Course work on social conflict theory

Sociology, Bullying

Social Conflict Theory on the Family

Before engaging in any studies, researchers usually make assumptions which will act as a blueprint of their studies. Sociological perspectives are assumptions that sociologists make in the study of the family. In sociology, the essential approach is that the behavior of human beings is usually shaped by the groups it which individuals are part and the social interaction occurs in these groups. The major sociological perspectives include the symbolic perspective, conflict perspective, structural-functional perspective, feminist perspective as well as the social exchange perspective. Generally, the conflict perspective focuses on the constant conflicts that occur between classes and groups. Basically, the conflict theory in sociology has been linked to Karl Marx's works. Unlike the functionalists who believe " what is, is good", proponents of conflicts theory believe that " what is, is wrong." Introduction of the conflict theory was first made by Sprey in 1969. According to him, the family is a " system in conflict". He also argued that the basic reason for conflicts in the society is motivation of individuals to act according to their own interests, (Farrington & Chertok, 1993). This essay tries to analyze the conflict theory on the basis of the family.

According to the advocates of the conflict theory, live entails a friction. Based on this claim, the society is always seen as being divided with the existence of conflicts between individuals as well as groups. The family is depicted as social arrangement in which a group of individuals benefits more as compared to other members. In the context of the family, this theory confronts the argument that families are in agreement as an alternative to focusing on the capability of the family in tackling the conflicts, changes, as

well as differences that exist within the family. According to this theory, the family is seen as being in normal conditions, (Farrington & Chertok, 1993). Moreover, the vibrancy of the family can only be implicit by the identification of the roots of conflict as well as power.

Conflicts theorists assert that affection and love are very crucial elements in families and marriages. However, they also tend to agree that power and conflict are fundamental as well. Therefore, a family relationship is comprised of love and affection plus conflict and power. A family is made of individuals who have different personalities, values, goals, ideas, as well as tastes, (James & David, 2002). Arguably, each and every member of the family is not in good terms with the other members. Consider a scenario where a child argues with the parents over something. Conflict theorists argue that in this particular case, the child will always follow the instructions of the parents just because they have power over matters in the family, even though the child may not be comfortable.

It is believed that conflicts within the family are a crucial sector of the family and conflicts will always exist in this context. Conflicts takes different forms the first one being competition over power. The other cause of conflict is the competing goals of the family members. For example, the husband may be aspiring to own a radio while on the other hand; the wife may be aspiring to do kitchen shopping. Different role expectations can also be a source of conflicts in the family, (James & David, 2002). This is very common especially in families where both the husband and wife are working in formal jobs. In this case, the wife may propose that they divide housework evenly but the husband disagrees on the basis of gender roles. It should be noted that,

being a group of different people in terms of sex, age, as well as personalities; conflicts in the family are ordinary.

In order to avoid conflicts or rather to find solutions to conflicts when they occur in the family, mechanisms that enhance peaceful co-existence within the family should be put into place. The first mechanism is to ensure that there is better communication among the family members. Clear communication channels should be promoted which could facilitate consultation whenever an issue arises. Development of understanding and empathy is another strategy which should be promoted in an attempt to solve family conflicts. The last mechanism as per the conflict theorists is creating an environment in which individuals are motivated to change whenever they are in conflict with each other.

Finally, there a number of assumptions on which the conflict theory is based. The first assumption is that there will always be conflicts when individual interact. As such, there is no group or society that can exist without conflicts. The other assumption is that change and conflict are ordinary, omnipresent, and inevitable, (James & David, 2002). The third assumption is that conflict is endemic. This implies that the objective is to handle conflicts so that it does not go beyond levels that can lead to the separation of a group. The fourth assumption is that there is always scarcity of resources in the society. This is pillar on which the conflict theory is based more especially in the context of the family. The last assumption is that generally human societies is comprises of unstable degrees of naturally unequal elements.

References

Farrington, K., & Chertok, E. (1993). Social Conflict Theory. New York:

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References