

# Theoretical Foundation of Social Conflict Research New Points of View and Fields of Research

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## 1. Introduction

Social conflicts of certain kind of levels and forms arising from social differences and inequalities and interweave deeply the everyday life. They (can) show in their form, manifestation and effects a close correlation to the social well-being (or to the lack of it). In spite of this, a more thorough examination of these questions, based also on theoretical and empirical work, cannot be considered as a systematic, coherent research program, neither in the national nor in the international sociological research.

This can be explained by at least three fundamental problems. Firstly, the term of social conflict is unexplained, plastic and has different interpretations, which makes it difficult working with it. Secondly, the conflict theory, as a fundamental sociological and social paradigm, has lost significantly from its function of inducing and guiding research, in the last three decades. Additionally, it has reached out its theoretical “arms” in form of mosaic-like, postmodern theories in a lot of directions, causing further difficulties on the level of empirical research. The third problem is that there are surprisingly only a few quantitative researches about the different forms, characteristics and effects of social conflicts on the level of individuals, households or the whole society.

The focus of a current research project is on conflicts, which arise from socio-economic inequalities and have an effect on social life. This question will be examined with a nationwide, representative, large sample survey (N = 2031 persons) in five conflict dimensions (conflicts in private life–social life, regional–place of residence, labour market–income, power–institution) on the level of the individual, group and the whole society. Therefore, it is a particularly important step to overview the above mentioned theoretical problems. The foundation of this process can be from our previously published research papers about this subject matter (Csizmadia 2007;

Csizmadia 2009). In these works, without claiming to be exhaustive, the following topics have been reviewed: the most important questions about the term social conflict, the different conceptual approaches (Boudon 1998; Collins 1974; Coser 1956; Cseh-Szombathy 1985; Turner 1982), the basic principles of conception method of conflict theory in the sociology, laid down by Dahrendorf (1959), possible forms and types of conflicts, the basic principles of classifying and the positive and negative functions of social conflicts. Based on these conclusions, in this paper the new developments, the new interpretations of conflicts and tendencies from the last decade will be summarised.

## **2. A few new basic points of the conflict-theoretical approaching method**

The first problem is the immensely far-reaching, complex and often controversial characteristic of the term and the theoretical framework. Thus, it is worth starting the conceptual foundation with an overview of thematisation and placement of the concept on the meta-theoretical level by today's social theory.

Conflict theory used to be connected with Marxist and neo-Marxist theories, which appeared as a reaction to the functionalist and positivist theoretical traditions. On the contrary, in the paradigm system of today's social science this perspective can rather be described as a conceptual, theoretical network of much more complex, interconnected theoretical fields. An approach on conflict theoretical foundation is also applied by the followers of the critical theory, the feminist theory, the postmodern theory, the post-structuralist theory, the post-colonial theory, the world-systems theory, the queer theory - only to mention the largest theoretical fields.

A consequence of this is the problem that the paradigmatic baselines, which can be regarded as the common core of the conflict theoretical approach, have been significantly disarranged since the classical period and it can be very difficult to unite them as a uniform guiding principle. Only a few common points remained, which can be used as a kind of sound basis for empirical researches with such focus. Alan Sears (2008: 34-36) has pointed out the prominent role of the following common theoretical corner points as a pre-hypothesis in his study:

- The societies can be apprehended in the form of conflicts caused by inequalities and not as a guardian of order and consensus. Social inequalities lead inevitably to conflicts. Therefore, this can be regarded as the fundamental characteristics of social organizations, contrary to stability and harmony.
- Conflicts caused by inequalities can be solved by transformation of today's social relationships solely up to the bases. Thus, the new social relationships and interactions can be only developed by conflicts.
- The structural interest of social groups, which are currently at disadvantage, is to intervene against the ruling conditions, which is in this way one of the important driving forces of social changes and transformations. In this sense, those groups, which are suppressed, excluded and at a disadvantage have to be treated as active agents and not as passive subjects of sympathy and compassion.
- No talk about real social consensus is possible. As a matter of fact, the dominant groups are able to enforce and to make the majority accept their conceptions, interests, ideology and even discourses.
- A theory is not just a neutral tool of explanation or a sequence of thought to maintain and legitimate the current social establishment, but it has also critical characteristics and it is also an active component, which brings human potential to the fullest and move the society to change (to transfer) (Sears 2008: 34-36).

Thus, the key terms are inequalities, conflict, change, new social relations, active agent, suppression masked as consensus, critical attitudes... etc. A similar theoretical basic concept appears in the work of Sanderson (2007: 662). He makes a distinction between four fundamental presuppositions of the conflict theory:

- The conflict or fight is the essence and substantial component of social life because it develops among individuals and groups, which have different interests and/or competition with each other for the scarce resources.
- A lot of different kind of competitions and conflicts can be observed in our everyday life. Primarily, the power and the economic resources are the main sources of conflicts.
- A conflict appears typically as a few individuals or groups influence and control others.
- The dominant groups have a particular influence on the distribution of the resources and on the development/transformation of the structure of the whole society (Sanderson 2007: 662).

The presuppositions, which can be considered as a common base, demonstrate the fundamental relationship system behind the arising problems in this research: economic and social inequalities create social conflicts, which fundamentally influence everyday social interactions on the level of individuals, families, communities and larger groups and institutions as well. Therefore, the perception of inequalities and social conflicts and the examination of attitudes towards them have an important role because by this also the factors behind the present forms of social behaviour can be understood better.

### **3. The theoretical position of conflict theory and problem fields in conflict**

In the last two decades, disintegration of a conflict theoretical approach or its integration and/or absorption in other theoretical approaches can be observed. The goal with this overview of a few new and crucial standard works is to show, according to the newest, relevant reference materials, how the question of social conflicts is thematised in professional discourses.

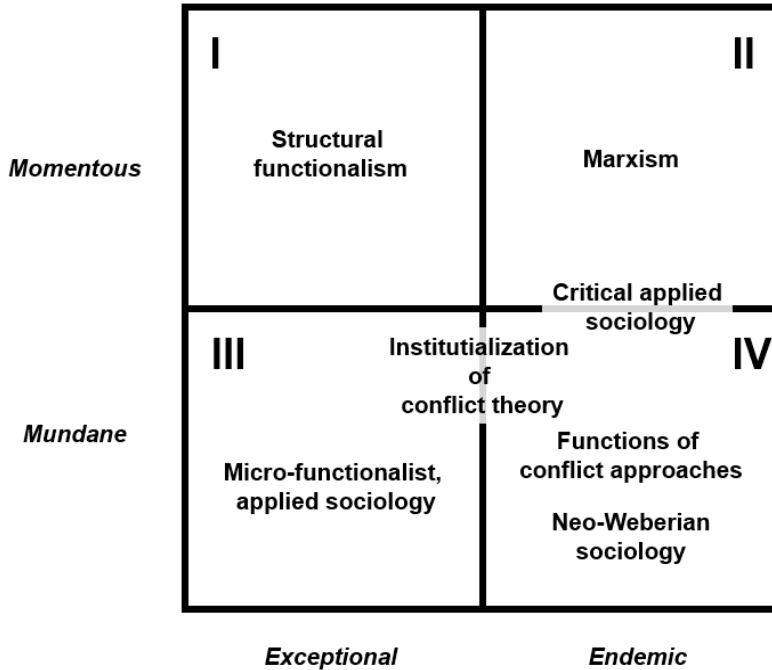
In the new encyclopaedia of social theory (Ritzer 2005) Jonathan H. Turner wrote the entry about conflict theory (Turner 2005: 134-139). Turner distinguishes three main classical fields of conflict theory. These fields are the Neo-Marxism, the Neo-Weberianism and the Historical Comparative field. These fields have, however, flourished in the seventies, based on their critical reflexions on the functional paradigm. According to his point of view, conflict theory became insomuch a part of the mainstream of social theory (mainstream theory) that there is no need to hang an extra label on this theory. This can be called even as dissolution by integration. In fact, as the central core or basis of the most theoretical fields, the position can be considered that social inequalities play a crucial role in understanding and analysis of the allocation of different resources. Also, the issues of social tensions and conflicts on the individual, group, institutional and communal level, arising from these social inequalities, are inevitable parts of theories these days. This new position is illustrated properly by the time interval of the referred literature of the entry, which is almost exclusively from the sixties and seventies. The list of the other entries in the encyclopaedia in connection with this topic, regarding the main connection points

is also remarkable: globalization, historical-comparative theory, power, revolution, social class, theory of social movements, state and world-system theory.

The comprehensive sociological interpretation of these problems can be found in the newest international encyclopaedia of social and behavioural sciences (Smelser – Baltes 2001) under the entry „conflict sociology“ (Crouch 2001). Also Crouch talks about the disintegration and disappearance of the labelled conflict sociology around the millennium. The interpretation of conflicts in western sociology has headed these days, according to his perception, towards regarding conflicts as a fundamental component of social relationships and not as a specific, particular aspect of social life. The more appear conflicts as normal and everyday incidents, the more will be pushed a specific theory, which focuses on them, into the background. This conclusion will also be confirmed by his classification of the fields of conflict theory (Crouch 2001: 2555).

According to Crouch there is a conflict on the most general level, if the interests of two or more social actors cannot be reconciled; this is the base of the conflict as a social relationship. However, on the theoretical level, these relationships can be decomposed into four larger dimensions with the use of two basic “variables”. A difference can be made between conflicts of considerable importance (momentous) and everyday, daily (mundane) conflicts, or they can be perceived as extraordinary (exceptional), occasionally or widely spread (endemic) conflicts. As a consequence of these, the theories, dealing with conflicts, have to make two fundamental choices. On the one hand, a decision has to be made about whether normal social life is burdened with conflicts or those conflicts are only exceptional, individual incidents, which arise from the inappropriate functioning of the society. Thus, the existence or even the lack of conflicts can be regarded as a pathological case? On the other hand, it also has to be considered, whether the occurring conflicts will be approached primarily as a momentous event of considerable importance or as a mundane incident, which is a part of everyday life. From this, a four-cell matrix can be drawn, which is a heuristic tool of visualization of the positions and focuses of the different fields (Figure 1).

Figure 1: System of the main conflict theoretical fields



Source: Crouch 2001: 2555.

These days the interpretation of conflicts has been shifted towards the corner of cell IV, which can be treated as the neo-Weberian sociological tradition. This became the dominant approach of the Western sociology regarding the theoretical understanding of meaning, forms, characteristics and effects of social conflicts.

The relevant entries of the encyclopaedia are expressive also in this case, regarding the hubs in which the issues of social conflicts emerge out of the network of professional clouds of the problems of social sciences: conflict management, social psychology of conflicts, conflict and war, archaeology and anthropological aspects of conflicts, conflict and consensus, organisational conflicts, psychology of cooperation and competition, ethnical conflicts, racial and gender differences, violence, sociology of war.

For an interpretation of conflicts within sociology, the best starting point can be the new Blackwell encyclopaedia (Ritzer 2007). In this approach, the comparison of the two main schools (neo-Marxism and neo-Weberianism) plays the main role. Additionally, the questions of conflicts

regarding stratification, class antagonism, crime, racial and ethnical conflicts, dependency theories and the critical theory will be presented in form of separate entries. According to Stephen K. Sanderson (the author of the entry), conflict theory is alive and it flourishes these days too. It is an important field of the modern sociology and many sociologist approach social questions within this framework (Sanderson 2007: 665).

To decide about how true this statement is, however, the questions of social conflicts have to be put in a broader perspective. Accordingly, it is worth overviewing in which areas of the sociology interpretation of conflicts plays a role these days and with which professional fields the study of conflicts can be combined.

#### **4. The main research fields of social conflicts these days**

For answering the question, the new sociological encyclopaedia, previously referred to, will be applied (Ritzer 2007). In this work, with more than 5000 pages, there are altogether 70 entries for the combination of words „social conflict“ and 1768 entries for the expression „conflict“. Thus, almost every third page on average has an occurrence. The purpose of the analysis of the content is to find out the topics, in connection with which the expression “conflict” appears and to detect the research areas of sociological examination of social conflicts, through this.

The first surprising thing is that there are only very few references in form of entries, in the work of 10 volumes, to the social conflicts. The expression “conflict” appears only in the titles of eight entries, as the encyclopaedia deals with the more important conflict-research fields, which are popular these days:

- conflict theory
- theory of crime and conflicts
- family conflicts
- inter-generation conflicts
- world conflicts
- class conflicts
- racial and ethnical conflicts
- stratification: theories based on functionalism and conflicts

On the contrary, considering the whole content of the encyclopaedia, a picture of a research field, which is indeed very wide-ranging, can be seen (Figure 1). After having overviewed the more than 1500 entries, the more important and relevant points have been highlighted. The disintegration

effect, previously introduced, which is the final integration of the aspects of conflicts in the social discourse, has already taken place. Therefore, it is in fact difficult to highlight a specific area (probably besides the theoretical line of research), which would require a separate labelling. The list below confirms the assumption that research of conflicts does not mean the analysis from the perspective of a specific theoretical and methodological school, but the conceptual and methodological emphasis of and distinguished interest on a social phenomenon and the resulting problems and furthermore the systematic research of appearance and role of conflicts in social organizations.

*Table 1: The most important topics and questions of conflict research, these days*

1. Absence - as a potential source of conflicts in the workplace and in organisations
2. Living conditions - an appropriate accommodation reduces conflicts
3. Aggression - conflicts within groups
4. Ageing - being at the mercy of sb./sth., conflicts resulting from dependency
5. Alliances, coalitions - reduction of conflicts between groups
6. Anti-Semitism - religious conflicts
7. Anti-war and peace movements - violence, armed conflicts
8. Assimilation - reduction of violent conflicts within groups
9. Benefit zone and victimized zone - particular social spaces: in the explanation of conflicts and the difficulty of consensus, areal and environmental conflicts
10. Multicultural and multilingual education - school conflicts
11. Bio-sociological theories - biological determination of conflicts, how the ecological environment affects the interaction patterns of conflicts between the actors
12. Capitalism - reducing trend of conflicts, increasing willingness to cooperate
13. Change management - running out of conflicts and possibilities of reconciliation
14. Protection of children - treatment of conflicts within the family, conflict between parents
15. Social classes - conflicts between classes, conflicting class interests, class-consciousness, class relations and power
16. A potentially conflict-laden characteristics of collective actions, identity, memory and trauma
17. Collective conflicts
18. Racial and ethnic conflicts
19. Crime and deviation - causes, reasons and consequences
20. Critical theory - conflicts between classes, political conflicts, conflicts of power
21. Environmental pollution - effects on everyday life, health damage

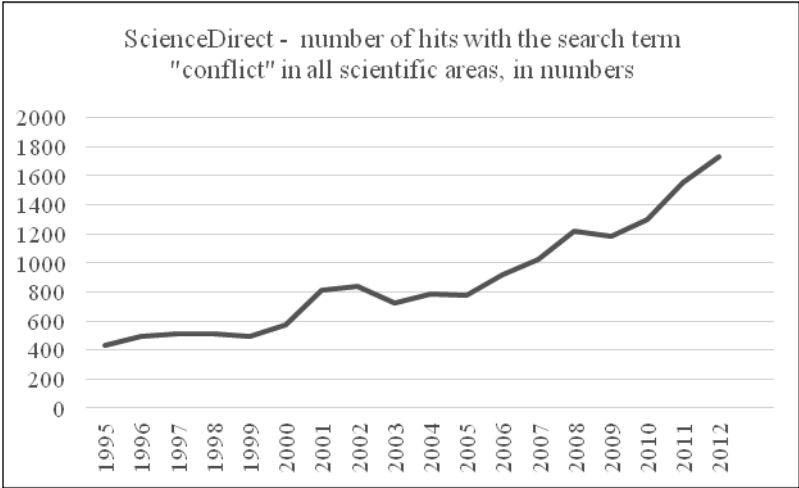


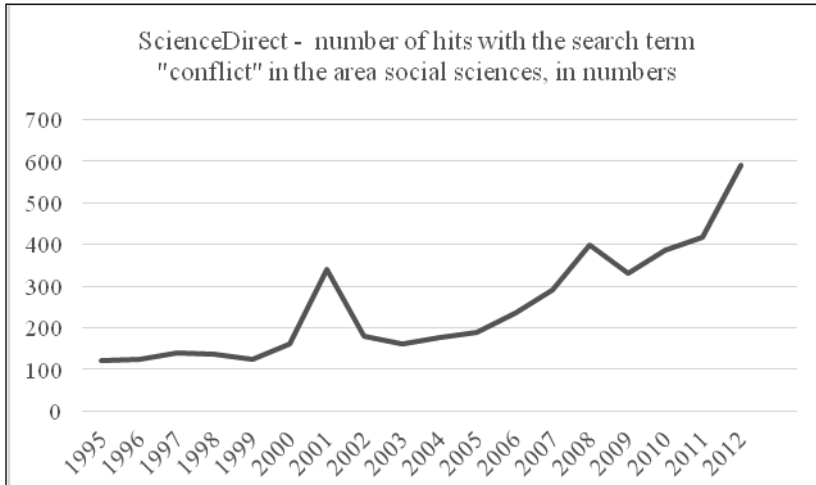
22. Deviant forms of behaviour, unlawful behaviours, causes and consequences of deviation
23. Problems, conflicts resulting from social division of labour
24. Diad / triad – the fundamental components of social relationships and mechanisms
25. Ecological problems – the relationship of environment and economy
26. Ethnical, minority conflicts, ethnical enclaves, ethnical groups
27. Migration, refugee problem, spatial mobility
28. Cultural conflicts, ethnocentrism
29. Conflicts within the family, new family models, family structure, division of labour, role conflicts
30. Feminist theories, movements
31. Gay and lesbian movements
32. Gender issue, gender inequalities and differences (gender bias)
33. Inter-generation conflicts, generation change, mobility, ageing, gerontology
34. Conflicts from globalisation
35. Education, training – reproduction of social inequalities
36. Relationship of social inequalities and conflicts
37. Genetic experiments and genetic engineering – as social problems and the accompanying conflicts
38. Group theories – in-group, out-groups, group cohesion
39. Crime: lack of sense of security, fear of crime, sense of danger
40. Leader-subordinate relationship, conflicts in workplace, sub- and superordinated relationships
41. Marginalisation, liminality, exclusion, barred persons and groups
42. Market – as the area of power and conflict, exclusiveness, monopoly
43. Media research – social role, function and effect of media, publicity
44. Organisational conflicts
45. Post-industrial society, postmodern conceptions of society
46. Mobilization, activation – social changes, protest, social movements
47. Racial, ethnical, minority consciousness – identity, minority politics
48. Theories of resource-mobilization
49. Hazard, risk – risks and damages generated by society and their effect
50. Role conflicts – Role theories (role taking)
51. Scapegoating
52. Social movements and networks – tensions, dissatisfaction, representation of interests, for/against inequalities, suppression...etc.
53. Transition – political transformation, economy in transition, transformation of political and social system
54. Urbanization – as the source and hotbed of social conflicts, city conflicts, suburbanization conflicts
55. Global conflicts, sociology of war, violence

*Source: Ritzer 2007.*

The more and more intensive embedment of conflict research in the mainstream of social science studies can also be easily followed in the dynamic growth of the published publications. According to the online catalogue of ScienceDirect ([www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)), the growth of the number of such kind of publications has been significant in the last two decades. While searching titles of publications, which contain the terms “conflict” or “social conflict”, the results are shocking. There are more than 11 million publications altogether in the database. For the search term “conflict” (in title, keyword or abstract) there were 22,259 hits in June 2013, considering all fields of science. From these 5,122 were published before 1994. This value is equivalent to 23 percent of all papers. Thus, three-quarter of the publications of the online catalogue were written in the last two decades. From all of the publications 6,314 (28%) belong to the area of the social sciences and a dynamic growth can be observed here, similar to the whole statistical series, which include all scientific areas (Figure 2). While at the beginning of the nineties, only 100-150 publications with such topics has been published every year, there were already 400 papers, on the average, each year in the last five years.

Figure 2: Appearance of the term “conflict” in title, key words or abstract





Source: [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com) – June 2013

However, in the case of the term „social conflict“ a radical decrease can be observed in the hits. There are altogether 327 publications in the ScienceDirect database with the term “social conflict” in the titles or in the abstract. This means 15-20 publications annually. According to the figures, it can also be seen, how sensitive the research area is, regarding fast interpretation of larger processes with global impact (see the extreme values of the years 2001 and 2008).

Thus, the statistical series clearly confirm that the research of social conflicts has not fallen into the background. Moreover, those assumptions according to which the problem field is basically integrated in the conceptual-theoretical and methodological-empirical practice of the research fields and approaches of the sociology and other social sciences are confirmed.

## 5. The conceptual framework of the social problem

The conflict based approach, focusing on the social conflicts, means in a broader sense, also a kind of problem sensitivity because of the larger emphasize on the social challenges. The manifestation of conflicts namely is the reason or the consequence of some social difficulties. As a result of the above mentioned the social problems behind or as a consequence of the conflicts can be considered as the broader subject of the examination.

A social problem can be defined probably in the most general way that it is a socially constructed condition, based on objective facts and subjective feelings, goes through individual and collective considerations, which jeopardizes and undermines the well-being and the expected or targeted quality of life of a few, more or even all members of the society. It can also be defined in form of appearance of specific, immediate damages and disadvantages or in form of narrowing down of chances, opportunities or choices (Macionis 2012). The interpretation of social problems, as a result of their constructed, often contradictory, characteristic, based on objective and subjective fundamentals can be illustrated in form of a complex matrix with four cells. According to the objective effect of the problems (how many people are truly affected) and the subjective judgement (feeling as being problematic), the social conditions and phenomena can be classified into four groups, from which three (A, B, C) are classified clearly as a kind of problem (Table 2).

Table 2: Types of social problems according to their constructional characteristic and effect

		Considered subjectively as a very serious problem	
		Yes	No
It causes serious damages to many people	Yes	A e.g. Suicide	B e.g. Use of car
	No	C e.g. Shooting in the school	D e.g. Using Ipod

Source: Macionis 2012. 5

Thus, problems occurring in our social life are social constructions, which depend on the scale of values and the knowledge level of that specific society. Furthermore, problems also depend on the knowledge of the objective effects, the manifestation of the subjective opinions and they can change, take form and cease to exist in course of time. The sociological approach of social problems is based on various, basic principles, which are clearly laid down (Macionis 2012: 7-8). The most important principles are that: 1) problems are always the consequences of the structure and functioning of a society and the consequence of this is that 2) problems are not caused by “bad people” and they cannot be simplified as the consequences of actions of bad, antisocial, weak...etc. people. 3) They are social constructions, since people are the ones, who qualify a condition as harm-

ful and as ready for change. Moreover, 4) there is no uniform, objective basis of the interpretation of problems, people see problems differently, therefore most of such kind of questions are accompanied by contradictions. 5) The definition and thematisation of problems also changes in the course of time, each age-group see the social problems differently. 6) The interpretation of problems is based not only on objective facts, but it also includes subjective values and interests. Moreover, 7) many – but fortunately not all – social problems cannot even be solved and in many cases 8) these are connected and interact with each other. These eight basic principles summarize practically the presuppositions and dilemmas in connection with researches in this field and the problems, which make empirical researches more difficult. Moreover, the list even makes it clear, why planning and starting, but especially comparing of such kind of quantitative, empirical researches is a serious methodological challenge.

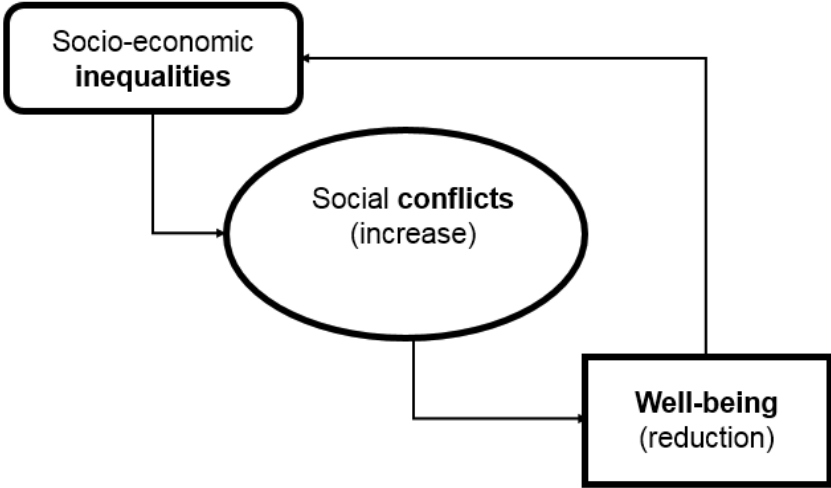
## **6. The logical structure of a possible conflict-research approach**

After overviewing the conceptual-theoretical questions, the context system of a current quantitative, empirical conflict research and a conflict-typology, which was worked out in this research, will be represented. In this interpretation, the social conflicts are an organic part of the everyday social interactions, on the level of individuals, groups and social organisations and institutions. As a consequence of this, such kinds of approaches are not connected by a specific, theoretical aspect - this already became obsolete these days - but a contentual point of focus. The fundamental hypothesis is that those interpersonal and intraorganisational relations, which develop and function, as a consequence of the interest of the parties involved, on the basis of incompatible values, interests, information and resources, are specific types of social relationships. Conflicts are organic elements of the most social relations and organisations. They play a role in the development (causes), characteristics (forms) and effects (goals and consequences) of most social relationships and organisations. Furthermore, they influence at the same time the process of dynamisation, change and development and social disintegration.

In a broader context, social conflicts can also be considered as a central element of a larger theoretical system, in which on the one hand the so-

cio-economic inequalities can be considered in some cases as the background or cause of triggering of conflicts. On the other hand, the possible indicators of social well-being can be considered as ideal conditions to be achieved and to be maintained, which becomes more difficult as an effect of the social conflicts, increasing by these the inequalities (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Characteristics of the three main problem fields and relations of the empirical research



Source: Own collection

During the examination, primarily the various forms of social conflicts were emphasized, but actually, as a consequence of the logic above, the assessment of the inequalities and the social well-being was also carried out. As it was seen, how complex the research field of the social conflicts is, therefore their possible classification and the definition of the actually examined types is essential, as clear as possible. The classification of social conflicts has been solved according to two organizing principles. The most important dimensions of the problem field were firstly circumscribed from contentual aspect (five contentual dimensions) and secondly according to their scopes and primary measuring levels (dimension according to 3 measuring levels). From these actually 15 possible conflict fields arise (Table 3), from which certainly not all will be the object of this examination.

Table 3: Possible types of empirical examination of social conflicts

<b>Contentual dimensions</b>	<b>Measuring level/ scope</b>		
	<i>Individual micro-level</i>	<i>Group mezzo-level</i>	<i>Collective macro-level</i>
1. <i>Demographic</i>	concerning age-group, generation, gender, ethnics/minorities		
2. <i>Private-social</i>	concerning family, social life, personal relationships		
3. <i>Labour market</i>	concerning income, working, superior-subordinate relationships		
4. <i>Territorial-residential</i>	concerning residence, neighbourhood, region-area, urbanisation		
5. <i>Power-institutional</i>	concerning sub- or superordination, politics, decisionmaking, representation		

Sources: Own collection

There are only examples in the typologies, based in particular on the topics in focus of this research. Regarding scope, in the case of the emphasized social conflicts, certainly all three typologies can be effective, since e.g. conflicts in the working place can also have personal, familiar and organisational or even collective impacts. In spite of this, a certain logical shift can still be effective in the system, since going down in the contentual dimensions more and more a shift in the scope in the direction of group and community can be observed.

## 7. Summary

In this study, an attempt has been made to overview the newest developments of conflict theory and views of social sciences, based on conflicts, according to the international literature. Furthermore, to make a few questions clear regarding definitions, classifications and relations, which are essential for national, empirical research about this topic. The most important conclusion on the meta-theoretical research level is probably that the conflict theory as a sociological tendency has lost from its importance and it cannot be considered as a viable, independent orientation. However, the problem field of the social conflicts concerns the scientific public more and more. The conflicts weave through all segments, processes and mechanisms of our social life; they show fundamental relations with the

socio-economic inequalities and the dimensions of well-being. In order to make this problem field empirically understandable, this merging and integration process has to be followed and the presence and effect of conflicts has to be observed in different forms of the social relationships. However, this requires a complex typology. In this study, also regarding this, the possible theoretical solutions have been overviewed and a new classification method was recommended.



# Correlation of Well-being with Socio-Demographic Factors

PÉTER RÓBERT

## 1. Introduction

Well-being is a category, which turns up more and more frequently at the assessment and the characterization or at the spatial and temporal comparison of societies. The spread of the concept was supported significantly by the report of the Stiglitz Commission (Stiglitz et. al., 2009, Stiglitz, 2010). Its largest merit is probably that it goes beyond the concept that economic development, measured mostly as the GDP (per capita), is the only criteria of well-being. Instead of this it recommends the consideration of more dimensions<sup>1</sup>. According to the report, many *objective* indicators of *macro character* can be assigned to the dimensions, which can be measured on the whole level of the given society, country and economy.<sup>2</sup> This indicator system enables the assessment, the international comparison and the ranking of societies in many aspects. The most important feature of this study is that it does not approach well-being by objective indicators, but it creates and examines *subjective* well-being indicators, based on the data of a public-opinion poll research. This approach is in conformity with the position of the Stiglitz Commission, in so far as the authors – according to the previous literature of the topic, which is to a significant extent (socio) psychological literature – recommend and encourage the consideration of subjective factors during the measurement of well-being (Stiglitz et al., 2009 p. 15-16). Such factors are, among others, happiness, satisfaction with

<sup>1</sup> There are altogether eight dimensions: material living standards; health; education; personal activities including work; political voice and governance; social connections and relationships; environment; insecurity of economic as well as physical nature. Nussbaum and Sen emphasize, in fact, also very similar dimensions (1993) regarding the quality of life: financial situation, life expectancy, health condition and quality of health provisions, education, work, political and legal situation, family relationships.

<sup>2</sup> Without any claim to comprehensiveness: personal incomes; educational level; educational expenditures; mortality; unemployment rate; participation in elections; extent of corruption; civil participation; environmental expenditures; extent of crime, etc.