

# Conflict vs. symbolic interactionist grudge match

Sociology



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Conflict vs. Symbolic Interactionist Grudge Match Conflict theories represent perspectives in which sociologists use to analyze the political, social and material inequalities in social groups. These theories focus on explaining the various conflicts that exist in society including class, status and economics conflicts. Symbolic interactionism is a theory that seeks to explain the nature of people's perception about self. This perception is cited as being a social product that manifests itself as a purposeful and creative entity. Symbolic interactionism postulates that people gravitate towards entities that are based on the innate meaning held by those things; these meanings are obtained from social interaction and modified through interpretation. There are various conflicts going on in the world in which the above mentioned theories can be applied to analyze their cause and effect.

The war, in Syria, is a typical example of how differences in society can bring about conflict in a seemingly peaceful country (Goffman 228). The country descended into civil by means of an opposition movement that took up arms after the government illustrated its unwillingness to negotiate and agree on some common objectives. Syria has been under the leadership of a purported democratic system that is characterized flawed elections and dictatorship by one political family for decades. The application of conflict theory on the Syrian crisis would be enlightening because it addresses the principles and building blocks of the theory. The Syrian war is an uprising of the middle class against the ruling elite that is represented by Bashar al Assad's regime.

Syria's crisis is characterized by a middle class that has realized its rights as a people and the role that government is supposed to be playing as their benefactor and protector. This is in support of Collins' postulating that, "<https://assignbuster.com/conflict-vs-symbolic-interactionist-grudge-match/>

potential interests become effective to the degree that they are mobilized, relative to the mobilization of opposing interests” (Collins 211). This is in accordance with what happened in Syria, with the government standing its ground, and the opposition forwarding the same stance. According to Collins (98), “ every resource produces a potential conflict, between those who have it and those who have not” (Collins 98). The apparent oppression by the ruling elite in Syria in terms of economic and social status is an example of interests that spurred the conflict.

Erving Goffman is a sociologist who is an ardent supporter of the symbolic interactionism that advances the postulate that people give meaning to entities depending on the meaning accrued by the entities themselves. Subjective meanings are given priority because people act in accordance to their beliefs even if it not objectively true (Goffman 164). These interpretations could have played a key role in the development of the Syrian conflict. This is in the sense that Syrians’ perspective of their political leadership changed over time with respect to their leaders. The gradual partitioning of society into the high, middle and low class is not new aspect in society, but the difference becomes significant when these compete for resources. This creates a situation where the groups’ perceptions towards each other become ‘ cosmetic’ moving away from a mutualistic relationship. A majority of Syrians changed their political leadership changed for the worse, thus the witnessed conflict of interests and civil war.

#### Works Cited

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Goffman, Erving. Relations in public. Transaction Publishers, 2009. Print.