

Readings

in Peace & Conflict Studies



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Table of Content

Section One: Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies

Chapter One: An Overview of Peace and Conflict Studies.....2

Chapter Two: The Conceptual Analysis of Peace and Conflict..5

Section Two: Analysis of Conflict

Chapter Three: Types and Causes of Conflict.....15

Chapter Four: Life Cycle of Conflict.....30

Chapter Five: The Sociological Dimension of Conflict.....42

Chapter Six: Psychological Dimension of Conflict.....62

Chapter Seven: Conflict Handling Techniques.....83

Chapter Eight: Gender and Conflict101

Section Three: Peace Process/Approaches to Peace

Chapter Nine: Non-Military Means to Conflict Resolution:
Negotiation, Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration.....122

Chapter ten: Military Means to Conflict Resolution:
Peacekeeping, Peace Enforcement and Peace
Building..... 155

Chapter Eleven: Post-Conflict Peace-Building.....168

Section Four: Proactive Measures in Achieving Peace-	
Chapter Twelve: The Nexus between Communication and Peace.....	195
Chapter Thirteen: Preventive Mechanism and Early Warning.....	212
Index.....	226

Chapter Five: Sociological Dimensions of Conflict

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Introduction

Unlike other social sciences, Sociology seeks to diagnose, explain, understand and solve practical problems that affects every aspect of individuals or groups social interactions and inter-relationships in the society. This perhaps explain why Sociology as a discipline is referred to as the 'queen of all sciences' (Andersen and Taylor, 2002). The interest of Sociology in engaging scientific approach to resolve social problems including conflicts confronting man in the society makes it more relevant and practical than theoretical. Essentially, man's society, be it the physical or non-physical remains the exclusive domain and laboratory of the Sociologists. Anywhere human beings are found in groups or large clusters such as communities, towns, cities, workplace, factory etc. remains a center of attraction and research focus to Sociologists. It is against this premise that this paper examines the concepts of Sociology, conflict, types, forms, dimensions, causes and the theoretical explanations of conflict on the basis of which conclusions are drawn for the paper.

The Concept of Sociology

Sociology was coined by the French philosopher - August Comte in 1837 from the Latin word "socio" (meaning society) and the Greek word "logy" which means science (Igbo, 2003). Simply put, Sociology is the scientific study of human societies. As a Social science discipline, Sociology seeks to understand how one activity or aspect of social life influences or impact on the other in a giving social milieu. Sociology

places more emphasis on human actions, activities and relationship which are social in nature. The major focus of Sociology is on the group rather than the individual that make up human societies. Sociologists are therefore interested in social interaction amongst groups, i.e. ways in which people act towards, respond to and influence one another. Sociologists concentrate on the group because human behaviour is largely shaped by the group to which people belong, be it primary, secondary, reference, In and Out-group. Typical examples include: a group of friends (clique), a University as in Covenant University (CU), organized private sectors such as the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA).

The Concept of Conflict

The concept of conflict has attracted much attention over the years. Scholars are of diverse views as regards the definition, causes and implications conflict have for a group, organizations and the society at large. In the literature, varied definitions of conflict abound. In this context, a few of such definitions are critically examined.

One of the earliest definitions of conflict was by Karl Marx (1818-1883). Marx defines conflict as resulting from divergent interests within a group and as a result of each group trying to pursue their own selfish interests which leads to disagreement and misunderstanding, hence conflict emerges. For Salem (1993), conflict is a state of tension that exists when one party perceives its goals, need, desires or expectations are being blocked by another party. On the other, Marvin (1968) in his writings, states that conflict can arise in any social situation in which two or more actors interact. In other words, Marvin view conflict as that which does occur when there is a discord or opposition between two or more actors within the process of social interaction. Burton (1987) on his part views conflict as an essential creative element in human relations. Burton like Marx concur that if conflict is suppressed, society will become static. Durham (1984) supports Burton's view that conflict is not always bad for groups or organizations, but can provide the needed change for organizations. The industrial revolution in Europe in

mid 19th century gave rise to the emergence of the science of society called 'Sociology' to provide explanations for the widespread societal transformations, social changes and conflicts that were taking place in the European society at that time. This perhaps informed Imobighe's (1993) definition of conflict as a condition of disharmony in an interactional process as a result of the pursuit of incompatible ends and the use of incompatible means to pursue desired goals by parties involved in an interactional process.

Common Types of Conflict

Conflict may take various forms and dimensions. In this section, the following : Political and Organisational conflict, Intellectual/Ideological conflict, cultural conflict, religious conflict, ethnic/racial conflicts and work and family conflicts are briefly described with relevant examples:

a. **Political and Organisational Conflict:** This kind of conflict may occur when there is a perceived opposition of value and interest between and among a social group. Johnson (1976) suggested that clashes between formal authority and power and those individuals involved and groups affected are practically inevitable. For instance, in an organizational and political setting, there are usually disputes over how revenues should be divided, how work should be allocated and done, and how long and hard people should work. There are also jurisdictional disagreement among individuals, departments and between unions and management. Johnson further identified subtler forms of conflict such as rivalries, jealousies, personality clashes, role definition, and struggle for power and favour.

b. **Intellectual/Ideological Conflict:** This could simply connote the clash of ideas and belief systems. Disagreements usually emanate from intellectual differences where one group may want to impose their own ideas and belief on another. This may more often than not lead to a clash of ideology. People may disagree over basic political or religious ideologies, people may also disagree based on intellectual discoveries. In fact, in the academia, various schools of thought that are usually in opposition exist. Intellectual and ideological conflict may not be viewed from a negative light so to speak because it usually leads to the

postulation and discoveries of more theories thereby creating room for further knowledge. Examples of clash in ideology include: the cold war, communism versus capitalism, functionalism versus Marxism, Islamic fundamentalism versus Christianity to mention a few.

c. Cultural conflict: Culture is fluid and dynamic, usually overlapping and adapting. Culture is a universal concept; it is found everywhere all around the world. Culture forms our belief systems, frames our perceptions, formulates our understanding and guides our actions and behaviours. It gives meaning and currency to our lives. Cultural conflict is a clash or struggle between two or more sets of cultural beliefs and values. It is when two different cultural orientations clash as a result of misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misrepresentation, a breach in cultural taboo or lack of conformity with cultural dictates and tradition. It could also be caused by a disrespect for another person's culture and tradition which might be viewed by the owners of the culture as a blasphemy or a sacrilegious offence. In the opinion of Fortier (2008), culture and conflict are inextricably linked. It however does not mean that cultural differences inevitably produce conflict. Fortier went further by saying that, when problems surface between or within cultures, it is often a response to difficulties in dealing with differences; whether it pertains to racial, religious, political, social or economic matters, difference is often a source of fear and misunderstanding. Examples of clashes in culture here in Nigeria include: the Ife-Modakeke conflict, the Ota and Owu clash, the Aguleri and Umuleri clash, the Tiv and Hausa/Fulani clash, communal clashes in Kaduna, Jos, and other parts of Northern Nigeria, the conflict among Ijaw, Urhobo and Itsekiri tribes and so on.

d. Religious conflict: Religion and conflict has been seen as a very controversial issue. Around the world, religion has been identified as both the cause of conflict and also as an important tool for conflict resolution. Hence, religion can be viewed as a major force for integration or marginalization (*Eynikel and Ziaka, 2011*). Recent events across the globe today have highlighted the misunderstanding and intolerance generated by the expression of religious belief. According to Hislop (2012), a major problem in our world today is our inability to live side by side as people of different faiths or no faith at all. There is religious

intolerance when members of the self acclaimed true religion proclaim in practice that persons they consider to be in error have no right to live, no legitimate political, social and economic amenities unless they renounce their error and be converted to the supposed true religious views and practices, (Ekwenife, 1993). Cases of these waves of religion violence abound, particularly here in Nigeria. The tension created over Sharia (Islamic law) issue in the late 1970s (Wambutda, 1978), the religious disturbances in Kano (1977, 1979, 1980), in Zaria (1981), in Maiduguri (1982), in Kaduna (1982), in Kano (1982), in Yola and in Gombe (1984): religious disturbances in Saki (Oyo state) and Ilori (Easter 1986), the OIC controversy (1986), the carnage in parts of Kaduna and Kano state (1987), and, the 1988 religious crisis in Kaduna Polytechnic (Osume, 1988) are all evidences of the religious bigotry of the Nigerian state. Other examples are the Bauchi religious crisis of 1991, Kaduna crisis of 2001, Jos religious crisis of 2001, the religious violence sparked by a blasphemous article on Prophet Mohammad (Punch November, 2002), the ethno-religious crisis of Yobe state in 2003, Kaduna crisis of 2004, Lagos crisis of 2004, Isale eko crisis of 2005, Kano and other northern states crisis of March 2008, recent Bauchi/Plateau crisis, and the very recent *Boko-Haram* religious disturbance, occasioned by suicide bombings, killings, arson and wanton destruction of lives and properties in certain parts of Nigeria constitutes issues of unresolved conflicts.

e. **Ethnic and Racial Conflict:** Many scholars have construed conflict along ethnic and racial lines as age-old and eternal. Ethnic clash is a clash between ethnic group often as a result of ethnic nationalism or ethnic hatred. Ethnic and racial conflict often results in hate crimes such as genocide. Many popular perceptions have suggested that ethnic hierarchies and conflict are inevitable when contacts occur between different races or ethnicities. Race and ethnic pluralism does not however in all cases lead to conflict. Examples of ethnic and racial conflict include: the annihilation of the Jews by the German Nazi, the clash between the Hutus and the Tutsies in Rwanda, and, the clash between the Hausa/Fulani and the Igbo in Western Nigeria.

f. **Work and Family Conflicts:** Work and family conflict is also known as work-home interference. According to Greenhaus & Beutell

(1985, p. 77), it is “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressure from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible so that participation in one role (home) is made more difficult by participation in another role (work)”. Given the demands of today's society and the need for most families to have dual wage earners, work and family conflict are inevitable (Nauert, 2011). Conflict between work and family may be associated with increased absenteeism, increased turnover, decreased performance and poorer physical and mental health. Some researchers have made a distinction between what is termed “work-family conflict” and “family-work conflict”. Accordingly, work-to-family conflict occur when experiences at work interferes with family life, for example: extensive, irregular or inflexible work hours, work overload and other forms of job stress. interpersonal conflict at work, extensive travel, career transitions, unsupportive supervisor etc. Family-to-work conflict on the other hand may results when experiences in the family interferes with work life like the presence of very young children, elder care responsibility, interpersonal conflict within the family unit, unsupportive family members and so on.

g. Forms of Conflict Several forms of conflict are identifiable in the literature. For the purpose of this paper, two (2) forms of conflicts: Violent Conflicts such as (Genocide, Revolution, Terrorism, War etc.) and Non-Violent Conflict (Peaceful demonstration, Strikes, Lock-out, Workto-rule etc) are briefly discussed with relevant examples. As the name implies, violent conflict involves the use of violent means, weapons or physical attack and assault of one's opponent resulting in physical injury, defacement and eventual death, of the victims as the case may be. The following examples gives a clearer picture of violent conflicts:

➤ Genocide: Genocide is a form of violent hate crime committed against humanity. It is a form of ethnic cleansing aimed at the total annihilation of a particular ethnic group or race. Ralph Lemkin (1944) has been credited for coining the term 'genocide' by combining the Greek word '*geno*' which means '*race*' or '*tribe*', with the Latin word

'cide' which means 'killing'. According to the United Nations convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide, genocide is an international crime and it has been defined as any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. As such, it could mean any of the following:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Source: UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article 2

Examples of acts of genocide that readily comes to mind include: the holocaust where between 11 and 17 million lives were cut short - 5,860,000 being Jewish; the Rwandan genocide of 1994 which claimed an estimated 800,000 people within a period of 100 days; the Bosnian genocide of 1995 where about 200,000 people were killed - 12,000 being children, about 50,000 women were raped, and around 2.2 million people were forced to flee their homes, the recent ongoing guerrilla conflict in Darfur where an estimated 50,000 to 400,000 casualties have been recorded; and to bring it home to here in Nigeria where thousands and thousands of lives have been lost thanks to the hate crimes of the Boko Haram.

➤ **Revolution:** Revolution simply connotes a sudden change, turnaround, overthrow or replacement. It can be seen as an act of rebellion. It could mean an overthrow and complete replacement of an established system of government or political system by the people governed. Revolution within this context could be brought about by a certain group of people agitating for a total and complete breakaway from an existing norm and social order. It could take the form of political upheaval or organizational structure change, and, more often than not, may occur as a result of dissatisfaction with the status-quo. Revolution is

sporadic: often accompanied by violence. Examples include: the Kosovo rebellion, the Egyptian revolution, the Iranian revolution, the Cuban revolution, the American revolution, the French revolution, the Biafran war saga and, several cases of coup-de-tat in Nigeria and other African countries before the advent of democracy. The current insurgencies in Northern Nigeria by the radical Islamic sect *Boko Haram* are good examples of revolution. In addition to these, the emergence of dissident groups within the nation such as the *Bakassi boys*, *Egbesu boys*, the *Odu'a People's Congress (OPC)*, the *MASSOB*, *MEND*, the *AREWA* of the North and the militant group of the Niger Delta area are all as a result of dissatisfaction with the status-quo.

➤ **Terrorism:** Terrorism is another form of violent conflict. It is the unofficial or unauthorized use of violence and acts of intimidation in pursuit of political aims. According to the United States Department of Defense, terrorism is "the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological." Notable in this definition are three key elements -violence, fear and intimidation- and each of them is often targeted at producing fear and terror in its victims. For the United Nations, terrorism is seen as "An anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby-in contrast to assassination - the direct targets of violence are not the main targets" (UN, 1992). Several examples of acts of terrorism abound here in Nigeria and in other parts of the world. For instance, in Nigeria, the kidnapping of innocent people in the Niger-delta region for ransom is an act of terrorism. The incessant bombings of churches and the wanton wastage of thousands of human lives and properties in the tune of millions by the *Boko Haram* sect is an act of terrorism. The 9/11 attack on the US is another quick example that rightly comes to mind. Other examples include the apartheid orchestrated terrorism, aircraft hijacking, hostage taking, acts of dictatorship by power hungry African leaders, etc.

➤ **War:** A scholar once said “war is synonymous to bloodshed”, meaning that, anytime there is an outbreak of war, there will always be loss of lives and violent deaths. It has been observed that women and children bear the greatest burden of war because of their vulnerability. War is a state of total absence of peace and tranquility that has hitherto characterized a social system. It is a form of armed conflict and it could ensue between individuals and groups, organizations, communities, ethnic/racial groups, and nations that are at loggers' head as a result of clash in ideology, values or interest. War is a state of competition, struggle, antagonism and unrepentant hostility. It is usually characterized by prolonged extreme aggression, social disruption and high mortality rates. It can be said that conflict is inevitable since human interactions are done in dyads, there will always be a clash of interest and ideology that could lead to disagreements and ultimately, war. Our ability to resolve conflict is however what makes us rational social beings. Several instances of war abound all around us and there are several that are actually ongoing. There is the World War 1 and 11, there is the cold war, Vietnam war, the Nigerian civil war, the Ife-Modakeke crisis, the crisis between the Aguleri and Umuleri communities in Anambra state, the Tiv and Hausa/Fulani clash, communal clashes in Kaduna, Jos, and other parts of Northern Nigeria, the conflict among Ijaw, Urhobo and Itsekiri tribes and so on. Currently, we have ongoing war in Burma, Columbian conflict, war in Afghanistan, Somali civil war, Al-Qaeda insurgency in Yemen, war in North-west Pakistan, Mexican drug war, Sudan internal conflict, Syrian civil war, Iraqi insurgency, Libyan conflict and Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On the other hand, Non-violent conflict refers to using non-violent means to drive home the points, make ones requests or dissatisfaction known to concerned authorities for probable action or intervention. Some non-violent means of conflict examined in this section includes:

➤ **Strike Actions:** A strike is simply when a large number of workers stop working in protest. It is a collective, organized cessation or slowdown of work by employees to force acceptance of their demands by their employer. It is a non-violent means of airing one's opinion without causing any bodily harm or injury to another person. It is a form

of organized protest usually carried out by employees as a kind of subtle act of refusal to do something. A strike action is therefore a work stoppage caused by the mass refusal of employees to work. It is also known as labour strike and it usually take place as a result of employee grievances. Strikes are occasionally used to pressure government to change policies, for example - the nation-wide strike that took place at the beginning of the year 2012 (Occupy Nigeria) when the oil subsidy was removed by the Jonathan Goodluck administration. Fashoyin (1992) states that when properly used, strike can compel management to concede the demand of the union in addition to effecting a change in the structure of bargaining. Strikes are usually orchestrated by a labour union to get better pay, hours or better working conditions. According to Yesufu (1982) most of the causes of labour discontents and strikes in Nigeria are the same as elsewhere and relate to various aspects of wages, irregular payments, illegal deduction, etc) wrong dismissals, poor conditions of service and hostile management.

➤ **Lock-outs:** Lock-out is the direct opposite of strike. A lockout is a temporary work stoppage by an employer in which an employee is denied access into a working environment by the employer and it is usually initiated by the management of a company or organization. It is usually implemented by simply, refusing to admit employees onto company premises. The employer or management may adopt such means as changing the locks or hiring security guards to keep employees off the company premises. While employees uses strike actions to ask for increased wages and favourable working conditions, employers utilizes a lockout to enforce their terms of employment upon their employees. So, employers of labour usually utilizes the threats of lockouts to force labour unions to accept changed conditions such as lower wages, increased working hours and so on. Lockouts have been used in the past by employers of labour to force labour unions to back down on their strike protests.

➤ **Peaceful demonstrations:** Peaceful demonstration is another type of non-violent conflict that is done in form of a rally or a public march expressing dissatisfaction on a particular issue. It is a kind of street

protest embarked upon by a mass group of people with the sole aim of airing their views about a subject matter. It is a public exhibition of the attitude of a group toward a controversial issue or other matter. It usually involves walking in a mass march formation and it may begin with a meeting at a designated place. Such actions as road blockages, carrying of placards, picketing, parading and sit-ins may also be referred to as demonstrations. Peaceful demonstrations if not well managed could spread and turn into a full blown riot. Example of peaceful demonstration is the "occupy Nigeria" rally that held for about three days after the removal of the fuel subsidy.

➤ **Work-to-rule:** This is an industrial action whereby employees engage in not more than the minimum required by the rules of their contract. Employees that engage in work-to-rule action follow safety and other regulations specifically in order to cause a slowdown. Work-to-rule is usually contrasted with a strike action the sense that, workers do not completely withdraw their labour like they do during a strike action. Instead, they stay on their job but drastically slow down their operations by engaging in a narrow interpretation of work rules included in the collective bargaining power. Many consider such action less disruptive than a strike or a lockdown. Examples of work-to-rule include: refusal to work overtime, refusal to travel on duty, refusal to sign up to other tasks assigned etc.

Be it violent or Non-violent forms of conflict, conflict is still conflict and could have its impact on the society either negatively or positively.

Positive Outcomes of Conflict

Durham (1984) supports Burton's (1997) view that conflict is not always bad for groups or organizations. It implies that conflict is not always negative or inimical to progress and development. Some positive outcomes of conflict identified in the literature include:

- (i) Organizational Change
- (ii) Increased group cohesion
- (iii) Cooperation
- (iv) Creative New Ideas

(V) Serve important group function

On the other hand, when conflict occurs and is not properly managed, it may escalate resulting into some negative outcomes such as:

- i) Decreased Performance
- ii) Decreased Cohesion
- iii) Decreased Satisfaction
- iv) Sabotage
- V) Physical Aggression etc.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Conflict

Conflict is acknowledged as an inevitable occurrence in any social interaction and several attempts have been made at explaining its existence. One of such attempts is a theoretical proposition that is of the view that there are groups within the social structure that have differing interests. Conflict theorists therefore are of the opinion that social arrangements tend to benefit some groups in the society that have different interests and that some social arrangements will tend to benefit some groups at the expense of others. Because of the existence of these clashing interests, the potential and likelihood of conflict is always present (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008).

The conflict theory according to Heather Zarka (2007) has three components:

- a. Conflict is a common and ongoing feature of society; in fact, conflict is the most basic feature of social life.
- b. Society is made up of various social groups who have conflicting values and interests.
- c. All societal conflict occurs between dominant and subordinate social groups who are in constant competition over resources.

Furthermore, according to Lepird et al (no date), conflict theory emphasizes the following:

- Resentment and hostility are constant elements of society.
- Emphasis on power differences among social classes.
- Special *interest groups* fight over scarce resources of society.
- Competition puts society off-balance until dominant group gains control and stability through power.

The conflict perspective was developed in the late 18th and 19th centuries and is primarily associated with the works and writings of Karl Marx and Max Weber (Zarka, 2007). Conflict theories arose primarily as a reaction against structural functionalism. The theory attempts to refute functionalism which considers societies and organization as a unifying whole with each part functioning and performing specific role for the society like organs in the body. The basic elements of conflict theory was by two Sociologists: Karl Marx and Max Weber as discussed briefly in the next section.

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Karl Marx was one of the most influential social thinkers of his time. Karl Marx was a German philosopher, economist, sociologist, historian, journalist and revolutionary socialist whose ideas are still relevant in today's society. Marx's work was devoted to explaining how capitalism shaped society. His writings centered majorly on economic determinism. Marx used a class analysis to explain capitalism, describing capitalism as a system of relationship among different classes. Marx identified the existence of two (2) different classes (Upper and Lower) in every society with divergent interests. For him, the upper class are the propertied class, owners of the means of production and the bourgeoisie. In spite of the fact that members of the upper class are usually very few, they control the economy, owns the big businesses and employ the ever growing teeming population (labour) to work for them. As Capitalists, their primary aim is to maximize profits even if it requires exploitation of the workers to achieve their goal. The workers or labourers in their large numbers sell their labour to the capitalist who decides what to pay. Because the supply of labour far outweighs the demand, the workers are obliged to work for meager resources to the advantage of the bourgeoisies. In his view, the capitalist class owns the means of production- the system by which goods are produced and distributed. To say that the capitalists class owns the means of production does not just mean that it owns property, but also that it owns the system by which wealth is accumulated the factories and machineries where goods are produced, the ships, railroads, and airlines by which goods are distributed, the banks and financial institutions by which profits are managed and the communication systems by which

ideas supporting capitalist values are being disseminated. In Marx's view therefore, the central goal of capitalist endeavor is profit, and this is generated through the exploitation of the working class. Workers sell their labour in exchange for wages, while capitalists make certain that wages are worth less than the goods the workers produce (Andersen and Taylor, 2002). This according to Marx formed the basis of social conflict and class struggle within every human society.

Max Weber (1864-1920)

Max Weber was a German sociologist and political economist who was best known for his work on the "Protestant Ethics and the spirit of capitalism". Max was greatly influenced by Karl Marx's work. Like Marx, Weber saw people's activities as largely self interested in material and wealth acquisition. The ways in which these interests are pursued generates various types of conflicts that abound in the society. For Marshall (1998), conflict is a normal aspect of social life, rather than conceiving it as abnormal or dysfunctional occurrences. Whereas, Max saw economics as the basic organizing element of society, Weber theorized that society had three basic dimensions namely: political, economic and cultural. For Weber, a complete sociological analysis must recognize the interplay between economics, political and cultural institutions (Parsons, 1947). Weber therefore developed a multidimensional analysis of society thereby going beyond Marx's one dimensional focus on economic determinism (Andersen and Taylor, 2002). While Weber agreed with Marx that economics played a central role in power distinction, he however believed in two other factors which he introduced:

- a. Social prestige (status). For instance, someone could be poor and still hold a lot of power because of social prestige e.g. mother Theresa
- b. Political influence. For instance, there are some politicians who have great power but do not earn a big salary.

Weber differentiated between power and authority. According to him, power is the ability to impose one's will on another even when the other objects, while authority is legitimized power; used with the consent of the ruled.

To Weber therefore, the distribution of power and authority is the basis of Social conflict. For him, if subordinates believe in an authority, conflict

would be avoided, but if an authority is not recognized as legitimate, conflict would result.

10. Causes of Conflict

Conflict is any social situation may have varied root cause or cause(s). It is however not limited to the following:

a.) Unequal distribution of resources be it natural, human or financial may lead to conflict among individuals or a group of people. The manner in which financial resources for instance are distributed to individuals or groups can generate conflict. For instance, issue of budgeting and resource allocation at different levels (Local, State and Federal) may spark off un-ending conflicts resulting to breakdown of law and order or other, destruction of lives and properties among the disgruntled group.

b.) Competition for the scarce resources always ensues between different parties. Competition over scarce resources (money, property, power, sexual partners for example) is at the heart of all social relationships. Essentially, human relationships are characterized by conflicts rather than consensus.

c.) Biases/stereotypes describes a pre-conceived judgment and treatment of a group or people. A subjective way of thinking leading to perceiving, treating and judging others as inferior often times generate conflicts between different parties or groups.

d.) Discrimination - leading to denial of access to rights, power and resources has fuelled many conflicts in modern society. In some culture in Nigeria, female children are often discriminated against in property sharing and sometimes outright denial leading to enmity and pending conflicts. Also, the historic Aba women's riot of 1929 was a by-product of perceived discrimination of tax imposition by warrant chiefs on women traders in Aba and neighbouring communities during the colonial rule. The affected women saw it as a means to further impoverish them, thus, they resisted vehemently even though by using non-violent means of "sitting on the Warrant" meaning following the Warrant Chiefs everywhere they went until they headed to the women's request of no tax at all.

e.) Distrust - Often breeds lack of confidence in a person, leader, group's ideologies or system leading to antagonistic relationships.

disrespect for existing rules/policies and consequent conflicts. For instance decamping of members of political party A to another may be traceable to issues of distrust and unresolved conflicts among party members.

Concluding Remarks

Sociology as scientific discipline is interested in conflict studies because conflict is part and parcel of every human society. Conflict is inevitable because it is integral to any human social interaction. Besides, it is a necessary element for birthing change in societies. Even though conflict cannot be totally eradicated in the society or among individuals and groups with opposing viewpoints, it can be checked and reduced to the barest minimum. Scholars are of the opinion that the cost of conflict far outweighs the benefits. When violent means of conflicts such as bombings, assassinations, arson, genocides and wars for instance are used as we currently observe in some countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Libya where several lives and properties worth billions of dollars have been destroyed, the cost of nation re-building and compensation usually takes its toll on the national budget of the affected country or people and by implication, development suffers.

Even though conflict has been found to be inevitable in any human interaction or collectivity, it may be practically impossible to totally eradicate it among groups with divergent interests. Imobighe (1993) notes that the conflict resolution technique adopted by the parties depend on the specific goals they want to pursue at the negotiating table. Parties that are interested in promoting peaceful relations are usually more inclined to exploring non-coercive and mutually beneficial techniques which will lead to a "win win" outcome. It is therefore important that both parties arrive at a compromise and utilize peaceful mechanisms in resolving such conflicts when and if they do occur.

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