Conflict in Peace
An Introspection of Modern British Society

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Structured Abstract

Purpose: Making club culture as an entry point, the paper intends to show how conflict and peace, though apparently representing opposing properties, work in tandem in English social space. However here I have tried to examine these two opposite entities as parallel tracks which exist simultaneously. Identification of such events and opening up a new theme of examination so that further research can be carried out of this view point remains the purpose of this paper.

Design / Methodology / Approach: The paper has been produced in a narrative style so as to avoid the intricacy of a complex theoretical approach along with cross references of notable thinkers to support the view point.

Findings: The study identifies how conflict and peace two opposite dimensions existed at the same time amongst the social gatherings of modern England chiefly in the Public Sphere in clubs and societies.

Originality/Value: Few works have been done to measure the psyche or mentality of social circles but none to this date have measured it through the prism of peace and conflict existing simultaneously at the same time.

Keywords: Clubs, Societies, Coffeehouses, Public Sphere, Jurgen Habermas,

Paper Type: Theoretical Research Paper

Introduction

The concept of conflict and peace at first appears like two poles which is quiet natural and occurred to me when I set out to examine these two concepts. However a detailed and a broader examination of these two subjects threw up remarkable results.

First of all before embarking on this voyage let's examine the concept of peace. Peace in general parlance is a situation when turbulence ceases to exist or is at a bare minimum, calmness prevails which leads to smooth systematic and syncronised functioning. All these factors combine together to bring about a sense of well being, happiness and prosperity. Thus the question arises has the whole of humankind ever experienced peace throughout its life time. The answer to this question lies in the fact that life evolved from the sea and from that day had undergone a continuous state of transformation brought about by an unending revolution, which finally resulted in the formation of intelligent human beings.

But the tragedy lies in the fact that whatever we say we cannot ignore that throughout this period of civilisation, peace and tranquility have not existed thoroughly. If so called peace had existed there were various conflicts of different versions which existed simultaneously within the paradigm of peace. Such conflicts had their sources in cultural backgrounds, economic tragedies, changing social orders, technological progress; etc, etc. Such conflicts in the social arena came to be noticed more frequently in the modern period in Europe where it re surfaced to remarkable extents. At the first instance this concept might appear paradoxical but an intrinsic examination reveals results about deep undercurrents flowing within the concurrent situation of peace, and here lies the main question! That was there a prevailing conflict existing even within the strata of peace.

Thus hereby we set out to explore an integral part of the public sphere which was the clubs and societies of modern England and find out the relevant answer to the question that could these contrasting elements of conflict and peace existed simultaneously at the same place within the same time.

Literary References

Literary references are available only about social circles of modern England or the formation of the Public Sphere but none have viewed the ongoing process or rather interpreted it through the lens of peace and conflict prevailing within such gatherings.

Objectives

- The objective of this study is to examine the concepts of peace and conflict.

- The study focuses on the point that though both might appear like opposite dimensions they exist simultaneously.

- Identification of such events amongst the modern social circles of England remains the priority of this study.

- Opening up a new theme of examination so that further research can be carried out of this view point also remains one of the purposes of this paper.

Methodology

The paper has been produced in a narrative style so as to avoid the intricacy of a complex theoretical approach.Cross references of notable thinkers to support the view point has been provided. As it is a new concept no literature or internet search could throw light on the subject. Overall this paper aims to add to the general pool of knowledge and at the same time open up a new avenue for other researchers to examine thoroughly this new concept.

Body

Modernism was also prevalent in the thought process of mankind as newer ideas surfaced every day along with newer inventions. There was practically a flood of ideas almost every single day as the people for the first time in the history of mankind were coming out in the open space to discuss, criticise, judge rationally, and come to conclusions regarding any matter under the sun. People met each other not only to conduct business and exchange pleasantries, but also to exchange views regarding whatever they have come to know which was mainly due to the efforts of an unregulated press.

In order to exchange views a place was necessary where groups could engage in conversation thereby leading to the establishment of such places which were the saloons, coffeehouses, clubs, societies and continental organisations. These modern organisations founded on a principle of democracy where everyone had equal rights were a new concept which unknowingly created the public sphere which in the sense of a separate realm distinguished from the private sphere cannot be shown to have existed in the feudal society of middle ages or before that.

Jurgen Haberrnas has further subdivided the public sphere into three parts, which were (a) the

public sphere in the political realm, (b) the public sphere in the World of letters, (clubs, press) (c) markets of cultural products, "Town". Whatever be the subdivision of the sphere one thing was for sure that it was here one saw the first signs of that combination of the economically unproductive and politically functionless urban aristocracy with eminent writers, artists and scientists (who frequently were of bourgeois origin).

The club was originally a byproduct of the coffee houses that sprang up in England during the seventeenth century and eighteenth century. The evolution occurred when some clients eventually took over a part of those premises or the whole unit for their exclusive use thus giving rise to the concept of clubs. The novelty of clubs is shown by appearance of the word club in its commonest meaning in English around the period of 1650-1680. The sociability of clubs was associated with places where groups sharing common purpose and interest could talk, eat, drink and share expenses.

Here if we notice carefully by transporting ourselves to the England of that time we can undermine that there must have arose points of differences between the patrons of those coffee houses which must have led to a position of conflict, which resulted in a separation of common positions. Thus herby we first come to notice the notion of conflict even amidst a peaceful social gathering in a public sphere which somehow implores us to think about the probability of conflict and peace existing together in the same place at the same time.

Though the club grew out of the coffeehouses of London there was a basic point of difference between the coffee houses and clubs. The clubs were meant for exclusive use by its members who generally were of the same kind whereas the coffeehouses differed very much by the more diverse nature of its clientele. The coffee houses did not represent anyone in particular nor did anyone need an introduction or sponsorship whereas in the clubs this factor of exclusivity was always present. Here also we come to notice the factor of class differentiation and as mentioned previously the members of the club did not want to associate themselves with the varied clientele of the coffeehouses thereby again bringing to the fore front the concept of underlying conflict present even at a spot of relaxation. We must also remember that the members of the clubs were a reading public thus making the club an ideal place for tutelage, as young members were doctored and influenced about the ways of life at most clubs.

The clubs and societies were also the breeding grounds from where new ideas surfaced and

emancipated in newer and reformed forms as principles and collective laws of the society. Here a factor should be kept in mind that the clubs and societies were a matter of exclusive participation so that the method of common democracy or the participation of all classes were somewhat absent, which brings hitherto the forwarding reason of the economic condition of the greater public at large.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth century the club came to constitute the cultural pith and marrow of the British society and there came to be established clubs of every sort in almost all the cities from Glasgow to London. However during those early days of club culture the government still felt uneasy about such institutions and clubs were not above suspicion till the achievement of political stability.

Gradually club land or the clubs become not only venues for socialising but also places for free discussion which can be termed as a widespread experience of organising freely to achieve common purposes. The religious and libertine, the republic and the monarchist, the connoisseur and the rake, all had their clubs as did the prominent thinkers and the innovative doers.

British clubs also lobbied and pursued collective ends not directed or necessarily sanctioned by the state or church. They became training grounds for political associations and for groups that would affect local conditions through improvements and politics. The political nature of these organisations was often recognised in debating clubs which became popular in Britain by 1750 and the political clubs that arose towards the end of the century to agitate for reforms. The Select Society of Edinburgh (1754-1762) is an example of the first and Paineite groups of the 1790's are among the second. The club life of adults was mirrored by that of university students whose initiation into the roles of adult thought and action began early.

During the previous two instances we came to notice that a situation develops whereby a so called affluent class of likeminded people who cannot acquaint themselves with the concurrent situation hereby they created a separate space. This in fact was a creation of a container within another container which makes us think that such an act must have diffused the pre existing undercurrent of conflict but as we can see the conflict changed dimensions to resurface as debating clubs or Paineite groups which in turn led to conflicts of another nature.

Hereby the total scenario of the club culture would be somewhat devoid of its multi coloured aspect of the total prognosis of this phenomenon if it is not looked upon through an anti capitalistic viewpoint. Marx comes in handy here as he had viewed the public sphere (of which the clubs formed an integral part) from a different point of view.

Marx denounced public opinion as false consciousness as it hid before itself its own true character as a mask of bourgeois class interests.

Marx interpreted that the capitalist system if left to itself could not without crisis reproduce itself as a natural order therefore in order to establish itself as a natural phenomena on the part of mankind a crisis situation is a must, whereby the new order with a little bit of modification and additions and alterations will take over from the older order and carry on. As a new social order was taking place, all the above preconditions were present.

The public sphere with which Marx saw himself confronted, contradicted its own principle of universal accessibility. This was certainly true as clubs which formed a part of public sphere consisted chiefly of an urban public and that too of a reading public who were consumers of cultural goods. The public sphere did not include the people from the countryside, the uneducated and the financially weaker sections of the society. Furthermore elementary education where it existed was inferior. The proportion of illiterates at least in Great Britain even exceeded that of the preceding Elizabethan epoch. Here at the start of the eighteenth century more than half of the population lived on the margins of subsistence. The masses were not only largely illiterate but also so pauperised that they could not pay for literature. They did not have at their disposal the buying power needed for even the modest participation in the market of cultural goods. Thus the public could no longer claim to be identical with all of society.

Similarly equating property owners with human beings was also unrealistic, for their interest in maintaining the sphere of commodity exchange and of social labour as a private sphere was demoted, by virtue of being opposed to the class of wage earners, to the status of a particular interest that could only prevail by the exercise of power over others. From this view point control over private property could not without further circumstance be transported into the

freedom of autonomous human beings. Private civil autonomy led "every man to see in other men, not the realisation but rather the limitation of his own liberty" and the right that guaranteed this "egoism were rights of man" in the sense of the abstract human being who in the pursuit of his private interests never left behind the unfreedom of the property owner, of an agent in the process of the capital valorisation who hence never developed into the actual and authentic human being in whose capacity the bourgeoisie wanted to assume the functions of a citizen. As long as power relationships were not effectively neutralised in the reproduction of social life and as long as civil society itself still rested on force, no juridical condition which replaced political authority with rational authority could be erected on its basis. Consequently the dissolution of feudal relations of domination in the medium of the public engaged in rational critical debate did not amount to the purported dissolution of political domination in general but only to its perpetuation in different guise. The bourgeois constitutional state along with the public sphere as the central principle of its organisation was mere ideology. The separation of the private from the public realm obstructed at the stage of capitalism what the idea of the bourgeois public sphere promised. Hereby the last nail in the coffin of this conflict theory is driven by Marx who totally denounces the theory of public sphere and states it as conspiracy of the financially rich classes to subjugate the struggle of the weaker sections of the society which underlines the age old provisions of conflict between the haves and have nots.

Conclusion

Thus to sum it all the club started off as a byproduct of modernism, a free fare ground where questions could be raised and answered within the realms of rationality to develop into a breeding ground of post modernism as the flow of culture was unhindered on club land. The process can be identified as how gradually modern men and women became subjects as well as objects of modernisation. Overall the people tried to make a grip of the modern world and make themselves at home in it. This was not achieved in a programmatic manner, for the control that different groups can exercise as capitalism is at best uneven and subject to global distribution of institutional power, but the underlying struggle and conflict carries on. The process of producing metaphysical identities for oneself both collectively and individually marks this struggle, and there it was in the club lands of Great Britain this saga of the struggle came to be enacted.

Thus throughout this so called peaceful time we came to identify undercurrents of conflict

which provokes us to come to this conclusion that peace and conflict does exist simultaneously at the same time.

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