

Culture and ethnic conflict management

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Abstract. We have tried to define: what is ethnic conflict, and what causes it. In fact, ethnic conflicts since the end of the Cold War is a continuation of a trend that began in the 1960s. It is an enduring tension between states that want to consolidate and expand their power and ethnic groups that want to defend and promote their collective identity and interests. The breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia has opened up opportunities for ethnic groups to pursue their interests. The world of the 1990s is followed by the birth of many new states, upsurges of ethnic violence and oppression, and ascendancy of dictators and ideologies of exclusive nationalism. The pattern of conflicts in Bosnia, Serbia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia proves this trend. Ethnic studies especially ethnic conflicts in domain of international interactions is an up-to-date discussion. Domination of realism paradigm on international interaction has effected this very effective variable in internal politics level. It was in fact especially 1990s that ethnic groups were left away beside the many actors as a micro level actor. This matter has been a focus in the mind of international analysts and pundits.

Keywords: management, culture, ethnic conflict

1. Introduction

The struggle of ethnic groups for recognition, equality or autonomy within the framework of an existing territorial state, or for independence from such a state, is not a recent phenomenon. Such struggles appeared in the aftermath of decolonization during the 1960s, within the successor states of the European empires in Africa and Asia. However, during the Cold War just a little attention was paid to such problems. The Cold War between the Soviet bloc and the US-led Western alliance created a sense of stability among of the world population, because the most serious consideration was the possibility that an East-West confrontation would lead to nuclear war.

The end of the Cold War has been accompanied by the emergence of nationalist, ethnic, and religious conflict in Eurasia. Once more, such conflicts have re-emerged as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav Federation in the early 1990s.

Within the borders of most of states there exist numerous ethnic, national, racial, linguistic or cultural groups. In other words, the majority of states are composed of more than one ethnic group. Sometimes these groups are not accepted as full members of this state or the nation, which it purports to be or presented, or who actually excluded from it. In such circumstance number of ethnic groups demands more rights and recognition that leads in many cases to ethnic conflict.[1]

2. Culture

A 19th century engraving showing Australian "natives" opposing the arrival of Captain James Cook in 1770 Cultural invention has come to mean any innovation that is new and found to be useful to a group of people and expressed in their behavior but which does not exist as a physical object. Humanity is in a global "accelerating culture change period", driven by the expansion of international commerce, the mass media,

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and above all, the human population explosion, among other factors. Cultures are internally affected by both forces encouraging change and forces resisting change. These forces are related to both social structures and natural events, and are involved in the perpetuation of cultural ideas and practices within current structures, which themselves are subject to change. Social conflict and the development of technologies can produce changes within a society by altering social dynamics and promoting new cultural models, and spurring or enabling generative action. These social shifts may accompany ideological shifts and other types of cultural change. For example, the U.S. feminist movement involved new practices that produced a shift in gender relations, altering both gender and economic structures. Environmental conditions may also enter as factors. For example, after tropical forests returned at the end of the last ice age, plants suitable for domestication were available, leading to the invention of agriculture, which in turn brought about many cultural innovations and shifts in social dynamics. Full-length profile portrait of Turkman woman, standing on a carpet at the entrance to a yurt, dressed in traditional clothing and jewelry. [3] Cultures are externally affected via contact between societies, which may also produce—or inhibit—social shifts and changes in cultural practices. War or competition over resources may impact technological development or social dynamics. Additionally, cultural ideas may transfer from one society to another, through diffusion or acculturation. In diffusion, the form of something (though not necessarily its meaning) moves from one culture to another. For example, hamburgers, mundane in the United States, seemed exotic when introduced into China. "Stimulus diffusion" (the sharing of ideas) refers to an element of one culture leading to an invention or propagation in another. "Direct Borrowing" on the other hand tends to refer to technological or tangible diffusion from one culture to another. Diffusion of innovations theory presents a research-based model of why and when individuals and cultures adopt new ideas, practices, and products. Acculturation has different meanings, but in this context refers to replacement of the traits of one culture with those of another, such as happened to certain Native American tribes and to many indigenous peoples across the globe during the process of colonization. Related processes on an individual level include assimilation (adoption of a different culture by an individual) and transculturation.

3. Management

This definition of management refers to a “program”. This implies that, for management to be effective, there needs to be some type of defined approach or system in place. This system becomes the plan and management is guiding others in following that plan. This is often the downfall of managers. They have no plan or system. As a result their actions seem random to the people they are managing and this leads to confusion and disappointment. This is why it is so important for business managers to have an employee manual. Without the employee manual providing direction, managers will struggle to be fair and balanced in their dealings with employees. is the organizational process that includes strategic planning, setting objectives, managing resources, deploying the human and financial assets needed to achieve objectives, and measuring results. Management also includes recording and storing facts and information for later use or for others within the organization. Management functions are not limited to managers and supervisors. Every member of the organization has some management and reporting functions as part of their job.[2]

3.1. What Is Ethnic Conflict?

Ethnic conflicts within a state belong to identity conflicts that are a type of internal conflicts. Besides identity conflicts there are other types of internal conflicts such as ideological conflicts, governance conflicts, racial conflicts and environmental conflicts. Sometimes the term “ethnic conflict” is used to describe a wide range of internal conflicts. For example, conflicts in Afghanistan, Somali, or Cambodia are not ethnic conflicts, because these conflicts are not between rival ethnic groups, but between rival political groups, all of which belong to the same ethnic group.

The dominant aspect of identity conflicts is ethnic, religious, tribal or linguistic differences. These conflicts often involve a mixture of identity and the search for security where the prime contention concerns the devolution of power. This was the main type of war in Sri Lanka, Palestine, Punjab, and struggle of Kurds in the 1980s. Such conflicts are likely to increase. Identity conflicts are subdivided into territorial conflicts, ethnic or minority conflicts, religious assertions and struggles for self-determination.

Before talking about ethnic conflict, it is necessary to make definition: what is ethnicity? There is little consensus in the literature regarding the terminology and basic concepts about ethnicity. “Ethnic group”, “ethnic community”, “ethnie”, “minority”, or sometimes “identity groups” are used by different authors in different ways. Ethnic groups are historically given collectivities or psychological communities whose members share a persisting sense of common interest and identity that is based on some combination of shared historical experience and valued cultural traits - beliefs, culture and religion, language, ways of life, a common homeland[6]. Such groups exist over time, even as they emerge and may well change and disappear.

Ethnic conflicts can be defined as conflicts between ethnic groups within a multi-ethnic state, which have been going on some time, which may appear to be unsolvable to the parties caught up in them. According to Michael E. Brown, an ethnic conflict is a dispute about important political, economic, cultural, or territorial issues between two or more ethnic communities. Many ethnic conflicts result in a significant loss of life, a serious denial of basic human rights and considerable material destruction, some escalating into interethnic or internal war.

Since the 1960s increasing numbers of ethnic groups have begun to demand more rights and recognition, demands that are now recognized as the major source of domestic and international conflict in the post-Cold War world [8] All conflicts are different. The desire for secession or independence from an existing state, the demand for greater autonomy within a state, or recognition and protection of minority interest within a society are three general issues of ethnic conflicts. The protagonists in the most intense ethnic conflicts want to establish their independence or autonomy, as the case of Kurds, some ethnic groups of the former Soviet Union. Other ethnic conflicts arise from efforts by subordinate groups to improve their status within existing boundaries of a state rather than to secede from it. For example, most black South Africans want majority control of state power. Turkish and other recent immigrants to Germany are worried about their security, seek greater economic opportunities, and hope to become citizens. Native peoples in America want to protect what is left of their traditional lands and cultures from the corrosive influences of modern society.[5]

3.2. Culture and ethnic conflict management

Many observers see intransigent ethnic conflicts as the greatest contemporary threat to peace. While some of these conflicts, such as in Sri Lanka or Northern Ireland, are long-term disputes, others develop an unexpected intensity in a very short time. Clearly there is widespread interest in understanding the origin, escalation, and peaceful settlement of ethnic conflicts. While a number of frameworks exist for the examination of ethnic conflict, the one developed here emphasizes the role of culture and identity in these conflicts. It focuses on the power of symbolic phenomena such as the language of street signs in Montreal and Bratislava, Orange Order marches in Northern Ireland, and religious imagery and interpretation in the Middle East. Underlying this emphasis is the central hypothesis that identity and threats to identity which are embedded in cultural practices are at the core of ethnic conflict. This hypothesis says that successful conflict resolution must consider cultural, as well as political, dynamics if it is to be successful. To examine the role of culture in ethnic conflict this course will ask general questions about the importance of culture in the definition of the concrete interests and culturally rooted interpretations and actions which seem to drive ethnic conflicts, and focus on the detailed analysis of thirteen specific ethnic conflicts at different levels of intensity. Through the case studies the course will develop an analysis of how culture offers constraints and opportunities to governments and leaders engaged in ethnic conflict and cooperation. [2] The first part of the course will offer a framework for the analysis of culture and ethnic conflict, and general readings on culture and ethnicity. There are two extended cases we will examine together: Canada and Northern Ireland. During this part of the course each student will write two short papers and weekly ungraded (but required) comments in response to the readings or any other issues which are relevant to the course’s questions. These comments are to be a paragraph to a page in length and are to be handed in at the beginning of each class.[3] During the second part of the semester each student will work on a single case study which will result in a term paper due at the end of the exam period. This research will be on one of twelve ethnic conflicts. Co-authored papers are encouraged but not required. In addition to the paper each student will present a preliminary analysis of the conflict and culture’s role in the conflict they are studying to the class in November. Each week in November there will be presentations of three different conflicts in class and

students are expected to coordinate their presentations with those working on the same conflicts on which they are working and with those presenting the same week but working on different conflicts.[2]

4. Comparative Conflict Management Approaches

In view of the intensity of the ethnic conflicts that have rocked Nigeria and South Africa, both countries have worked to develop constitutionally backed institutions for conflict management. In South Africa, after a difficult and courageous political negotiation between the country's various interest groups, the state has prevented further violence by developing multiple democratic approaches to create a foundation for peace and security. The architects of the new South African constitution crafted an impressive document aimed to heal the wounds of the past and establish a society based on social justice, fundamental human rights and rule of law. The constitution guarantees freedom of association, languages and religion and includes a bill of rights. Secondly, the government has created affirmative action packages for disadvantaged groups, which emphasise "management of diversity." They are meant, among other things, to address the structural racism created by the apartheid state. [4] Thirdly, the structure of the South African government was constitutionally changed to make way for a government of national unity. Power-sharing mechanisms were included in the constitution to prevent the ethnic or racial domination of any group. The composition of the new government confirms a trend towards accommodation and tolerance, which also helped to legitimise the government. Fourthly, the constitution dismantled the homelands. This act signified the end of apartheid. As mentioned above, the conditions in the black reservations were inhuman. Poverty was endemic and social amenities and jobs were scarce. The neglect of the homelands and townships made the people vulnerable to ethnic entrepreneurs and warlords who were fighting for power and economic resources. Following the dismantling of the ethnic homelands, the constitution provided for the creation of nine provinces in place of the former four provinces that existed during apartheid. This decision aimed to distribute power between sub-national units. The provinces enjoy relative autonomy, thus helping to de-escalate conflict. The fifth step taken towards peaceful conflict management was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) chaired by Arch-bishop Desmond Tutu, which helped to heal the wounds inflicted by the apartheid system. It also helped to inculcate a commitment to accountability and transparency into South African public life. [9] The sixth step the ANC government took was meant to address the roots of economic inequalities. The ANC introduced an ambitious plan of action called the "Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The RDP was aimed at encouraging disadvantaged groups, especially blacks, to participate equally with others in business. To manage her complex ethnic problem, Nigeria, like South Africa, has developed mechanisms for ethnic conflict management. Constitutionally, Nigeria opted for federalism and secularism to manage ethnic and regional misunderstanding Like South Africa, a bill of rights was included in the 1999 constitution, which was intended to allay the fears of ethnic minorities in the South. Past Nigerian dictators had been under enormous pressure from minority groups for a more fair distribution of power. From 1967 to 1999, thirty-six states were created in Nigeria, which cut across ethnic and religious lines. This move was meant to further allay the ethnic groups' fears of being dominated by the three major linguistic groups, the Hausa-Fulani, the Igbo and the Yoruba. However, the viability of these new states is unclear, with the exception of the oil-producing states in the South. Some of these states have recently become conduits for the personal enrichment of the elites at the expense of alleviating poverty and creating job opportunities for the rest of the population. There have been reports of disparities in the distribution of the oil resources in Nigeria for many years. This contentious issue has fuelled most of the recent ethnic conflicts in the country. Though the constitution provided for a new system of resource allocation, ethnic groups from the oil and mineral producing areas see the new system as inadequate, arguing they are not receiving enough money for their own regional development. These are the dynamics behind the Ogoni crisis and the recent sporadic ethnic violence in the oil producing Niger Delta states. I would argue that unless this issue is resolved, by a national conference, the economic base of the country will be jeopardised.[6]

5. Acknowledgements

During the past 2 centuries most of national governments have been counteracting with ethnic, religious and local challenges. These problems that are related to factors such as international processes and

competitive ideologies to nationalism like globalism and ethnic ideologies, cooperation processes have been counteracting with serious challenges. Ethnic ideologies with emphasize on concepts like prejudice and national cruelty in one hand, and in the other hand focusing on the danger of vanishing the micro and macro culture have been an attempt for making a crack inside the national cooperation and uniting parts. The process of globalization has treated the national borders in economical, informational and even political aspects and caused the down-to up forces to be free. These forces with demanding political, social and new cultural needs, counteract with national government .The result of both of these two , makes the culture and national identity cooperation .And it is own place has changed the application and traditional tasks of the national government in maintaining the cooperation and integrity of the country .getting more serious with the way of managing of cultural differences inside the national society has been one of the results .this problem has been much important that fear of spillover ethnic conflicts from one country to another country has caused international mediation attempts through decreasing the conflicts between the two opponents in international level .

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