessi Bernard in his book *The Sociological of Conflict*, published in 1957, Lewis Coser with his book *The Function of Social Conflict* published in 1956 and Ralf Dahrendorf with his book, *Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, published in 1957. Among the many conflict theory figures, the names of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and George Simmel are the few "pioneers" of social conflict theory.

⁴ Social conflict can be interpreted into two things. First, a perspective or point of view that considers conflict to always exist and colors all aspects of human interaction and social structure. Second, social conflicts are open conflicts such as wars, revolutions, strikes and resistance movements. Soerjono Soekanto mentions conflict as a conflict or dispute, which is a process of individuals or groups trying to fulfill their goals by challenging the opposing party, accompanied by threats and or violence.

⁵ Conflict is motivated by differences in the characteristics that individuals bring in an interaction. These differences include physical characteristics, intelligence, knowledge, customs, beliefs, and so on. With the

Conflict theory focuses its analysis on the origins of a social order or rule. This theory does not aim to analyze the origin of the violation of regulations or the background of a person's deviant behavior. The conflict perspective emphasizes the pluralistic nature of society and the imbalance in the distribution of power that occurs among its various groups. Because of the power possessed by elite groups, these groups also have the power to create regulations, especially laws that can serve their interests. In this regard, the conflict perspective understands society as groups with various competing interests and will tend to compete with each other and will tend to conflict with each other. Through this competition, groups with excess power will create laws and regulations that guarantee they are won (Puspitawati, 2009: 1). In other words, conflict theory sees that existing community groups are built, controlled, and maintained based on the manipulative ways of the dominant group. To break away from the dominant group, it is necessary to take a way outside the existing consensus and based on confrontational methods from the subordinate group to the dominant group (Saefudin, 2005: 76).

In sociology, conflict theory is based on the basic assumption that society or organizations function in such a way that individuals and groups strive to maximize their profits; indirectly and unavoidably are major social changes such as revolutions and changes in the political order. In general, this conflict theory tries to provide a critique of functionalism which believes that society and organizations play their respective roles in the same way as the organs in the body of living things. In summary, there are at least four things that are important in understanding the theory of social conflict, among others: first, competition (over the scarcity of resources such as food, pleasure, sexual partners, and so on. What is the basis of human interaction is not consensus as offered by functionalism, but rather to competition. Second, structural inequalities. Inequality in terms of power, gains that exist in the social structure. Third, individuals and groups who want to gain profits and struggle to achieve revolution. Fourth, social change occurs as a result of conflicts between the desires (interests) that compete with each other and not just adaptation. Social change often occurs rapidly and revolutionary rather than evolutionary (Puspitawati, 2009: 3-4).

3.2. Conflict Cause Factors

The first is individual differences, which include differences in attitudes and feelings. Every human is a unique individual. This means that everyone has different opinions and feelings. Differences in attitudes and feelings about something or a real environment can be a factor causing social conflict, because in carrying out social relationships, a person is not always in line with his group. For example, when a musical performance takes place in a residential area, of course the feelings of each citizen will be different. There are those who feel disturbed because of the noise, but there are also those who feel entertained. Differences in cultural backgrounds so as to form different individuals. A person will more or less be affected by the patterns of thinking and the establishment of the group. These different thoughts and stances will eventually produce individual differences that can trigger conflict.

The second is the difference in interests between individuals or groups. Humans have different feelings, attitudes and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, at the same time, each person or group has different interests. Sometimes people can do the same thing, but for different purposes. For example, such a difference in terms of the interests of forest use. Community leaders regard the forest as a cultural treasure that is part of their culture so that it must be protected and not cut down. The farmers cut the trees because it is considered as a barrier for them to create gardens or fields. For timber entrepreneurs, trees are cut down

inclusion of individual characteristics in social interactions, conflict is a normal situation in every society and there is not a single society that has never experienced conflict between its members or with other community groups, conflict will only disappear along with the loss of the community itself. Conflict is against integration. Conflict and Integration run as a cycle in society. Controlled conflict will result in integration. on the other hand, imperfect integration can create conflict (Puspitawati, 2009: 1).

and then the wood is exported to earn money and create jobs. As for environmentalists, forests are part of the environment so they must be preserved. Here it is clear that there are differences in interests between one group and another so that it will bring about social conflict in society. Conflicts due to differences in interests can also involve the political, economic, social, and cultural fields. Likewise, it can occur between groups or between groups and individuals, for example conflicts between groups of workers and employers that occur because of differences in interests between the two. The workers want adequate wages, while the entrepreneurs want a large income to enjoy themselves and enlarge the field and volume of their business.

The third is the rapid and sudden changes in values in society. Change is something that is common and natural, but if the change takes place quickly or even suddenly, the change can trigger social conflict. For example, in rural communities experiencing a sudden industrialization process, social conflicts will arise because the old values in traditional societies which are usually agricultural in nature quickly turn into industrial values. The values that change, such as the value of mutual cooperation, change to the value of a work contract with wages that are adjusted according to the type of work. Kinship relations shifted to structural relationships that were arranged in the company's formal organization. The values of togetherness turned into individualism and values about the use of time which tended to be less strict turned into strict time divisions such as work and rest schedules in the industrial world. These changes, if they occur quickly or suddenly, will shake up social processes in society, and there will even be an attempt to reject all forms of change because they are considered to have disrupted the existing order of people's lives.⁶

Conflict can result in increased solidarity among group members (ingroup) who experience conflict with other groups. In addition, it also causes rifts in relations between conflicting groups, personality changes in individuals, for example the emergence of revenge, hatred, and mutual suspicion, damage to property and loss of human life, as well as the dominance and even subjugation of one of the parties involved in the conflict.

A conflict also does not always bring bad things, but sometimes bring something positive. The positive aspect of a conflict is being able to clarify aspects of life that are not clear or have not been thoroughly studied, allowing for readjustment of norms and values as well as social relations in the group concerned according to individual or group needs. Conflict can be a way to reduce dependence between individuals and groups, and can help revive old norms, create new norms, and can serve as a means to strike a balance between forces in society. The results or consequences of a social conflict are able to increase the solidarity of fellow group members who are experiencing conflict with other groups, change the personality of the individuals.

A society can be declared to have reached an orderly condition if there is harmony between the actions of community members and the values and norms that apply in that society. Social order is characterized by three things, namely, there is a clear system of values and norms, individuals or groups in society know and understand social norms and prevailing social values, individuals or groups in society adjust their actions to the norms -the prevailing social norms and social values.⁷

⁶ Various literatures regarding the occurrence of various conflicts in society in various dimensions state that conflicts occur not only due to a single factor, but more than one fact. Among these many factors, the factors listed above are more of a summary of several dominant factors. Regarding several cases of conflict events and the factors that occurred, you can read, (Liliweri, 2005), (Habib, 2004), (Anwar, Yesmil, & Adang, 2001), (Hasrullah, 2009), (Sudrijanta, 2009).

⁷ Conflict as an event experienced by humans certainly results in various kinds of results. In various literatures, the consequences of conflict events will differ from one another. The consequences written above are more of a summary of the various consequences that arise when a conflict occurs. You can also read about various aspects

3.3. Theories of Social Conflict and Social Change

The birth of a socio-cultural theory cannot be separated from the figures who laid the foundation. Conflict theory itself has many experts who complement each other's theories. However, this theory is still very closely related to the main characters. Of the many conflict theorists, there are three figures who have contributed to the birth of the conflict theory. The three of them include: Karl Marx, Max Weber, and George Simmel. Each character who gave birth to the conflict theory compiles different propositions about the incidence of conflict in society from different units of analysis.⁸

Karl Marx is a sociological figure who makes material infrastructure the determinant of the social system that takes place in the midst of society. In relation to conflict theory, Marx in formulating his proposition about the conflict process is based on unequal access to resources. This omission creates a group (group) that positions itself as ordinate (dominant) on the one hand, and subordinate (marginalized) on the other. Furthermore, Marx said that those who are subordinated will become concerned about their collective interests over the domination of the ordinate group by questioning the unequal distribution pattern of natural resources. The result is the breakdown of relations (relationships) between the ordinate group and the subordinate group due to the alienative disposition created by the ordinate group towards the subordinate group. Under these conditions, the subordinate group builds ideological unity to question the ongoing system and carry out "resistance" through collective leadership against the ordinate group. This is what causes the polarization between the ordinate group and the subordinate group which is prolonged.

In contrast to Karl Max, Weber's analysis of conflict theory emphasizes his conflict theory from the perspective of ideological structure. Max Weber builds a proposition in seeing the process of conflict between the superordinate and the subordinate. Weber's proposition is as follows. First, the conflict between the superordinate and the subordinate is possible if there is a pull from a political authority, which then the next process (second) there will be a high pull from the political authority through a membership in class, status groups, and political hierarchies. In addition, it can also occur through discontinuities or degrees of inequality in the distribution of resources with high social hierarchies. It can also be through social mobilization through social hierarchies based on power and prestige, and wealth. Third, conflict between superordinates and subordinates is possible through charismatic leadership that can mobilize subordinates. Fourth, through this charismatic leadership, conflict was successfully achieved with strong pressure on the old authority, resulting in a new system of roles and administration. Fifth, a system with the authority of the role and administration that is formed, again there is a pull that keeps repeating (back to the 2nd proposition and so on). The five propositions above, if abstracted into Weber's theory which is more complete or comprehensive, the key words are found, namely formal rationality. In this case, Weber gives an example of the bureaucratization process that he packs into political institutions. According to him, the bureaucracy has different authorities and is divided into three systems of authority, namely: traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. Of the three systems of authority, rational-legal authority can only develop in modern western society and it is only in this system of rational-legitimate authority that modern bureaucracy can fully develop. Of course this is different from bureaucracies in other worlds, where charismatic or traditional authority hinders the development of rational legal systems. and modern bureaucracies.

of various conflicts, (Liliweri, 2005), (Habib, 2004), (Anwar, Yesmil, & Adang, 2001), (Hasrullah, 2009), (Sudrijanta, 2009).

⁸ There are three basic components in the analysis of sociocultural systems. According to him, the basic components of a sociocultural system consist of ideological structures, social structures, and material infrastructure. These three basic components are then used as a foothold for sociologists in analyzing social phenomena or events that take place.

If the two previous sociologists view the dimensions of society as the unit of analysis, G. Simmel does something different, who emphasizes the individual unit of analysis in his theory of conflict. According to him, one of the main tasks of sociology is to understand the interactions between individuals that can lead to conflict and solidarity between people. In this regard, the propositions built by Simmel tend to see conflict events due to interactions between individuals who have "emotional power" which then builds bonds of solidarity among others.⁹

4. Conclusion

Conflict theory emerged as a reaction to structural functionalism theory in a socio-cultural change. According to conflict theorists, conflict itself is a necessity that will occur in people's lives to be able to change the socio-cultural conditions of society. Conflict is a normal phenomenon and at a certain point is considered important to achieve a change. Conflict itself can be a double-edged sword, which can make a positive change. Even so, on the other hand, it can also have a negative value if a resolution cannot be given.

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⁹ Both Marx, Weber, and Simmel each have their own corrections to the various theories of conflict made by other sociologists and anthropologists. Even so, these three figures are the "founders" of conflict theory in socio-cultural change which in subsequent developments will be further developed, one of them by Dahrendof and Coser.