Week 4: Theories of Ethnic Violence II.

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Ethnic conflict

- Ethnic conflict is a complex social phenomenon. Therefore it is hard to find one particular theory that captures all possible causes and overall essence of such conflict. The theories of ethnic conflict are a useful starting point, as they can give us some essential concerns about conflict motivation.

Ethnic conflict

- Ethnic conflict is a situation "in which the goals of at least one conflict party are different in (exclusively) ethnic terms, and in which the primary fault line of confrontation is one of the ethnic distinctions." This means that we speak about ethnic conflict "when at least one group defining the causes, fault lines, and potential solutions of the conflict along a real or perceived ethnic divide".

Ethnic conflict

- Donald Horowitz:
- 1. Ethnic conflict occurs as a result of ethnic differences;
- 2. Ethnic conflict is a result of longtime hostility.
- 3. Ethnic conflict is a collision of cultures and values.
- 4. Ethnic conflict is carried by modernization.
- 5. Ethnic conflict is a result of economic competition between ethnically distinct groups.

Ethnic conflict

- 6. Some ethnic groups ethicize the politics of state that leads to abruption of suppressed groups; this means that success of some ethnic groups promotes envy and fear in the little successful one and such situation can lead to conflict.
- 7. Members of ethnic groups tend to mutually coordinate their behavior, but the some imbalances in this respect can lead to ethnic conflict.
- 8. Ethnic conflict can result from the fight over political power.
- 9. Ethnic conflict can take place if there is no mutual trust between conflict parties.
- 10. Ethnic conflict is related to the evolutionary assumptions.

Ethnic conflict

- Model of ethnic relation by T. David Mason: ranked (vertically integrated) and unranked (horizontally integrated) system.
- In the **ranked system** of interethnic relations different ethnic groups live together and there is cultural division of labour between ethnicity. This means that each member of a group has its particular occupation and social roles according to its cultural character. Stability in ranked system depends on ability of dominant group to manipulate with access to resources and its monopoly in law enforcement apparatus.

Ethnic conflict

- In horizontally integrated system there is no cultural division of labour in interethnic relations. Members of different ethnic groups live separately. This system can be characterized by competitive ethnicity in which ethnic groups are competing not only for economic recourses, but also for a control over state institutions. Ethnic mobilization in unranked system is easier than in ranked one and conflict usually leads to secessionism.

Ethnic conflict

- **Traditionalists** empathize, that conflicts inside a state are caused by inequalities, political oppression, deprivation experienced by one group vis-à-vis another ethnic groups and struggle over scarce resources.
- **Modernist theory** is built around an economic model and their arguments are based on proposition that more important factors than that listed above are financial and military viability of particular group.

Theories of ethnicity

- Theories of ethnic conflicts provide an obvious starting point when thinking about the nature of ethnic groups. There is general agreement among most scholars that there are two ideal types of theories of ethnicity – primordialism and constructivism.
- For primordialists " ethnicity is so deeply rooted in historical experience that it should properly be treated as a given in human relations", while for constructivists "ethnicity is not a historical given at all, but in fact a highly adaptive and malleable phenomenon" and that it is "primarily a practical resource that individuals and groups deploy opportunistically to promote their more fundamental security and economic interests and that they may even discard when alternative affiliations promise a better return".

Theories of ethnicity

- That means that, both individuals and collective identities are seen as fluid, individuals are said to be able to choose them more or less at will and to instrumentalize them opportunistically for themselves, as well as manipulate the identities of other because they either feel a heightened need of cultural identification or seek to pursue specific political mobilization agendas.

Theories of ethnicity

- There are, of course, schools of thought that seek to overcome the primordialist/constructivist dichotomy. Ethno-symbolism is the most prominent among them, which was initially developed by Crawford Young (1976), it then became associated primarily with Anthony D. Smith (1991), Walker Connor (1994) as well as more recently, in the form of symbolic politics theory, with Stuart Kaufman (2001). The essence of the **ethnosymbolist synthesis** is well captured in Smith's description of ethnic group as "a type of cultural collectively, one that emphasizes the role of myths of decent and historical memories, and that is recognized by one or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language, or institution."

Theories of ethnicity

- As self-defined communities, ethnic groups are distinguishable by collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture, the association with a specific homeland, and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of population.
- This link between tangible and intangible aspects is key to understanding the political implications of ethnic identity and of the formation of conflict groups based on ethnicity. Connor has noted that tangible characteristic are important only inasmuch as they "contribute to this notion or sense of a group's self-identity and uniqueness." In turn, a threat to, or opportunity for, these tangibles, real or perceived, is considered as a threat to, or opportunity for, self-identity and uniqueness. Confronting this threat or taking this opportunity leads to the ethnic group becoming a political actor by virtue of its shared ethnic identity. As such, ethnic identity "can be located on a spectrum between primordial historic continuities and instrumental opportunistic adaptations".

Theories of ethnicity

- Such a definition that draws on both tangible and intangible aspect of ethnic identity and emphasizes both their objective and subjective elements is particularly useful for the study of ethnic conflict. This synthetic definitions seas ethnicity as a quasi-universal phenomenon, despite certain contextual differences, including both tangible (e.g., customs, traditions, language or religion) and intangible (e.g., sense of solidarity among group members, feeling of uniqueness) aspects of ethnicity, as well as their social and political implications, makes it possible to explain the intense emotions that "ethnic issues" generate and to account for the often excessive violence and wilful humiliation that can be observed in many of today's ethnic conflicts.

Theories of ethnicity

- I would like to pause at this stage and underline that I'm not trying to make you think or give a sense of conclusion about inevitability of conflict between different ethnic groups. It is neither theoretically logical nor empirically correct to assume that the mere existence of two or more different ethnic groups automatically leads to the onset of ethnic conflict between them. For that to happen, certain patterns of interaction are required, which occur only under specific circumstances. This is the reason why theories of inter-ethnic relations need to be considered on the way towards developing a comprehensive analytical model of the study of ethnic conflict and conflict regulation.

Theories of inter-ethnic relations

- **Rational choice theories** assume that the individual actors in ethnic conflicts choose to be involved on the basis of rational cost-benefit calculations. In one subset of theories, focus on security, the primary explanation for the occurrence of ethnic conflict is that the choice of violence is predicated on the fear of an imminent violent attack by an opponent who threatens the very survival of the group and its members thus coming under attack. Offence is considered to be the best defence of the group's vital interests. If the focus is on individual economic gain rather than security, the rationale for violence is found in the opportunity to profit from conflict.

Theories of inter-ethnic relations

- **Social-psychological approaches** to ethnic conflict take inequality between groups as their main explanatory variable. Where groups are denied to status or goods, they will be prepared to use violence to attain what they claim to be rightfully theirs. Both sets of theories provide distinct but valuable insights into the dynamics of ethnic conflict, into how and why ethnic identity is a useful and usable resource to mobilize groups for conflict and hold the together during conflict.

Theories of ethnic conflict

- No single theory exits that can comprehensively explain the multitude of ethnic conflicts across time and space. Besides, ethnic conflicts are extremely diverse, it is organized ethnic groups that confront each other with or without external support. In order to understand to this different claims and interest of different ethnic groups, we should examine **to what extent ethnic conflicts actually are about ethnicity**, and explore to what extent ethnicity is merely a convenient common denominator to organize a conflict group in the struggle over resources, land or power. That means, that we have to determine what causes ethnic conflicts. Closer examination of many intra-state conflicts, which are called as "ethnic" could be misleading. According to some scholars "ethnicity is no more that a convenient mechanism to organize and mobilize people into homogeneous conflict groups willing to fight each other resources that are at best indirectly linked to their ethnic identity."

Theories of ethnic conflict

- Any "adequate theory of ethnic conflict should be able to explain both elite and mass behaviour" and should also "provide an explanation for the passionate, symbolic, and apprehensive aspects of ethnic conflict".
- The term "ethnic conflict" is often used loosely, to describe a wide range of intrastate conflicts that are not, in fact, ethnic in character. The question remains what are these violent conflicts about? In most cases ethnic conflicts are about political power in disputed territory and involve ethnic group that wants to separate and form its own state or autonomous region. In some cases we can find some ethnic conflicts in which ethnic groups want to gain power over whole country. But the question remains about the extent to which ethnicity causes conflicts. It should be noted that the role of ethnicity in generating ethnic conflicts is the subject of dispute among many experts. It can be quite misleading to say ethnicity is the only cause of ethnic conflict and that two individuals or ethnic group struggle each other just because their ethnic identity are different.

Theories of ethnic conflict

- Over language policy or religion issues,
- Over economic goods,
- Racial differences.
- Ethnic violence can be explained from different perspectives: **Instrumentalists** argues that violence starts under particular conditions, such as weak governments, large population and inaccessible terrain create the opening extremists need to act. The role of extremist leaders is also very important, who stir up ethnic disagreements and provoke violence.

Theories of ethnic conflict

- **Mobilization** approaches also stresses the roles of the leader, but they are interested how ethnic groups mobilize. The main question concerns, how do members of the group get together the people and resources needed for collective action? They explain it, that people use social organizations or networks that already exist.

- **Social psychological** approaches focus on such question such "why do followers follow these extremist leaders? Why do they follow leaders who want violence?" According to this theory, when one group's myth-symbol complex points to the other group as an enemy, its members will be predisposed to be hostile to the other group.

CAUSES OF THE IMMEDIATE CAUSES AND CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR THEIR OPERATION

Structural Factors:
1. Stateless nationalisms pose a greater risk of war if they have the strength to plausibly reach for freedom, and the central state has the will to resist their attempt.
2. The more densely nationalities are intermingled, the greater the risk of war.
   a. The risks posed by intermingling are larger the more local (house-by-house) rather than regional (province-by-province) the pattern of intermingling.
   b. The risks posed by intermingling are larger if the rescue of diasporas by homelands is difficult but possible; smaller if rescue is either impossible or easy.
3. The greater the defensibility and legitimacy of borders, and the greater the correspondence between these political borders and communal boundaries, the smaller the risk of war.
   a. The less secure and defensible the borders of emerging nation-states, the greater the risk of war.
   b. The greater the international legitimacy of the borders of emerging nation-states, the smaller the risk of war.
   c. The more closely the boundaries of emerging nation-states follow ethnic boundaries, the smaller the risk of war.

Political/Environmental Factors:

4. The greater the past crimes committed by nationalities toward one another, the greater the risk of war.
   a. The better these crimes are remembered by the victims, the greater the risk of war.
   b. The more that responsibility for past crimes can be attached to groups still on the scene, the greater the risk of war.
   c. The less contrition and repentance shown by the guilty groups, the greater the risk of war.
   d. The greater the coincidence of power and victimhood, the greater the risk of war.
5. The more severely nationalities oppress minorities now living in their states, the greater the risk of war. (This restates Hypothesis No. I.4; I list it twice because it operates as both a direct and a remote cause of war.)

Perceptual Factors:

6. The more divergent are the beliefs of nationalities about their mutual history and their current conduct and character, the greater the risk of war.
   a. The less legitimate the governments or leaders of nationalist movements, the greater their propensity to purvey mythical nationalist beliefs, hence the greater the risk of war.
   b. The more the state must demand of its citizens, the greater its propensity to purvey mythical nationalist beliefs, hence the greater the risk of war.
   c. If economic conditions deteriorate, publics become more receptive to scapegoat myths, hence such myths are more widely believed, hence war is more likely.
   d. If independent evaluative institutions are weak or incompetent, myths will more often prevail, hence war is more likely.

Causes of ethnic conflicts

- **Systemic explanations**
- Systemic explanations of ethnic conflict focus on the nature of the security systems in which ethnic groups operate and the security concerns of these groups. It is the situation when national, regional and international authorities are too weak to ensure the security of individual groups.
- The notion of security dilemma is at the core of a wide range of causal explanation of ethnic conflicts.

Causes of ethnic conflicts

- **Domestic explanations**
- Focus on factors that operate primarily at the domestic level: the effectiveness of state in addressing the concerns of their constituents, the impact of nationalism of nationalism on interethnic relations and the impact of democratization on interethnic relations.
- D. Horowitz, Arend Lijphart stressed the impact of democratization and other domestic political factors have on the prospects for ethnic conflict.

Causes of ethnic conflicts

- **Perceptual explanations**
- Some explanations of ethnic conflict focus on the false histories that many ethnic groups have of themselves and others. These histories present one's own group heroic, while other groups are demonized. Such belief and perception create big escalatory pressures.

Causes of ethnic conflicts

- Theories emphasizing the particular aspect of ethnic conflicts can tell us only part of the story. It should be pointed that ethnic conflicts can also involve some rational choices of different individuals. While seeking for causes of ethnic conflicts, we should distinguish between underlying and proximate causes of the conflict and pay attention "whether they are triggered by elite-level or mass-level factors; and whether they are triggered by internal or external developments".

Causes of ethnic conflicts

- **The underlying causes** include four types of factor: *structural* – that is weak states, which have lost its control over some of its territories, or security concerns inside state, which can be caused by reinforcement of separatist movements with external support from neighbor country; *political* – which includes for instance discriminatory political institutions or exclusionary national ideologies that suppress the equality of all citizens or do not give citizenship to all members of some ethnic groups; *economic/social* – low economic performance and development of a state, which gives unequal economic opportunities to all ethnic groups; and finally *cultural/perceptual* - involves cultural discrimination and problematic group histories.

Causes of ethnic conflicts

- **Proximate causes** which have received insufficient attention in the literature on internal conflicts, involves **internal and external factors** both at the mass-level same as at elite-level which can't be underappreciated as they play an important role in outbreak of a conflict. Proximate causes examine such factors as **bad leaders** or **bad neighborhoods, serious domestic problems or bad neighbors.**

- We tend to describe ethnic conflicts mainly in the category of groups. But to look inside intra-group behavior is as important as to analyze the inter-group behavior. It should be said, that it would be wrong to ignore the role of leaders or neighboring states in escalation violence in internal conflict of particular state. Besides it is important to analyze conflict in a regional context, as an ethnic conflict in one state can have "spillover affect" to neighboring state.

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fEtUtMo82s&feature=related
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4P4nePpBHKc
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-mJwIRPfYo&feature=related