Identity And Conflicts

الهوية والنزاعات

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Abstract:

The study examines how the identity dimension affects current conflicts and poses a number of queries regarding the significance of this dimension and its ability to explain these conflicts. Two conflict types—ethnic conflicts and protracted social conflicts—in which identity plays a prominent role have been highlighted to this point, despite the challenge of becoming familiar with all facets of the topic to be discussed. The study gave a thorough explanation of the concept of identity, its various forms and causes, as well as the extent to which multiple identities and the identity crisis affect nations. It then explains the most significant conflicts in which identity emerges as a significant factor, namely ethnic conflicts and extended social conflicts, with a focus on the most crucial approaches and theoretical models that explain them. The study came to the conclusion that identity, along with other significant factors, essentially explains the majority of these conflicts and plays a significant role in their escalation and persistence.

key words: Identity; Identity Dimension; Ethnic Conflict; Protracted Social Conflict.

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1. Introduction:

Conflict interpretation, its range, and related ideas are no longer restricted to the international context and only focus on external factors, as they were in the conventional theoretical propositions (extra state conflicts). Instead, this goes beyond what is happening within states (intra-state conflicts), particularly with the rise in conflicts in multi-ethnic countries that are based more on cultural value foundations and components than on material foundations and components.

As a result, it has become crucial to discuss issues relating to the interpretation of what is presented in the field of theorizing in international relations in general and the justification of current conflicts in particular. These issues of identity and ethnicity and their connections to the most significant emerging issues on the national and international stage. The researchers of these theoretical approaches and models have studied and interpreted conflicts through the identity variable, or at least given it a good place in their analysis of the conflict along with other factors, the most significant of which are the approaches that explain ethnic conflicts and Edward Azar's model for analyzing the conflict. protracted social conflicts. The emergence of this tendency in the proposition has led to the emergence of new theoretical approaches and models.

To determine whether the identity dimension is a specific factor in these conflicts or if there are other more significant factors, we will study and analyze identity as a cause or motive in this research. We will then use the most significant approaches and theoretical models to explain our findings. To achieve this, the following issue will be raised: **How does identity represent a driver of conflicts?**

A number of questions arise from this problem, the most important of which are:

-What are the factors that make identity and multiple identities a trigger for conflicts within states?

-How do the multiple compositions of states lead to conflicts in them?

-To what extent does identity emerge in ethnic and Protracted social conflicts?

Study hypotheses: The study seeks to verify the following hypotheses:

-The multiplicity of identities within the state makes it vulnerable to internal conflicts of an identity dimension.

-The multi-state structure leads to the increase and prolongation of conflicts.

-Identity is an important and major factor in protracted ethnic and social conflicts.

Study Axes:

First: the concept of identity

1- Defining the Identity

2- Emergence of Identity

3- Types of Identity

Second: Identity as a cause of conflict

1- Identity and Ethnic Conflicts

2- Identity and Protracted Social Conflicts

2. the concept of identity

2.1 Identity definition

In general, identity refers to real or imagined (mostly socially constructed) characteristics that population groups attribute to themselves or others in order to distinguish themselves from these others (us/them) and others from one another. We define ourselves as humans "for what we are and what we are not" in order to construct our identities and ourselves (Kidani, 2013, pp. 465,466). Tajfel defined it as "the part of an individual's self-concept that is nourished by his awareness; membership in a social group or groups, and the value and sentimental considerations associated with that membership".(Tajfel, 1978, p.63)

Identity refers to how people define themselves or are described based on their race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion. This affiliation can determine and influence their

contribution to their country's political, economic, social, and cultural life.(Deng, 1999,p.9) The common perception of the presence of the specific features that make the group unique is the entry point into identifying groups, not the presence of a special feature or a set of attributes.(Gurr,1995,p.17)

People frequently favor their own group over other groups, and there are several ways to label this tendency, including intergroup bias for psychologist Rabbie (1993), group preference, or the differences between the inner and outer group for psychologist Tajfel (1981), as well as ethnocentrism for psychologist Sumner (1906). they all refer to a person's strict loyalty to their own inner circle and their categorical, cultural rejection of other groups.(Delikio, 2017,web site)

2.2 Emergence of identity

Although the group itself values group identity, the degree of prominence varies greatly.(Gurr,Op.Cit,p.135) Cultural, economic, and political distinctions between the group and others serve to strengthen the psychological underpinnings of group identity. When a group is treated differently, whether by being denied or given a certain distinction, its members become more aware of their ties and shared interests. This treatment could be the result of a deliberate government policy or a common social practice. Or both, or they might be the lingering effects of past events and circumstances. Some individuals who were once notable may no longer be so in society at large. (Gurr,ibid,pp.17,20)

Identity is typically strong among endangered indigenous peoples and conquered nations, but it is weaker among ethnic races and religious communities due to assimilation and disruption of the formation of collective bonds. Identity may also be weakened by conflict within the group. (Gurr, ibid,p.135)

External pressures on a group frequently make them feel more strongly identified. The retreat of the dominant northern regime from the compromises that ended hostilities between 1963 and 1972 and the policy of imposing Islamic law on the southerners who

were not Muslims both contributed to the resurgence of the civil war in Sudan in the 1980s. The question of "ethnic origins" can come up during a conflict, as it did during the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution, when Eritrean nationalists demanded recognition as an independent and distinct nation, challenging the revolution and the central Amharic government. (Gurr, ibid,p.102)

But three outside factors support the development of the group's identity:

1. The extent of the harm done to the ethnic group compared to other groups.

2- The degree to which ethnic groups and other groups that interact with them have different cultural perspectives.

3- The severity of disputes with the state and other groups. (Gurr, ibid,pp.135,136)

Numerous theories about the formation and purposes of identity have been developed by sociologists of all stripes, including psychologists. Social psychological research has shed light on how people and groups go about securing and maintaining their identities, which can result in conflict between various identity groups. When an identity is under pressure and has the ability to compare itself to other identities, tendencies and tendencies that try to fend off these dangers emerge.(Haji,2008,p.128) which might result in violence. When someone is attacked and certain assets or property are taken from them, violence is thought of as one of identity's functions. or defenses, where the goal is to keep certain assets safe from the avarice of another party. (Beaudoin,2013,p.56)

2.3 Types of identity

A/ Self-Identity

It has been established that self-identity plays a part in the psychological causes of persistent social conflicts. Individual identity refers to components of self-perception that are

comparatively stable. On the one hand, values include values, motivations, feelings, thoughts, attitudes, goals, and aspirations. and, on the other hand, group affiliations, social status, and roles. The entirety of one's self-identity would be in danger if any of the aforementioned were threatened.

Self-identity is flexible, dynamic, and responsive to social context. However, it is also true that self-identity exhibits an abnormally high degree of temporal and contextual stability. (Beaudoin,Op.Cit,pp.54,55)

B/ Group-Identity

Members of a group are said to share common traits and fundamental values as well as reputation, purpose, institutions, traditions, past events, present aspirations, and future prospects. Group identity is flexible and dynamic, and members' levels of emotional commitment and engagement can differ significantly. (Østby,2003,pp.23,24)

The group's identity is derived from its members, but because it is divided into an internal group and an external group, it cannot be understood as the sum of individual identities. In contrast to the (outer group), which the individual does not perceive any shared advantages that would bind him to them, the (inner group) refers to those groups to which the individual feels a sense of belonging and under which he feels comfortable and reassured. (Haji,Op.Cit,p.58)

People frequently divide society into two types: "we," or the inner group, and "them," or the external group. According to Tajfel, discrimination cannot take place unless this division is made, classification is a prerequisite for distinction. And conflict results when there is division. The distinction between the inner group and the outer group is made based on one or more salient clues, which may include racial or ethnic background, social class, or language proficiency. These categorizations frequently come with a critical assessment of others. (Haji,ibid,pp.123,126)

People tend to love and favor their inner groups over rival or antagonistic groups (i.e., outer groups), according to William Graham Sumner, who noted this in his seminal work Primitive Ways (1906). This behavior is more akin to ethnocentrism. (Haji, ibid,p.117) Getting to know the individual based on the group to which he belongs increases the likelihood of violence as a result of: (1) amplifying the positive side of the inner group. (2) reducing the negative side of the inner group. (3) Hold the outside community responsible for negative events. (4) Underestimate the importance of positive dialogue between groups. (5) Increasing useless dialogue. (6) Forming a negative image of the outside group. (7) Fear of any hostile behavior that may be issued by the outside group. (8) Not accepting differences that characterize the inner group. (9) dehumanization of the outer group. (10) Delegitimizing the outside group, considering that it infringes human rights. (Pruitt, and Kim,2004,pp.106,112

In many situations, a conflict between groups can be clearly caused by a conflict of interests, but it can also be said that there must be some competition among the groups' identities for the conflict to arise. We assume that when one group feels frustrated, constrained, or prevented in any way by another group, this will promote outright conflict and intergroup violence, even though there is no reason to believe that intra-group differentiation invariably results in conflict. (Østby,Op.Cit,p.24)

3. Identity as a cause of conflict

3.1.   Identity and ethnic conflicts

An ethnic conflict is a clash between two or more groups over significant issues pertaining to economic, political, social, and territorial issues. A method or pattern of organized violence wherein groups and values are judged according to ethnic logic can also be used to describe ethnic conflict. According to Stuart Kaufman, it is "the ongoing and pervasive organized violence in which groups and values are viewed in terms of ethnicity." In this context, he contends that a number of factors, including the existence of an ethnic group

known by its collective name, the myth of a shared ethnic origin, shared history, culture, regional grouping, and a sense of solidarity, contribute to the emergence of interethnic conflict. (Ibrahim Mahmoud,2001,p.24)

Ted Robert Gurr defines ethnic conflict as a group that uses ethnicity as a criterion to define itself and relies on asserting collective interests in opposition to the government or political figures. (Belaid, 2010,p.24) A focus of the conflict is relative deprivation and group mobilization, and ethno-political movements are initially sparked by people's complaints about their collective status, in line with the greater pursuit of political interests.

Gurr asserts that ethnic groups' dissatisfaction with hardships and grievances is the main cause of insurgency and ethnic conflict, and that the leaders of those groups mobilize their limited resources in response to shifting political opportunities. A sense of shared cultural identity and complaints of unfair treatment serve as the foundation for mobilizing and forming the demands put forth by the leaders of the affected ethnic group.(Gurr,ibid,pp.132,133)

Richard Schultz believes that ethnic conflicts are part of the movement of interactions in sharply divided societies because society is a multiple ethnic groups linked to each other by considerations of geographical proximity and the oppressive power of the government. In this case, the ethnic groups in such societies are large, and consider the The differences between it and other groups in the same society are permanent and cannot be compromised. Ethnicity is the primary form of identity for these groups, and members of these groups see life through a "us and them" lens. In extreme cases, ethnic groups resort to claiming specific plots of state land, imposing recognition of state borders, and developing a desire to achieve those goals. In this context, ethnic sentiments and identity are exploited against other groups by resorting to various forms of political violence. (Al-Mahdi,2014,pp.68,69)

Many researchers have attempted to investigate the ethnic phenomenon, its characteristics, and the consequences it causes. Because of the multiplicity and complexity of

the phenomenon's dimensions, analysis trends have multiplied and branched. (Ashour,2002,p.59)

First Direction

Primordial ethnic divisions are unavoidable because they are based on biological characteristics and supported by long-standing customs that neither individuals nor groups can now change. He believes that because "the conflict stems from ethnic differences, it need not necessarily be explained." The most logical explanation for this trend remains ethnicity itself, even in the case of wars and ethnic conflicts, where it is possible to discuss a specific motivating factor originating from the environment. (Ahmed Amal, 2015,p.26,27) In their study of ethnic conflicts between 1945 and 1999, D. Fearon and D. Laitin came to the conclusion that ethnic pluralism itself is not the explanatory factor, but rather the circumstances under which it exists. According to their findings, "Our information has proven that measuring cultural difference and hatred fails to explain ethnic conflicts as opposed to our focus on other factors". (Fearon, Laitin, 2013,p.3)

Second Direction:

The instrumentalist perspective approaches ethnic conflict in a very different way. A tool that people, groups, or elites use to further their material interests is ethnicity. Ethnicity rarely results in violence, and when it does, it can be attributed to colonial powers' policies and constitutions, which frequently gave the majority (and occasionally the minority) enormous advantages at the expense of other groups. Then, a constitutional framework was put in place that either helped to maintain or worsen the status quo. (Brah, 2003,p.520)

The instrumentalist perspective on ethnicity therefore contends that ethnic identity "has a social origin that is often created or discouraged by political elites seeking power in historically inevitable economic and social patterns". (Francis, 2010,p.95,96) Therefore, contrary to what the primitives claim, ethnic identity is not static but rather contextual, variable, and malleable. Therefore, the goal of those who support this trend is to pinpoint the

circumstances under which ethnicity changes and takes on a political form. (Ashour,Op.Cit,p.59) According to Jega, the active mobilization of identity awareness——including different forms of ethnicity and religion——into social and political action by competing groups in order to compete for limited resources, rather than identity awareness per se, is what causes problems in pluralistic societies. (Tenuche, 2009,p.254) As a result, ethnic conflict consists of two elements: the influence of elites seeking power in promoting ethnic identity and the mention of economic and social systems. Whereas in this case, ethnic leaders use the conflict to further their own political objectives. These leaders use their media sway to fan ethnic resentment, which they then use to fuel a security crisis that serves as justification for their extreme policies and abuse of power in the area of ethnic polarization. (Ibrahim Mahmoud,Op.Cit,p.24)

Here, Claude Ake makes the following observation: "Ethnic differences only cause conflict when they are politicized, and elites carry out this process of politicization in order to gain power and political support." Leaders profit from ethnicity's exploitation as well. They sow the seeds of ethnic conflict and then use the threat of ethnic conflict to defend their authoritarian regimes. (Azevedo,2003, ,p.505)

Third Direction:

Proponents of this view believe that identity can be clearly understood somewhere in the middle of the primitivist and instrumentalist approaches, allowing us to better understand its status, evolution, and dynamic nature in conflict situations. This is especially true in relation to the emergence of ethnic conflicts. This means that understanding ethnic conflict shouldn't center on an explicit, direct, and uncritical conception of the ethnic group as the cause of the conflict or imply that the ethnic group has been abandoned or eliminated as the actor. (Francis,2010,pp.96,98)

3.2. Identity and protracted social conflict

1- Definition of Protracted Social Conflict:

Protracted social conflict (PSC) is described by Azar as "the violent and protracted struggle by local groups to achieve the fundamental needs of security, recognition, acceptance, and a fair share in political institutions and economic participation". (Cordula, website)

Long-term social conflict is a type of conflict that is based on needs, particularly identity in relation to the needs of ethnic, national, or local groups, (Cunningham, website) rather than on material interests. Since long-standing social conflict and group identity are inextricably linked, it arises from the coexistence of groups with disparate ideologies in the same setting. One of the key factors that can divide a society that shares the same culture, language, religion, beliefs, customs, traditions, and aspirations in life is ethnicity.(Azar,1983,p.21)

2- Sources of Protracted Social Conflicts:

In his study of inherent social conflict, Azar identified four sets of variables as preconditions and sources for these conflicts:

A- The Community Component:

The identity of groups, regardless of how they are defined, is the primary focus of analysis of protracted social conflict. Noting that rather than between states, the sources of these conflicts are primarily found within (or across) the state. And that the fundamental issue is the interaction between identity groups and states. In contrast to earlier levels of analysis that primarily concentrated on the individual or the country, Azar claims that identity groups——ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, etc.——are the most useful units of analysis in situations of protracted social conflict. Here, Ronald Fisher concurs with him, stating that the identity group, with its ethnic, racial, religious, or other definition, is the basic analytical unit in a protracted social conflict. Just as the collective identity itself depends on the

fulfillment of fundamental needs like security, recognition, and distributive justice, so too do urgent human needs come to be expressed through the identity group in social and frequently political terms. (Francis,Op.Cit,p.101)

B- The Human Needs:

Azar has determined that the primary cause of protracted social conflict is the deprivation of human needs.(Abdel Ghaffar, 2003,p.142) When societies are unable to meet their basic needs on the basis of identity, protracted social conflicts "emerge". (Cordula,Op.Cit) As described by Azar, "These identity groups will work to achieve and secure their unique identity within society, whether formed around religious, ethnic, racial, cultural, or other divisions." These groups will exert every effort to regain their distinct identity when they are deprived of physical and economic security, political participation, and recognition from other groups. This, in essence, is what's causing the prolonged social conflict. (Cunningham, Op.Cit)

Protracted social conflict, according to Azar, is "the violent and protracted conflict by local groups in order to achieve the basic needs of security, recognition, acceptance, a fair share in political institutions, and economic participation". (Cordula, Op.Cit)

C- State's Role:

The majority of nations with protracted social conflicts have weak, narrow, authoritarian, and centralized systems that lack competence. The power to make decisions and the requirements for political access are constrained or tied to the needs of the dominant group at the expense of other groups in a rigid or fragile authoritarian structure. (Cunningham, Op.Cit)

Highly centralized political systems are thought to be a source of conflict because they make it harder for social groups to feel a sense of belonging to one another, heighten alienation, and frequently deny them the ability to meet their needs. Azar contends that in order to resolve these conflicts, it is necessary to create decentralized structures that are

suitable, focused on meeting the psychological and economic needs of groups, and involved in interactions with other groups and people within the framework of the nation-state. (Abdel Ghaffar, Op.Cit,p.199)

D- International Links:

Azar discusses two types of international ties: economic dependence (which decreases state autonomy and distorts patterns of economic growth, increasing the deprivation of some groups' needs); and political-military subordination links with powerful states (where the subordinate state protects the dependent state in exchange for the latter's loyalty, which may cause the dependent state to pursue internal and external policies that are far from the subordinate state's interests). (Francis, Op.Cit,p.109)

It is important to keep in mind that the root causes of protracted social conflict can follow and balance out one another over time, particularly if none of the parties can assert their dominance or find a peaceful resolution. If this conflict persists for several generations, it will set roots in society's consciousness and develop into a protracted social conflict. (Azar,1985,p.36)

However, identity issues play a much larger role in the emergence of psychological drivers for persistent social conflicts compared to other causes and sources. Violence will become entrenched in the identity of the person, the group, and society at large if these issues are not resolved, because those involved in the conflict will start to define themselves through it. Unprecedented levels of individual solidarity will be sparked by situations that could endanger a group or society. The violence that comes with this stage may contribute to the persistence of long-term social conflict because it may take time to preserve and restore this identity. Violence can be used to protect one's identity, property, or self. This kind of conflict typically lasts for a longer period of time, which may cause it to become deeply ingrained in people's identities through social influence, response to events, and possibly even their involvement in violence. A certain group will find itself without an identity—one

based on conflict and violence—even as the conflict is about to come to an end. This group will therefore use all of its resources to keep the conflict going. Each side uses the identity crisis as a weapon of violence in order to defend themselves and keep the conflict going. (Beaudoin,ibid,p.52,54)

In their study of the internal dynamics of protracted social conflicts, some researchers affirm that protracted social conflicts are conflicts brought on by identity crises, a byproduct of fear of extinction that intensifies in the presence of the experience of certain ethnic groups that are under threat and live in conflict. Not only ethnic minorities but also the majority of the population, are affected by memories of executions, massacres, and fears related to identity. A particular ethnic group attempts to impose its political hegemony through the institutions that bear its identity through the institutions that control the conflict in repressive regimes that enjoy high authority but little support. This leads to the emergence of two processes that lead to the destruction of public order and make it very difficult to restore it. The second process, political and social mobilization, aims to impose a new pattern of ethnic relations while also challenging the traditional system of ethnic dominance in society. As a result, these ethnic conflicts are frequently marked by their bloody and violent nature, the breakdown of governing institutions, the polarization of public opinion, the emergence of radical contradictions, the emergence of a political system that is solely motivated by self-interest, and the difficulty of reaching a political settlement. (Al-Mahdi,ibid,p.68)

4. Conclusion:

In this essay, we attempted to investigate the connection between the identity variable and its significance in current conflicts. Our findings are as follows:

- The existence of numerous identity groups within a single state, each of which has its own languages, religions, and levels of economic and political power. Between these various affiliations, each of which strives to obtain particular political and economic privileges.

- Compared to other causes and sources, identity-related issues, such as identity crisis, fear of losing political and economic privileges, and feelings of threat, frustration, and marginalization, greatly influence the emergence of psychological motivations for ethnic and protracted social conflicts.

-The issue isn't just with identity or the abundance of identities; rather, it's with how he handles this identity and controls the abundance of identities in the state. Ethnic tensions and conflicts are exacerbated and prolonged by the nature of political systems, the choices and policies they make, and the ways in which they are implemented.

- The interest in the identity dimension in the interpretation of contemporary conflicts does not imply that this dimension is the determining factor or the only cause; instead, there are numerous and interrelated (internal and external) factors that can explain the nature of ethnic conflicts and protracted social conflicts. Because the phenomenon cannot be attributed to a single source, the unilateral view of explaining these conflicts by relying on one variable without taking into account the other variables frequently does not provide a thorough explanation for the phenomenon.

-Some conflicts cannot be categorised as having an identity dimension at all because they are driven primarily by goals of politics, economics, and security, with identity serving only as a motivating factor.

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<u>**Notes importantes :**</u>

- Le délai de réception des articles sur la plateforme ASJP est :

  du **1er Septembre** au **30 Novembre** et du **1er Mars** au **30 Avril ;**

- Le volume de l'article ne doit pas dépasser **20 pages**, et ne pas être en deçà de **15 pages**.