

ETHNIC CONFLICTS AND THEIR CAUSES

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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

conflicts.

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 ¹. 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 ². Such groups exist over time, even as they emerge and may well change and disappear.

Several criteria about this definition must be met before a group can be called ethnic group or ethnic community. First, the group must have a name for itself. Names are important not only for self-identification, but also as expressive emblems of the collective “personality”. Second, language is also a powerful indicator of ethnic and national identity. The struggle over language policies and language rights are often a major reason in ethnic conflicts. Many linguistic minorities around the world are officially prohibited from using their language in public places, or in the communication media. Third is religion that has historically been an important marker of the ethnic identity. Especially, in the societies in which religion intervenes in the various spheres of public life, it may become a hegemonic factor and thus determinant for ethnicity. It becomes an ethnic marker. The more the religious factor is interwoven with other elements of social life, the more important does religion become as a determining factor of ethnicity ³. For example, in Lebanon, being Christian or Muslim refers not only to a private expression of religious faith, but to community, and to collective behavior and belonging.

A fourth feature is territory. Territory is the basis of economic and political structures, which are the fundamental units in the life of ethnic groups and nations. The territorial state is considered to be the determining element of the existence of a nation in modern times. Many ethnic groups which consider themselves to be nations aspire to have their own territorial state (Kurds, Palestinians, Tamils of Sri

Lanka). The majority of ethnic groups in the world are identified with some territory, which are not only their vital environment, but also their real or mythical land of origin, sometimes imbued with sacred meaning ⁴. Serbia denies rights to the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, because of the historically important (for Serbian identity) battle of Kosovo in the fourteenth century.

A fifth feature, shared culture constitutes a complex of distinctive elements of any ethnic groups. In the definition of ethnic groups, culture is a system of values, symbols and meanings, norms, and customs shared by the members of a group. Culture defines the way of life, which distinguishes one ethnic group from another.

The ethnic groups whose status is of greatest concern in international politics today are those that are the targets of discrimination and that have organized to take political action to promote and defend their interests.

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 ⁵. 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 ⁶. 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.

There are currently several hundred ethnic conflicts of varying intensity on all continents. As it has been mentioned above, within the borders of most of states there exist numerous ethnic, national, racial, linguistic or cultural groups. They either do not identify with the dominant model of nation-state, or they are not accepted as full members of this state or the nation, which it purports to be or represent, or they are actually excluded from it. From the perspective of the modern nation-state, the existence of ethnically distinct 'sub-national' groups always represents a potential threat, a destabilizing force, particularly when they are politically organized. This is especially the case when power in the state rests principally with a dominant or majority ethnic group.

In fact, the majority of independent states existing today are composed of more than one ethnic group, and this diversity poses challenges to governance and to the prevailing concept of the nation-state itself. One of the problems is that numerous states do not

legally recognize the ethnic pluralism existing within their borders, and those that do are still struggling with ways to deal with diversity constructively ⁷. Some governments may deny their existence altogether, whereas others impose strict legal criteria on ethnic groups and make them the object of specific policies.

As it has been pointed out above, a minority group might insist on seceding and establishing its own independent state. It might demand an independent state within a confederation of states, or might insist on an independent political entity within a new federal structure; it might want more political, economic, cultural, or administrative autonomy within existing institutional arrangements. At the same time, a group might be satisfied with democratic reforms aimed the implementation of a consociational democracy, ethnic power-sharing, or simply more equitable representation.

In many cases, groups seeking more autonomy are defeated, and central authorities are successful in imposing their own conception of order. In other cases, secessionist groups are successful in breaking away and establishing their own states. Thus, there are three types of ethnic conflict outcomes: peaceful reconciliation, peaceful separation, and war. In other words, groups might agree to leave together, agree to live apart, or fight for control of the situation.

Ethnic Reconciliation

In some cases, the ethnic groups involved in a dispute may stay associated with each other under some kind of political and legal framework. At the same time, they may devise new constitutional arrangements to address specific concerns and grievances. Usually, more local autonomy and minority rights guarantees will be

incorporated into new schemas.

Ethnic Separation

In some cases, groups involved in a dispute may be unable to devise new constitutional arrangements that are satisfactory to all concerned. They may decide to dissolve existing legal ties. This process might involve comparatively little bloodshed. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the separation of Czechoslovakia can be an example.

Ethnic War

A minority group might demand seceding from an existing state and establishing its own independent state. It might demand an independent state within a confederation of states, or might insist on an independent political entity within a new federal structure or administrative autonomy within existing institutional arrangements. At the same time, a group might be satisfied with democratic reforms aimed the implementation of a consociational democracy, ethnic power-sharing, or simply more equitable representation. Groups of roughly equal size and power might fight about similar issues or control of the state.

In many cases, antagonist ethnic groups will not be able to agree on new constitutional arrangements or a peaceful separation. These kind of ethnic disputes consequently become violent, some escalate into all-out inter-ethnic war. This is the situation in Angola, Kashmir, Shi Lanka, Bosnia, and Caucasus.

Causes Of Ethnic Conflicts

What causes ethnic conflict? By itself, ethnicity is not a cause of violent conflict⁸. It is not caused directly by intergroup differences. Most ethnic groups, most of the time, pursue their interests peacefully through established political channels.

Some scholars explain reasons of ethnic conflicts with collapse of the authoritarian rule. As an example, the main reason why ethnic conflicts have sprung up in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere, because the authoritarian rule has collapsed and made such conflicts possible. This is the conventional wisdom. This argument offers an inadequate explanation of the causes of ethnic conflicts. Scholars generally fail to explain why conflicts have broken out in some places, but not others, and why some ethnic conflicts are more violent than others.

Mainly scholars explain the causes of ethnic conflict based on two levels of analysis: the systemic level, the domestic level.

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 groups⁹. The first and most obvious systemic prerequisite for ethnic conflict is that two or more ethnic groups must reside in close proximity. Conflict arises in a mixed ethnic community within a single state. Ethnic conflict is based on the struggle between different groups for political power and status. The potential for ethnic conflict is almost universal because there are very few states with only one ethnic group.

The second systematic prerequisite for ethnic conflict is that

national, regional, and international authorities must be too weak to keep groups from fighting and too weak ensure the security of individual groups.

In systems where anarchy prevails individual groups have to provide for their own defense. These groups fear for their physical safety and survival – especially when groups are more or less evenly matched and neither can absorb the other politically, economically, or culturally¹⁰. Collective fears of the future arise when states lose their ability to arbitrate between groups or provide credible guarantees of protection for groups. Barry Posen argues that security becomes of paramount concern under this condition¹¹.

Groups have to worry if neighboring groups pose security threat and if threats will grow or diminish. In this case, the problem groups begin to take actions to defend themselves mobilizing armies and deploying military forces. In turn, this can lead the second group to take their actions to diminish the security of the first group. This is the security dilemma. Groups are often unaware of the impact their actions will have on others.

These conditions are often generated when empires collapse and ethnic groups suddenly have to provide for their own security. We can see this situation in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The collapse of imperial regimes can be viewed as a problem of emerging anarchy. Authority system collapsed in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and individual groups have to provide for their own defense and security in anarchy system.

According to Posen, instabilities develop when two conditions hold¹². First, when offensive and defensive military forces are hard to distinguish, groups cannot signal their defensive intentions by the kinds of military forces, which they deploy. Groups cannot distinguish

one another's intentions, whether forces are defensive or offensive. Because forces deployed for defensive purposes will have offensive capabilities and therefore will be seen as threatening by others.

Second, if offensive military operations are more effective than defensive operations, due to the nature of military technology or the kinds of available capabilities, groups will choose the offensive if they want to survive. The offensive advantage can cause preemptive war because the superiority of the offensive capability will greatly increase prospects for military success.

Domestic Explanations

Other explanation of ethnic conflict focus on factors that operate primarily at the domestic level: the effectiveness of states in addressing the concerns of their constituents, the impact of nationalism on inter-ethnic relations, and the impact of democratization on inter-ethnic relations.

People look to states to provide security and promote economic prosperity. Nationalism reflects the need to establish states capable of achieving these goals ¹³. Intense nationalism and a heightened risk of national conflict are caused when states fail to meet military and economic threats to their peoples and when they fail to develop effective institutions for managing increased levels of political participation. As an example, nationalism has flared up in parts of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where state structures and political institutions have weakened or diminished capacities. In other words, the collapse of the Soviet Union and east European communist states is unleashing a new round of nationalism. That has caused ethnic warfare in the post-Soviet states and mounting nationalist opinion in

Russia itself.

The emergence of ethnic nationalism makes some form of ethnic conflict almost inevitable. The rise of ethnic nationalism in one group can be seen as threatening by others. In turn, this will lead to the development of similar elements elsewhere. Ethnic nationalism also makes groups to field large, highly motivated armies. This will lead others to be more vigilant and to build up their own military forces. In turn, this can make preemptive attacks or preventive war between neighboring groups more likely.

Another factor of domestic level, which impacts on ethnic conflict, is democratization. In fact, democratization has the potential to help mitigate ethnic tension by allowing for the establishment of an inclusive means of governance to address the needs of all ethnic groups in the state ¹⁴.

However, democratization is problematic in multiethnic societies, particularly in the beginning stage, when the old regime is changed to the new democratic regime. This process can effect to existing ethnic problem. Democratization process depends on two factors. The first is the level of ethnic tension. If the old regime used forced assimilation, forced relocation, ethnic expulsion, extermination campaigns toward ethnic problems, in this case the democratization process will be very problematic and many ethnic problems will be on the agenda. The other case is that if the old regime pursued benign policies toward the ethnic groups, ethnic issues will be less important and moreover, less problematic on the agenda.

The second factor is the equation of the ethnic groups in the country or their relative size. If one group is larger than others are, the majority group will be able to dominate discussions about new political arrangement. In this case minority interest will be neglected.

If two or more groups are almost equal in size, in this case all groups' concern will be addressed.

Conclusion

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.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, p. 4.
2. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Sources of Nationalism*, in Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, p. 28.
3. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, *Ethnic Conflicts and the Nation State*, p. 27.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
5. Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, p. 5.
6. Ted R. Gurr, Barbara Haff, *Ethnic Conflict in World Politics*, p. 2.

7. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, *Ethnic Conflicts and the Nation State*, p. 197.
8. David A. Lake, Donald Rothchild (eds.), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*, p.8.
9. Barry R. Posen, *The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict*, in Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, p. 103.
10. David A. Lake, Donald Rothchild (eds.), *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict. Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*, p. 8.
11. Barry R. Posen, *The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict*, in Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, p. 103.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
13. Jack Snyder, *Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State*, in Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, p. 79.
14. Renee de Nevers, *Democratization and Ethnic Conflict*, in Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, p. 61.

X Ы Л А С Д

ЕТНИК МЪНАҚИИИЕДЛДР ВД ОНЛАРНН СДВДБЛДРИ

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Etnik qruplarnn mvcud dcvldt daxilind tanmmalarn, bdrabdrlik, muxtariyudt vd ya mstdqillik uxrundakn mbarizdlrdi son illdrd yaranan fenomen deyil. Bu mbarizd 60-cn illdrd Avropann bcyk dcvldtldrinin Afrika vd Asiyadakn mstdmldkdzilikldrind son

qoyulduqdan sonra meydana gəldi. Bununla belə, soyuq müharibə illərində bu məsələdə az diqqətiyyət verildi. Sovet bloku və ABƏ-nin bəzən etdiyi Qərbi Məttifaqın arasında gedən soyuq müharibə dünya dhalisi arasında sabilliyin mühüm əldə etməsi üçün yaratdı. Zənkı Edrə Qərbin belə qarəndurmasının nəvə müharibəsində gətirib zəharasaxn kimi ciddi fikir var idi.

Soyuq müharibənin sona zətdənxən dıvır Avrasiyada milli, etnik və dini mənaqiedlərin yaranmasn ild məəiyyət olundu. Bundan dıavd, belə mənaqiedlər 1990-cı illərin dıvıllərində Sovet Məttifaqının və Yüqoslaviya Federasiyasının daxılmasn saydsində yenidən ortaya zənxən.

Dksər dıvıltlərin daxilində bir nəzd məxtəlif dil, irq, məddniyyətdə, eynik mənedud mənsüb qruplar yəəəyrlər. Vəzən bu qruplar həmin dıvıltin və ya ıllənin tam əzvi kimi qəbul edilmirlərKK. Belə edraitdə, etnik qruplar ız həquqlarının tələb edir ki, bu da zox vaxt etnik mənaqiedlərdə sərbəb olur.

Etnik mənaqied nədir? Bu, dıvıltin daxilindəki mənaqiedlərdən biridir. Kimlik mənaqiedləri ild yənaən ideoloji, hıqumət, diskriminasiya, dıraf məhitlə baxın mənaqiedlər daxili mənaqiedlərdə daxildir. Vəzən "etnik mənaqied" ifadəsi daxildəki nərazlıqların gıstərmək əzən də istiafdə olunur. Məsələn, Dıqanstanda, Somalidə, Kambocidə etnik deyil, siyasi mənaqiedlər bəə verir, zənkı bunlar bir qrupa daxil olan məxtəlif siyasi tərdflər arasında dənir. Etnik zəkiəmlərdən dənəməzdan dıvıdl etnikliyin nə olduxunu məduudnıdedirdk. Etnik qrupda insanlar ımumi məraxa, kimliyd, dind, məddniyyətdə, həyat tərzində və torpaxa malik olurlar. Belə qruplar uzun məddət məvcud olur, həttə dıyied bilir və ya yox olurlar. Hər hansı qrupu etnik adlandıрмаq əzən bəzi məyarlar məduudnıdedirilməlidir. Birinci qrupun adı, ikinci dili, əzənc isə dini

olmalıdır.

Дүрдәнсь дламдт дразидир. Дрази иqtисадı вđ siyasi strukturun bazasıdır. Цзынь milldt kimi тđqdim edдн bir зох etnik qruplakkr цз дразиси olan дцвдтд malik olmaха залненрлар. (Кърдлдр, фддstinlildr вđ s.). Etnik qrupun бццкльуцьь onun дразисинд гцгд аунрд edirlдр.

Beeinci meyar etnik qrupun мдддниуудtidir. Onларнн мдддниуудtлдринд дsasдн һдуат тдрзлдрі мьдууднлдедирilir ki, bu da bir etnik qrupu digдриндн ддрлндирir.

Мьнақиедлдр мьхтдlifdir; мцвсуд дцвдtin тдрkibиндн знхмақ вđ уа мьстдқillik qazanmaq. Etnik мьнақиеддд olan ьз ьmumi мдсдлд, сдmiуудт daxilindд azлнqlарнн tam muxtariуудт qazanmasн, onларнн тапннmasн, maraqlарнннн мьdafid olunmasıdır. Кърдлдрдд вđ дvvдlki Sovet Mttifaqında olduxu kimi. Elд hallar olur ki, qruplar дцвдtin тдрkibиндн знхмақdansa, onun daxilindд statusларннн мцћкдмлдндирмдуд залненрлар. Тьрклдр вđ son zamanlar Almaniyaya гдlmie digдр мьһасирлдр цз тдһлькдsizlikлдрі ьзын парahatднрлар, daha genie iqtisadi imkanlardan istifadd etмдуд залненр вđ вдtdндаe olmaха ьmid бдslдyirlдр.

Muxtariyyat istдудн bir зох azлнqlарнн мьbarizдsi мдхlubiyудтд uxramне, digдр hallarda isд onlar цз дцвдtлдрini qurmaха мьвдffдq olmuelar.

Belдlikд, etnik мьнақиедлдрі ьз yolla һдll etмдк olar:

1. Sьlh yolu ilд azлнqlар birгд уaeamaха razнlaенрлар.
2. Dinc yolla аунн уaeamaха ьстьнльк verirlдр. Zexoslovariya, Sovet Mttifaqında olduxu kimi.
3. Etnik qruplar вđziуудтд ндzarдt etмдк uxrunda vurueurlar. Зох vaxt antaqonist etnik qruplar sьlh yolu ilд problemin һдllинд razн ola bilmirlдр вđ мьһaribд вđziуудтинд гдlib знхнрлар. Qafqazda, Kдemirdд, Bosniyada, Anqolada olduxu kimi.

Нддир етник мѣнаѳедлдрин сдбдби? Етнмк ґрурларнн мцѳсудluxu цзлѳуьндд дахнднсн мѣнаѳедлдрд сдбдб олмур. Мѣтдхдссислдрин фйкринсд етник мѣнаѳедлдрин ґаранмаснна сдбдб онларнн дахилиндд ґерлдедиґи дцѳлдин hakim ґѳѳѳлдринин здифлиґидир. Lakin onlar нґуд бдзи ґерлдрдд бу мѣнаѳедлдрин бае вердиґини, бдзи ґерлдрдд исд хез бир problem olmadнхннн, һдмзинин нґуд белд мѣнаѳедлдрин бир ґисминин дигдрлдринд баханда даһа дахнднсн olduxunu аґдннлаеднға бilmirlдр.

Дксдр мѣтдхдссислдр етник мѣнаѳедлдри системли вд ґерли тдбдқддд тдһлil edirlдр...