Cognition and Thinking of Conflict and Integration in the Operation of Social System

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Abstract: The view that society is an organic whole has been widely accepted that society is not a collection of individual individuals or a simple sum, but a community of various groups linked by specific relationships and ties. In the social organism, the elements that make up the society depend on and coordinate with each other, at the same time, there are contradictions and conflicts. Social conflict is a characteristic "morbidity" of modern industrial society, therefore, the ability to reconcile various contradictions and conflicts of interest is an important condition for the sound functioning and development of a society, and any society is faced with the task of social integration. In Western societies, social integration is regarded as the process of social integration or the ultimate state of this process. The British philosopher Herbert Spencer introduced the concept of social integration, arguing that at a late stage of social evolution, society had become so complex that it was impossible for each sector to adjust itself, and that "social integration" was needed to perform the function of coordination and control within society. Social integration is a state of differentiation and unification of different sectors of a country, which includes the social coordination of differences. Emile Durkheim systematically studies social integration, distinguishing two types of social integration, namely mechanical solidarity based on socio-cultural homogeneity and organic solidarity based on complementary roles and mutual commitment. In the light of the Anomie of social order in the development of human society, social scientists and Marxism used different methods and tools to investigate and put forward solutions to the problem. Comte advocates the use of science and natural law to achieve social integration. Durkheim highlights and emphasizes social consensus. Coser advocates releasing hostility through social safety valves. Parsons proposes to maintain the basic values and norms shared by members of society to avoid socially divisive conflicts. The use of ideology for social integration has worked well in some cases and has not been effective in others. Ultimately, the root causes of conflict must be analyzed through socio-economic relationships, drawing on various integration theories and tailoring the remedy to the specific situation in order to achieve the goal of effective social integration.

Keywords: Social System, Social Organism, Conflict, Integration

1. Introduction

In the process of human society, contradictions and conflicts are always occurring, only with different degrees of intensity. Contradictions and conflicts often lead to anomie of social order and endanger the stability of society, therefore, how to resolve contradictions and fulfill social integration has become a problem that must be faced by social development. To address the relevant issues, social scientists, both ancient and modern, Chinese and foreign, as well as Marx, have used different methods and tools to investigate, put forward various explanations for the occurrence of social organisms and social conflicts, and have thought deeply about the path of social integration. Exploring these theoretical achievements is of great significance for effectively enhancing social cohesion.

2. Society Is an Organism

The word "society" has long been used frequently and has become a popular term. The ancients in China first had the concept of "社". For example, Shuowen says "Zhou Li said, twenty-five families for 社", Guanzi. Riding Horse says "6 miles square, named 社". And then there was the word "社",

"会" means converger", with the meaning of gathering, collection. The word "社会 society" first appeared in the book the old Tang Dynasty·Xuanzong Records, with the expression "village and village society". The word "society" we used today, was translated from the English word "society" to the Chinese word "社会" by Japanese scholars during the Meiji Restoration and has been used ever since.

A variety of explanations can be given for society. The view that is now widely shared is that society is an organic whole. According to French scholar Auguste Comte, all parts of society are interconnected and do not exist in isolation. Society is a regular structure, an organic whole of human life, i.e., a social organism. The British philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer examined society by analogy, arguing that society, like living things, is an organism and that there are many similarities between the two organisms. He compared the whole society to a complete human body. According to him, the survival of the human body depends on three systems of nutrition, circulation (distribution) and nerves (regulation), and the survival of society also depends on the corresponding three systems, namely, the industrial organization of society (nutritional system), the commercial organization of society (blood circulation system), and the political organization of society (nerve regulation system). It is the working class that performs the functions of the nutritional (productive) system, the merchant class that performs the functions of the distributive (circulatory) system, and the industrial bourgeoisie that performs the functions of the regulating (nerve) system. This division of labor, he argued, is naturally occurring and rational. With these three classes performing their respective functions and coordinating with each other, the whole society can be in a state of equilibrium. According to the analysis of Chinese scholar Wu Pengsen, the views of the social organism school are as follows: (1) Society or social group is a living organism, a living unity, and individuals can exist only within society. (2) the main features of the social organism are the same as the structure and functions of the biological organism, and the skills of the components within the society are interdependent and mutually influential (3) The movement and development of the social organism is governed by the same laws as the biological organism. A slight move in one part may affect the situation as a whole. It absorbs elements of the environment and has metabolic processes. (4) Sociology should be a science based on the viewpoint of biology, and it is a "advanced biology". [1]

The theory of the "organic whole of society" is an important Marxist idea. In defining "society", Marx advocated the totality of social relations. He said, "The sum of the relations of production constitutes what is called social relations, what is called society, and what constitutes a society at a certain stage of historical development, a society with a unique character."[2] He was particularly opposed to the fragmentation of social relations, to the view of society as a heap of individual individuals or as a simple addition. He said: "People do not only influence nature in their production, but they also influence each other. They can only produce if they work together in a certain way and exchange their activities with each other. In order to produce, people enter into certain connections and relations with each other; and only within the context of these social connections and social relations can there be their influence on nature. Only then can there be production." [2] He thought that the essence of man is not an abstraction inherent in a single person. In its reality, it is the sum of all social relations. He wrote: "The further we go back in history, the more the individual, and thus also the individual who carries out production, manifests itself as not independent, as subordinate to a larger whole......." [3] In this organism, the productive forces, relations of production and superstructure are like the "bones" and "flesh and blood", people are like the cells of society, and the various communities of people linked by specific relations and ties are like its ""organs" and "organizations", these elements are closely linked together and form an indivisible organic whole.

3. Conflict and Anomie in the Functioning of Society

The principles of Marxist political economy tell us that the productive forces determine the relations of production, and that the relations of production must adapt to the development of the productive forces, and that when the original relations of production does not adapt to the development of the productive forces, they need to be changed, and new relations of production will replace the old ones. Of the many systems that make up the social organism, the productive forces and the relations of production interact to form systems of a fundamental nature, of which the material productive forces, as the most dynamic factor, often cause a chain reaction in all the other systems, thus causing a disruption of the balance between them. From a materialist standpoint, Marx believed that society operates with contradictions between the productive forces and the relations of production, between the economic base and the superstructure, always in a contradictory movement of equilibrium-imbalance-new equilibrium-new imbalance, and that there is not always harmony and coherence between the various elements of society, but rather a situation of social conflict or even a dysfunctional（anomie） social order.

In addition to Marx, many Western sociologists have argued for the objective existence of conflict and differentiation in society. Georg Zimmer made many studies of the phenomenon of social conflict. He argued that the individual is a product of society, that he is both bound up in it and opposed to it, that he is both inside and outside of it, that he exists for it as well as for himself, and that "exclusivity" is therefore an instinct shared by people living in groups. In his view, there is no such thing as a perfectly coherent social group, and if such a group did exist, it would not have any vitality, nor could it change or develop. [4]

Max Weber's views on social conflict focus on the transition from traditional authority societies to juridical

authority societies. Weber argued that in traditional societies that legitimized political and social activity, the associated high levels of power, wealth and prestige, the distribution of rewards and low rates of social mobility were potential factors of social conflict. The key to externalizing this potential factor into real social conflict is the emergence of leaders with rallying and influence. Political leaders come out to inspire hatred, and their effectiveness determines the course of change. Max Weber made a detailed and specific analysis of social classes and did not admit that the future society would evolve to a perfect and harmonious situation, considering that it was only a Utopian fantasy. He argued that the separation of power in the social hierarchy represented a conference body of appropriated interests that would value unity of opinion and solidarity, yet not always achieved, because any appropriation of privileges through the social hierarchy would create conflicting special interests.

In his book "The Function of Social Conflict", American sociologist and representative of functional conflict theory, Lewis Coser defines "social conflict" as "a struggle over social status, power and resources, and differing values; a struggle in which opposing parties aim to subsume, harm, or eliminate the opposing party." [5] Coser points out that removing legitimacy from existing systems of inequality is the primary prerequisite for conflict. Different interests exist at all times; the competition of interests occurs when the dispossessed no longer recognize the legitimacy of the system of inequality. The maintenance of social order is based, to some extent, on the recognition of the existing system. When this basis is reduced, conflict occurs, causing social unrest. Coser divides conflicts into two types: realistic and non-realistic conflicts. He argues that because people make conflicting claims to rare status, rights, and resources, every social system contains realistic conflict. When a person cannot vent his or her grievances against a truly hostile group, he or she tends to find an alternative group as an object of grievance and non-realistic conflict emerges. He points out that another process by which social groups are created and maintained is social conflict.

Ralph Darendorf accepts Marx's ideas on class struggle and class conflict, arguing that the social systems is always in a state of conflict, which arises from confrontation of interests, and that confrontation of interests necessarily exists in the social structure. He believes that conflict is an inherent tendency existing within the social structure, and without conflict there is no change and no social progress. There is always an inevitable conflict of interests in society and a driving force that brings the powerless into conflict with the powerful. He says, "Conflict is based on a particular social structural arrangement, and therefore as long as this social structure exists, conflict is bound to arise." [6]

These Western theories of conflict borrow some concepts used by Marx in his analysis of capitalist society, and some even claim to be followers of Marx's ideas on social conflict, but Western theories of social conflict are fundamentally different from Marx's ideas in their views on a series of issues such as the root causes of conflict, the bearers of social conflict,

the social role of conflict and social consequences. [7] But in any case, it fully proves the existence of social conflicts.

Social conflict can easily lead to negative division, which is a unique "morbid" of modern industrial society. Lundberg believes that the characteristic of conflict is the interruption of communication between opposing parties, so the conflict is divisive and a manifestation of dysfunction. Whether we can coordinate various contradictions and conflicts of interest is an important condition for the sound operation and development of a society. Therefore, any society is faced with the task of integrating society.

4. The Meaning of Social Integration

The term "integration" is originally derived from biology and refers to the structural organization of the components of a living organism or cell, which can function well together as a complete and benign system. As a general term, "integration" was first used in mathematics (integration, integral methods) and physics (matching) and has been related to the relationship between the parts and the whole.

The first use of the term "integration" in its philosophical sense is attributed to the English philosopher Herbert Spencer. He first used "integration" in his discussion of evolutionary philosophy, and he believed that the development of anything consists of a differentiation phase and a subsequent integration phase. He then applied this to biology, sociology, psychology, and philosophy, introducing the idea of social integration. He argued that the complex society is more prone to disintegration and conflicts, so that the various sectors and structures of society need to cooperate with each other. In this sense, Spencer says that at the beginning of social evolution, the function of coordination is mainly set up for the external environment, but at a later stage, society has become so complex that it is impossible for each sector to adjust itself, and its task is shifted to the coordination and control of society internally, which has to be carried out by "social integration".

In sociological research, the American sociologist T. Parsons explicitly introduced the concept of social integration and incorporated it into his structural-functionalist theoretical framework. In his book The Evolution of Social Systems and Action Theory (1977), Parsons specified the concept of social integration in the following sense: (i) the harmonious relationship of all sectors within a social system so that the system reaches a state of equilibrium and avoids change; (ii) the maintenance of existing components within the system to counteract external pressures. [8] According to Turner, what Parsons calls social integration is to solve the problem of how to maintain order in a competitive system, and at the same time, social integration is a social state that refers to the differentiation and unification of different classes in a country, containing the social coordination of differences, with common interests and goal orientations among the classes that do not make different classes fall into segregation.

The French sociologist Emile Durkheim was the first to systematically study social integration. First, in his work "On

the division of social labor", Durkheim distinguished two types of social integration, namely, mechanical solidarity based on socio-cultural homogeneity and organic solidarity based on complementary roles and mutual commitment. According to Durkheim, mechanical solidarity is a type of social bonding based on homogeneity among individuals. In this type of solidarity, due to the underdeveloped division of labor, people share the same activities and lifestyles, and there is a high degree of homogeneity among members, not only in terms of common material activities, but also in terms of shared beliefs and traditions. However, with the increasing development and complexity of social division of labor, the society is gradually divided and the interdependence among people is increasing, thus a new type of social solidarity emerges - organic groups. [9] Durkheim thought that the degree of integration of modern society is higher than that of traditional society, and a moderate degree of social integration has become an essential condition for the existence and development of society.

As Angel notes, Social integration remains a central idea that is constantly on the minds of many people, but it will still tell which of two options will determine the fate of the concept-either the concept is abandoned because social scientists find its meaning too broad for a scientific concept is discarded because social scientists find its meaning too broad for a scientific concept, or it attracts those who are determined to devote themselves to science to construct it in such a way as to make it useful for the development of sound theory. But social integration is a concept of great practical importance. In general, in Western societies, social integration is seen as the process of social integration or the end state of this process. Some Chinese scholars believe that social integration refers to the process of coordination and adjustment of social interests, which leads to the combination of social individuals or social groups into a community of human social life, in short, the process of human social integration. The definition of social integration in the 1999 edition of the Dictionary should be more comprehensive and authoritative: "Social integration, also called 'social integration', refers to the process of eliminating the separation of different factors and parts of society through coordinated action to achieve integration and unity. It can lead members of society to observe the same behavioral norms, share common values, and strengthen interdependence and functional complementarity among themselves." [10]

5. Discussion on the Path of Social Integration

Throughout his life, Auguste Comte sought ways to establish social order. Comte advocated the use of science and natural law to achieve social integration. Comte pointed out that sociology should be based on science, just like natural science, to discover the social laws that existed since the objective laws, to use the knowledge about the laws of social operation to shorten the time of social crises, to avoid revolutions, violence and civil wars,

and to improve the fate of human beings. He believed that once a social system conforms to the laws of nature, the natural laws that govern human and social phenomena become the basis for social and political reform. In this society, enlightened reason will motivate people to act cooperatively with each other and will completely eliminate superstition, fear, ignorance, coercion and conflict. [11] Comte advocated adding a spiritual order to the secular hierarchy. Comte believed that society would have true unity only when the entire guiding philosophy was embraced by all members of a collective, forming a coherent whole through shared beliefs. He recognized that religion had been a major pillar of social order in the past, and that it had provided the basis for "general agreement" in society by admonishing people to submit to secular society, which in most cases was conducive to social stability. In response to the tendency of industrial societies to impoverish the working class and to strain labor-management relations, Comte proposed solutions to increase the authority and regulation of government. Comte advocated the establishment of a religious and absolute "enlightened government" that would sanctify command and obedience, with the government exercising the necessary regulation over the various "parts" of society. On the basis of material foundation, ideological guidance, moral sanctions and social control, supplemented by intellectual and moral power, a composite political authority is established to achieve long-term peace and security.

Inheriting Comte's ideas, Durkheim highlights and emphasizes social consensus. According to Durkheim, collective consciousness is the sum of beliefs and emotions shared by members of society in general, and these beliefs and emotions pervade the entire social space. Collective consciousness is essentially the basis of mechanical solidarity. In societies where mechanical solidarity predominates, collective consciousness encompasses a large part of individual consciousness, and individuals are almost entirely under the domination of common emotions. According to Durkheim, law is the expression and representation of collective consciousness, the force that guarantees social solidarity. In his view, repressive law, with its emphasis on punishment and crime, is an indicator of collective consciousness in a mechanically united society; restorative law, based on justice, reestablishes the state of affairs as it should be, maintains mutual trust among the various specialized individuals and groups in society, and leads to cooperation among individuals. [12]

Lewis Coser advocates the release of hostility through a social safety valve. According to Kossai, the safety valve allows violent vapors to keep venting out without destroying the whole structure; the social safety valve allows violent hostility to keep venting out or hostile participants to withdraw without disintegrating the group or destroying the whole structure. [1] Coser gives the example that political jokes and satire belong to the venting of hostility, that a student club or a faculty welfare committee can be a safety valve in a university, and that a store office can be a safety valve for conflicts between stores and consumers. As the German sociologist Phil Kanter put it, such an outlet is

tantamount to providing a channel for a blocked river, and he saves the rest of social life from devastating effects. [14]

Parsons proposed the integration function of social system. Parsons points out that the economic system mainly undertakes the adaptive function, through a series of economic activities of production, exchange, distribution, and consumption, so that various resources are transformed into products that meet various needs and ensure the survival and continuity of society; the political system achieves the goals of the entire social system, which is achieved by government agencies that concentrate the human, material, and financial resources of society and use the power or authority of social organizations; the institutional norms seek to integrate society within Institutional norms seek to achieve the lowest level of social solidarity in society so that members and organizations in society cooperate with each other and avoid divisive conflicts, in which the legal system, religious system, interpersonal norms and other means of social control are conducive to the realization of the integration function. Parsons also proposes to preserve the basic values and norms shared by members of society. He argues that religion helps society establish a set of value norms and reinforces the obligation to observe them. In addition, the family, as the site of early socialization of children, and educational institutions such as schools, which socialize each new member entering society, play an important role in the transmission of cultural patterns from one generation to the next. The family, school, and community, enable individuals to internalize social goals and conform unit actions to the system's requirements. [15]

6. Conclusion

Taking a comprehensive view of the above thinking on the integration path, we can see that some social scientists have a preference for ideological approaches to social integration, such as Comte's "forming a coherent whole through shared beliefs," Durkheim's "safeguarding social solidarity through collective consciousness," Collins' "avoiding social conflict through moral beliefs and rituals," and Parsons' "preserving the basic values and norms shared by members of society. ", Collins' "avoiding social conflict through moral beliefs and rituals", and Parsons' "preserving the basic values and norms shared by members of society", all of which are, in essence, what Lipset emphasized as The "glue" function of ideology for society. The use of ideology for social integration has worked well in some cases, but not in others. Just as Seymour Martin Lipset has his own alternative view of the function of ideological social integration, he acknowledges that "shared universal values" in the United States are "ideological coherence" while explicitly emphasizing that the existence of a shared value system does not mean that conflict within society is The existence of a common value system does not mean that there is not intense conflict within society. After all, "the root of conflict lies in socioeconomic relations, not in human nature. [16] Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the root causes of conflicts through socio-economic relations, draw on various integration theories, and prescribe the right remedy according to the specific situation in order to achieve the goal of effective social integration.

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