

The Need for Conviction: A Status Quo Analysis of Social Contradictions in Contemporary China

Yingxia Wu

Congya Xia

School of Marxism Studies
China University of Petroleum
Qingdao 266580
China

Abstract

As it is known, the emergence of social contradiction is accompanied by the emergence of society. After a long period of development, the human society has entered a more advanced stage of civilization while the social contradictions have changed correspondingly. For China, it has become a more powerful country after experiencing the reform and opening up policy since 1970s, meanwhile the social contradictions have become more complex. Now, China has been at a critical period of social transformation, having a correct understanding of the current social contradictions is beneficial to meet challenges and resolve conflicts. Based on China's current national conditions, this study is focus on the changes of the current social contradictions in China, analyzing its form and characteristics. After the comprehensive study, it is put forward that establishing the conviction to the future under the inspiration of China dream is helpful to handle the conflicts better and defuse the contradictions correctly.

Keywords: Social Contradictions; Conflict; Characteristics; Conviction; China Dream

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, China has been encountered a long period of reformation. Chinese people now have good lives through protracted and unremitting efforts (Jan, 2009; Joe, 1998). Today, China's modernization construction is developing at a surprising speed and has received a great achievement; especially in the development of economic. It seems that people on longer worry about the problems of food or live and the social contradictions have already resolved. However, it's worthwhile to note that the contradictions which mentioned above doesn't mean the traditional contradictions, a series of conflicts still exists in current society of China since the social contradictions will not disappear. Moreover, there are two different concepts between "contradiction" in philosophy and the concrete "social contradictions".

From a philosophical standpoint, the contradiction means the two opposites between things. But the discussion of social contradictions we talk about is the conflict and confrontation in the society in the broad sense. About the Conflict Theory the American sociologist Coser L.A. has a view that the conflict is a struggle for the allocation of value, faith, and the scarcity of status, rights and resources. The conflicts are arisen from the uneven distribution of social returns and the disappointment to this imbalance that people show, so long as it does not directly violate to the basic values or common ideology, its essence would not be destroyed and it is also an important mechanism in the positive evolution of society (Coser, 1956). The term of Conflict Theory has first used from the book "The Function of Social Conflict" which opposing the conflict is only a partial view of the destructive effect, and supported the view of trying to combine the structural function analysis and the mode of social conflict analysis (Coser, 1969). We have to admit the social reality has two sides, one has the appearance of stability, harmony and consensus, the other has the appearance of change, conflict and coercion (Hrynshyn and Ross, 2011). The society not only needs a social model of harmony, it also needs a social model of conflict. Only in this way can the society comes out of the "Utopia" which is constructed by the people, and realizes the improvement in the conflict contradiction.

For China, although the government has been advocating and trying to develop the harmonious socialist society, but we know that it is impossible to completely achieve such a state in fact, the existence of social contradictions is inevitable and cannot be eliminated, only on the way of twists and turns the society can take a breakthrough and achieve self-improvement.

2. The contradictions at the time of social transformation

Social transformation can be divided into broad sense and narrow sense, the broad sense of social transformation usually refers to the changes of human society from one mode to another, for example, from the feudal society to the capitalist society, from the capitalist society to the socialist society, which is a kind of fundamental change; and the narrow sense of social transformation refers to the changes of social structure or the changes of types of civilization, such as China's social transformation (Fan, 1997). Nowadays, China is experiencing the stage of social transformation; some people would easily have the imbalance psychology due to the inevitable collision during the transformation process from the old social system and the new social system. These negative psychological phenomena easily lead to extreme emotions and extreme behaviors, so that the security of the society has encountered great threats and risks. Presently, China's social transformation is mainly reflected in three aspects: the first is the transformation of the economic system.

In the modern society, the most essential relationship which between people and people is the exchange of material benefits, this relationship is developing through the process of the satisfaction of people's needs and desires in the exchange of material interest. It is the source of all the social contradictions and dominates other parts of the relationship (Ying, 2013). Therefore, the social conflicts of interests are in large measure caused by the economic interest (Curran, 1998). With the continuous adjustment of social-economic structure, the social-interest structure has been reorganized, especially in the special historical period of social transformation. Thus, the different social interests have formed a variety of conflicts of interest. The second is the change of social structure. There are two parts of the social structure. One is the differentiation of society class. Under the market economy, the integration and optimization of social resources make the power; wealth and prestige present a phenomenon of heterogeneous distribution in the society. All kinds of new social strata and the edge class are gradually emerging at this time, making the differentiation between the strata speed intensively. Differentiation and reorganization occur in different stratus.

Class status is also rearranging, the proportion of the middle class is expanding rapidly, the scale of the middle and lower scale is reducing gradually. Market economy has created a lot of opportunities for people to get wealth. The low classes seize the opportunity to change their identities, and come into the ranks of the upper class. But the economic crisis also makes some of the middle class fall to the bottom of society (Paul, 2012). Structure of social class is transforming from the closed to open, the modern social structure is formed in the continuous differentiation and integration. And the other is the disintegration of the dual structure of towns and countryside. In a long period, the unbalanced development of urban and rural areas has been a prominent contradiction in China's economic and social development. In the process of the transformation from the traditional agricultural society to modern industrial society, the gap between urban and rural areas has been reduced, and the dual structure of urban and rural is developing gradually towards the integration of urban and rural areas (Cohen, 2004). In this situation, the continuous expansion of urban occupied land has made many farmers to lose their land. The new generation of farmers prefers to flood into the cities and become "migrant workers".

As soon as they return home, there is a lot of fresh urban blood has flew over into the backward rural areas, and the circumscription between urban areas and rural areas is not so clearly. Due to the factor of China's judicial process and social welfare mechanism are not so perfect at their present forms, many migrant workers' lives could not be get a effectively guarantee when they come into and work in cities, for examples, they usually encounter the problem of wage arrears, and their children are difficult to go to school because of lacking the household registration. All above mentioned are the new contradictions in the contemporary society. The third is the change of value idea. In the past, the value of the natural economy or the planned economy is relatively single, the collective consciousness dominants. Under the impact of the market economy, people have more opportunities to accept western ideas, people's world view and values have changed a lot. From the point of view of people, it presents that the people's modernization transforms from traditional to modern. This includes people's thinking mode, life styles, behaviors and value ideas and so on. Because these changes are occurred in a short period of time, so it has a considerable shock to the development of the whole social form, and bring about a lot of new social risks, including unemployment, crime, consolidation, and other social contradictions.

3. Characterization of social contradictions

Today, China's development is really unbalanced; this imbalance is presented directly in the aspects of social economic and culture, the development level of the cities and the rural areas, and the social members' performances and concepts in the society. In addition, the appearance of imbalance has also causes the diversities of the ways of interest requirements by the members of the community; and lead to the government has diverse understanding of social contradictions and makes different solutions (Wu, 2010). First, the subject main part of social contradictions is presented the characteristic of diversity due to the fact of different distribution of social interests. Financially speaking, Chinese people faced with the common problem for food and clothing in the past time, since the government allows some people to get rich first by the policy of reform and opening up, the social gap between the rich and the poor is widened quickly, then caused a great deal of social contradictions (Jamie, 2003). The rich people are so rich that could go to the Wall Street to buy gold, but the poor people are still really poor so that even could not support their children to go to school. In contrast to this gap between the rich and the poor, the expansion of discrepancy may finally cause psychological imbalance among the poor people, and the social contradictions are intensified accordingly.

In retrospect, it is easily to find that the Chinese social conflicts mainly focus on the contradictions of productivity and production relations, which is mainly reflected in the problem of whether the production relations can be adapted to the development of productivity. Now, with the continuous improvement of living standards under the market economy system, the social contradiction is no longer carried on in a single mode of development but a trend of diversified development (Pemberton, 1983). In addition to the gap between the rich and the poor, there are many other contradictions also breed out. As political sense concerned, because of the lack of scientific and technological development, the channel of obtaining the information is very limited in the past, so people's democratic consciousness is relatively weak and the political contradictions are not highlighted obviously (Kettl, 2005). With the rapid development of science and technology, the popularization of the internet makes most people have more platforms of gaining and exchange the information, so that the public supervision on the government is much more transparent and opened, thus the citizens' democratic consciousness has been strengthened and the political contradictions has been more intense and complex than before (Marcus, 2010). In regard of the relationship between human and nature, the economic is fall behind but the environment is good in the past, now the environment has been greatly damaged due to the factor of land requisition since the progress of urbanization has been developing more and more fast, the contradiction which between human and nature has become a new contradiction in Contemporary China.

Consider from the culture value aspect, due to the oppression of the feudal autocratic, people's mode of thinking is relatively narrow under the constraint of ruling class in the past. After the thought liberation, people's values are becoming more diverse in the communication of the western culture and eastern culture. Different values make the different kinds of conflicts of interests from the different stakeholders, this is become the ideological basis of the current social contradiction. There is a huge deviation between people's original standards of value evaluation and the new value tropism, which intensifies the generation of contradictions. At last but not at the least, the current conflict between human and natural environment is a new contradiction in the contemporary period. In the past, though the relationship between man and nature is the opposite, the contradiction is not thorny. After China has entered into a new historical development period, the relationship between man and nature is deteriorating rapidly, the development of industrialization makes the economic improve, meanwhile the natural environment caused a great damage to people's healthy lives and bring serious troubles.

In a word, the characteristic of contradictions in this period is much diverse then any before. The second characteristic of social contradictions is that the different contradictions are often interrelated and intertwined with each other. Under the background of the fast pace of modern society, these interest contradictions are reflected in different types of fields, such as political , economic, cultural, ecological environment, and so on. These complex factors are usually gathered together, which makes the main part of the social interests contradictions of our country present a more complex situation. Third, the social contradictions are presented the characteristic of resistance. The social contradictions are produced under the premise of the accordance of people's fundamental interests, so it doesn't have the destructive effects. But in recent years, a series of mass incidents occur frequently, which indicates that the current social contradictions in China have caused some unstable factors, because of the lack of correct understanding of the characteristics of social contradictions. Sometimes it causes much serious consequences and harm in terms of the problem of resettling in China.

Even under the premise of accordance of people's fundamental interests, it is totally necessary to pay more attention to those sensitive issues related to people's direct interests, to take a multi way of coordinating different kinds of interests and avoid the conflicts have any extension, so as not to cause adverse effects on the society.

4. Establishment of convictions

Since the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, China has finally achieved the victory of the revolution and established a new regime after a long struggle; this is not a simple process, which has experienced an arduous struggle by generations. China has such great success today not only by the attribution of the Chinese Communist's leadership, but also due to the fact of Chinese people's strong and firm conviction. Base on this fact, when today we face a variety of complex social contradictions, the conviction is the most powerful foundation to support us to keep going. No matter how alterative the society is experienced and how fierce the social conflicts are emerged, building a conviction is generally useful for people to cope with the fluxed social contradictions. That is why the Chinese government now calls on people to take the China dream as a spiritual guidance, to confront the difficulties of life bravely, and to strive for the prosperity of life. Today material is received more attention while spirit is rarely concerned by people. People no longer fervently believe that conviction can influence people's destiny and change people's lives as used to be, so when the social development could not cater for the demands of interests, some people would take the extreme way to solve the problems, and the conflicts arise.

The more conflicts are continued to produce, the more intensification the social contradictions are aggravated. In such a situation, if people build up enough confidence in the country, the nation and the future, it would not only take great advantages to improve people's attitude towards things, but also have a good effect on people's lifestyles. People would be more rational when dealing with the contradictions if they have confidence in the government or the Party (Park, 2012). Therefore, the conflicts would be reduced accordingly and the social contradictions would not be so fierce. Besides, having conviction could help people to move towards the dream more closely and steadily, it is also an effective way of promoting the trust between the government and the public, reducing the mass disturbances.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, the analysis mainly revolves around the changes and the characteristics of Chinese social contradictions and explores how we can cope with the current situation of social contradictions. Based on the above, the main conclusions can be achieved as follows:

- (1) Although the Chinese government now has brings forward the concept of harmonious society, it does not mean there are not any contradictions in the society. Contradiction is universal. Both sides of contradiction are always in a process of production, solution and combination, this is the law of social evolution.
- (2) Social contradictions are always in a state of constantly changing because of the progress of the times. Thus, the reform has to be carried out in a whole new way of innovating the political system. Though there are such difficult problems in the society needed to figure out as soon as possible, we still have reason to believe the China's social contradictions will be alleviated and improved greatly if the reform could be continued to deepen comprehensively.
- (3) The establishment of faith is really important to Chinese people for resolving conflicts in this critical stage, that is why the concept "China dream" has been brought into focus because dream is powerful which could support people faith to face all the challenges, and China dream is a set of personal and national ideals which is to describe the aspiration of self-improvement in Chinese society. Today, if Chinese people want to break through the contradictions and get a better development, it should firmly believe that the dream of the national minority as a magic weapon in the face of difficulties.

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