

Thesis

The sum and substance of human suffering, as Paul Farmer writes, is shaped by structural violence. The structural violence encompasses racism, poverty, political chronologies, and unequal health access (Farmer, 2004). He questions why there are inequalities in suffrage among people and argues that these patterns are intentional. Human sufferings are created through social systems that reduce people's opportunities long before the actual illness emerges. Following the clear pattern of suffering, the poor are sustained in unhygienic conditions, which pushes them to an early death. His thesis portrays that suffering is not erratic. It has a strong connection with the structure and organisation of society.

Support for Thesis

Real examples from Haiti have been portrayed to support the thesis where Farmer worked as a doctor for long ages. The communities there have insufficient medical equipment, clinics, proper transportation, and clean water. These systemic obstacles portray why many patients come so late to get proper treatment (Farmer, 2004). I found this evidence to be strong enough, as Farmer had direct work experience with these communities. His firsthand experience makes his argument more convincing.

Also, he adds some historical evidence to support his points. Haiti has suffered from issues like foreign debt, colonialism, and political interference from influential nations for such a long time. Just like, Haiti had a lump sum debt to France, which they could use in building public health systems and hospitals (Farmer, 2004). These testimonies make his criticism worth relying on as it delves into the structural violence having age-old roots, not only current causes. His fusion of stories relating to medical experience, historical facts, and macro-level assessment makes his thesis persuasive.

Question

Farmer elaborates the structural violence cogently; still, some remarkable questions remain unanswered. One question is, what could be the proper mechanism to get rid of structural violence when the global powers work as a cause, and the long histories of inequality as well? Another question that sticks is what

changes individuals should adapt to make a difference in this large system? Also, I am curious to know how structural violence differentiates across different countries having similar colonial history, are they similar to Haiti, or are there some distinct issues? These are the mysteries that show all the complexities relating to structural violence, which does not have a simple solution.

Comparison with Other Readings

The “*Pathologies of Power*” and the sociological imagination idea by C. Wright Mills are interwoven at some point. While Mills criticises that predicaments are close-knit with larger challenges the public face daily (Mills, 1959). Farmer (2004) shows an apparent concept where individual illness in Haiti has been displayed, and the issues have been connected to the worldwide bias. His article emphasises global debt and foreign political supremacy, while others concentrate on class, race, or neighbourhood issues.

Farmer has a strong similarity with other writers who prioritise oppression, though he conducts a medical and a universal outlook that makes systemic inequality easier to see. Unlike readings that concentrate mostly on identity or culture. Farmer highlights material conditions, like access to health care, transportation, and water. This makes his slant extensive and more original in solid proofs of human suffering than many other authors we have read.

References

Farmer, P. (2004). *On suffering and structural violence. In Pathologies of power: Health, human rights, and the new war on the poor.* University of California Press.

Mills, C. W. (1959). *The sociological imagination.* Oxford University Press.